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## **Co-creating Inclusive Arctic Urban Space**

A study in challenges and consequences of translating co-creation processes

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# ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the challenges and consequences connected to translating a co-creation process from the urban setting of Tromsø to the rural setting of Hansnes. Co-creation is a tool that has increasingly gained popularity in relation to modern urban planning. It connects issues that exist in planning with the specialised technical knowledge of experts and citizen involvement, allowing for spaces developed through collaborative processes between the two. The case for our thesis is a co-creation project organised by the Nordnorsk Design og Arkitektursenter. For the project organised by NODA in Hansnes, called *Inclusive Arctic Urban Spaces*, the idea is to design a public space that is attractive to use all year round, designed by collaborative processes between different stakeholders, focusing on including the residents of Hansnes. We do this through an investigational approach to link public spaces as the object of what NODA seeks to design with co-creation. We make use of a theoretical framework consisting of co-creation, Arctic planning, and the centre-periphery dichotomy. Observation through walking, conversing with locals and mapping of the field constitute our exploratory method driven approach. Concludingly, we present a selection of potential challenges identified as well as the consequences they might impose, when translating a co-creation process from one place to another.

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# Chapter 1 - Introduction

Co-creation processes is a tool that has increasingly gained popularity in relation to modern urban planning. It connects issues that exist in planning with the specialised technical knowledge of experts and citizen involvement, allowing for spaces developed through collaborative processes between the two. These measures have been utilised on various subjects related to urban planning (Mehta & Palazzo 2020), one being the development of public spaces meant to foster increased liveability.

The term urban liveability is understood to be connected to places designed and suitable for human living (Blanco 2018). Interaction between people and places is crucial. Such interaction happens all around the urban areas, including and frequently in the public spaces of cities. Places for interaction and places for meeting strangers and familiars alike are all part of the functions of public spaces in cities around the world. Public spaces constitute the fabric of a city that makes it distinguishable. In modern planning, public spaces are used as a medium for revitalisation and accommodating the changing needs of the public (Bjerkeset & Aspen 2020; Mehta & Palazzo 2020). Public space should be regarded as something possible to develop collectively in a manner that seeks to combine professionals' and locals' knowledge to produce spaces able to adapt to current and arising needs (Teder, 2019; Leino & Puumala, 2021). Thus, public spaces can hold great potential when designed for liveability.

Co-creating, as the name suggests, is descriptive of a process focusing on inviting in different actors with an intent to establish collaborative creative solutions (Hudson et al., 2017). The idea behind co-creation is that involving the public, such as the local inhabitants, as participants in these collaborative processes will encourage processes that address social needs and even enhance placemaking (Leino & Puumala, 2021).

In 2021, action was taken to enhance the liveability of Tromsø, Norway, through such a co-creative process. Through the engagement of different groups in the community, the idea was to create an urban space usable all year around. Due to the geographical location of Tromsø, the city undergoes a consequential transformation every year as the seasons change. Summertime provides light, sun and outdoor activities similar to that of the more southern parts of the country. However, when winter comes and snow begins to fill the streets and landscapes of this Arctic region, changing the city of Tromsø to something entirely different from winter through spring (Haggärde et al., 2020).

The project was initiated and executed by NODA (Nordnorsk Design og Arkitektursenter), an organisation well versed in collaborative processes focusing on designing for the Arctic region. Through this co-creation between local residents, designers, architects, and a local construction company, they designed a structure for urban spaces in an unused space by Prostneset in Tromsø (Noda, 2021a). The project was done with a focus on collaboration between different actors, as well as educational elements of teaching about the planning and designing of the particularities within the Arctic region.

In 2022, one year after the project in Tromsø 2021, NODA has planned a similar strategy, for a similar project. This is to be part of a project they call *Inkluderende Arktiske Byrom* or *Inclusive Arctic Urban Spaces* (Noda, 2022a). This name incorporates both the process of 2021 and the one from 2022, as well as other future processes to be held in Northern Norway. The new project is to take place in Hansnes, a harbour town in the municipality of Karlsøy, just north of Tromsø. The difference between the current 2022 project in Hansnes and 2021's 'Inclusive Arctic Urban Space' project in Tromsø is the considerable difference in size between the two places.

Tromsø functions in many ways as the regional centre for Northern Norway, in addition to it being the host of national and international research centres, international organisations and a university (Hemmersam, 2021b). For the current project in Hansnes, the idea is to design a public space that is attractive to use all year round, designed by collaborative processes between different stakeholders, focusing on including the residents of Hansnes through several workshops (Noda, 2022b). In terms of scale, Hansnes resembles a rural village similar to many other Northern Norwegian coastal places with less than 500 inhabitants (ssb.no n.d.a). The process in Tromsø in 2021 was set in an Arctic, urban setting, while the process in Hansnes in 2022 is set in an Arctic, rural setting. While there is a difference between the two places, the demand for urban planning that takes into account and incorporates the needs and wishes of the local residents is still there. Both projects emanate from the same subject: to design a public space that is made *for* the public on the basis of their involvement in the project. How, then, does a process designed and tested in an urban context function when translated to a rural context? Can the same measures be used? Is the process itself translatable between spaces that seemingly are very different? Moreover, what challenges and consequences might arise from doing so? This all leads to the problem formulation:

## **Problem Formulation**

“What are the potential challenges and consequences of translating a co-creation process designed for an urban environment to a rural scale?”

1. What is the ‘Inclusive Arctic Urban Spaces’ project, and how does the process work within the concept of co-creation?
2. How can Hansnes be understood as the arena for the new co-creation process?
3. What challenges might arise in the co-creation process in Hansnes?

# Thesis Structure

Here, we will briefly introduce the different subjects presented in each chapter of the thesis, as well as how they relate to each other. We do this to provide insight into the thesis structure.

## Chapter 1:

Here we present the entrance into the thesis, beginning with the introduction, then presenting the problem formulation and work questions, and lastly introduce the structure of the thesis.

## Chapter 2:

The second chapter introduces the theoretical framework of this thesis. Here we present the concept of co-creation through an investigative approach into how co-creation relates to public spaces. Through a multitude of research papers, we connect and conceptualise public space, liveability, placemaking and co-creation. Hereafter, we explore the aspects of planning for the Arctic and the understanding of the rural-urban relationship in the context of Hansnes and NODA's projects.

## Chapter 3:

In this chapter, we present the methodological approach we have utilised to gather the empirical data for our research. The exploratory research is initiated through a mapping of the field. Thereafter, the method of observation through walking alongside conversations with locals creates the basis of our fieldwork. Before a more thorough walkthrough of the field trips, the background of these methods is described. In concluding this chapter, we reflect upon our methodological considerations.

## Chapter 4:

Here we present the first analysis part, focusing on the first work question: “What is the ‘Inclusive Arctic Urban Spaces’ project and how does the process work within the concept of co-creation?”. This is done by first introducing NODA and their general vision and ideas. We then describe the process in Tromsø in 2021 and the process in Hansnes in 2022. The description of Hansnes



includes an account of all the changes which happened throughout the duration of our thesis; thereafter we relate this process to the process in 2021. Lastly, we discuss how NODA, alongside this knowledge of the two processes, is situated in the theoretical framework presented in chapter 2.

#### Chapter 5:

In the second analysis part, or chapter 5, we respond to the second work question: “How can Hansnes be understood as the arena for the new co-creation process?”. This is done through a descriptive exploration of Hansnes in relation to the empirical data collected. We start by describing Hansnes in the setting it exists in and how this setting is expressed in the data collected. We analyse the Arctic and the rural aspects of Hansnes. Thereafter we conduct an analysis by looking at public space and accessibility in Hansnes.

#### Chapter 6:

For the third and final analysis part, we respond to the third work question: “What challenges might arise in the co-creation process this year?”. Here we will draw on the findings from chapter 4 and chapter 5, to form a discussion on what issues we have found to be possible challenges in the co-creation process in Hansnes.

#### Chapter 7:

This chapter will conclude the thesis by answering the problem formulation: “What are the potential challenges and consequences of translating a co-creation process designed for an urban environment to a rural scale?” based on the findings in the three analysis parts.

## Chapter 2 - Theoretical framework

Within the following chapter, we will introduce the theoretical framework of our thesis. The introduction will be based on understanding the concept of co-creation within the context we work in. We do this through an investigational approach to link public spaces as the object of what NODA seeks to design with co-creation. As the thesis is focused on the co-creation of an inclusive public urban space, it is necessary to have a closer look into the different concepts of *public spaces*, *liveability*, and *co-creation*. These will constitute the first part of this chapter. Following this we have a section on planning for the Arctic and the dichotomy of urban and rural, centre and periphery, as these are some identified characteristics in which our case exists.

### Co-Creation of Public Spaces

Public spaces can hold great potential when designing for urban liveability. Overall, the creation of well-designed and used public spaces has become an important issue within local urban agendas as cities worldwide have become increasingly concerned with improving their “attractiveness and liveability” (Aelbrecht et al., 2019: 24). One thing to note is that despite the increasing use of the concept of ‘liveability’ and its intuitive meaning; this concept can be challenging to define and thereby difficult to implement directly into urban planning. Notwithstanding the ambiguities of the concept, we would argue that, for instance, the social role of public spaces is an integral part of urban liveability. We repeatedly refer to an article focused on the liveability of Umeå’s public spaces during the winter, as it directly connects to issues in a co-creation process of an urban space such as the one in Hansnes. In their article on the liveability of urban public spaces in Umeå, Costamagna et al. (2019), for instance, emphasise the social role of public spaces. In their article, the social roles of public spaces are described as such:

*“(1) as an arena for public life; (2) as a meeting place for different social groups; (3) as a space for the display of symbols and images in society; and (4) as part of the communication system between urban activities”* (Thomas cited in Costamagna et al., 2019: 135).

Similarly, to this definition, Bjerkeset (2021) emphasises that outdoor public spaces are considered the city's most accessible and inclusive spaces, assumed to accommodate all kinds of people and activities. In the context of planning in colder climates, Jan Gehl, influential in promoting the concept of urban liveability, also notes that darkness, wind, and cold weather affect livability and the feelings of safety. Therefore, it is necessary to reduce inconvenience, offer protections, and optimise exposure to its beneficial aspects (Gehl cited in Costamagna et al., 2019: 138). Costamagna et al. (2019) argue that:

*“Public spaces are defined as places of interrelation, social encounter and exchange, where groups with different interests converge. The presence of inclusive public spaces that accommodate the needs of a multitude of people, who may not otherwise cross paths in their daily lives, is therefore essential to a rich public life and an integrative society”* (Costamagna et al., 2019: 134).

Following these different definitions on public spaces, for public spaces to improve the liveability of a city they need to be made for the public (Bjerkeset and Aspen, 2020). The question then is how to create public spaces that people care for and want to use. Maria Teder (2019: 289) points out that “as in many other parts of society, citizens are becoming more and more involved in the creation process” this too applies to urban development projects. However, as exemplified by Teder (2019) and her experience working as an architect at the City Planning Office in Malmö, she states how the creation of new public spaces often caused dissatisfaction among planners, architects, and, most importantly, the public. She describes how many citizens were feeling cut off from the development of their close surroundings (Teder, 2019). According to her (2019: 17), a common feeling that was expressed during information meetings with citizens designed to expand public participation was that “They [the city planners] won’t listen to what we want anyway”. There was distrust among some participants in regard to their potential to influence the outcome of development proposals. Others found it “‘too complicated’ or ‘time-consuming’” to get involved in planning processes due to municipal bureaucracy (Teder, 2019: 17). Teder (2019:17) argues that this might partially be due to participatory planning processes that are not entirely suited for their target audience, as “many citizens had ideas about how they wanted the city to be but did not feel capable of turning their ideas into a built reality”. Thus, she concludes, “the public seemed to struggle to accept many of the new places” (Teder, 2019: 17). Fittingly, Leino & Puumala (2021: 783) argue that “since participation and inclusion are not synonymous, it is possible that purely formal inclusion results in experiences of marginalisation” by not taking the diversity of the citizens into account. We can take from these statements that there are problems with traditional planning

methods that do not seem to be well catered for the meaningful participation of people and other possible actors and stakeholders. In the introduction, we have already introduced NODA and its focus on educational, collaborative, and co-creational approaches within architecture and urban design. Still, it is essential to add that a central pillar of its philosophy is promoting people to shape their regions' future through architecture and design based on diversity and user insight (Noda, 2021a). We are using a number of case studies from the Nordic countries to elucidate what co-creation means in an urban planning context. The articles were chosen due to their relevance and timeliness, providing insights into real case studies of co-creation, thereby highlighting experiences from elsewhere. In looking at our chosen case studies, we want to gain further knowledge about putting the concept of co-creation into practice.

Co-creation as a concept and method sets itself apart from other traditional participatory planning ideas. According to Leino & Puumala (2021: 785), “co-creation implies a more profound and longitudinal take on participation; it is a more active and interactive process which challenges the views of all parties and seeks to combine professional and local expertise”. For instance, formal consultation processes in “[...] which professionals give users a chance to voice their opinions on a limited number of alternatives” or “one evening public hearings that have been traditionally used in furthering citizen engagement in public sector decision making” are profoundly different to co-creation processes (Leino & Puumala: 785). The notion of collaboration, interaction and participation is central to the concept of co-creation (Hudson et al., 2017). The idea is that involving the public, i.e. the inhabitants, as a participant in co-creation processes also “encourages processes that address social needs and even as a means to enhance democracy” (Leino & Puumala, 2021: 782).

In contrast to other public consultation/participation processes, the idea of co-creation transforms the user, e.g. of a public space, into a co-creator by active involvement in the creation process (Teder, 2018). Leino and Puumala (2021) describe that the current desire to create fairer, more sustainable, and socially more connected societies in connection to complex urban challenges is the reason for the popularity of concepts such as co-creation. Technical expertise alone is no longer sufficient to develop the city; urban planners and municipalities have to apply novel participation practices in the face of contemporary problems. While there is a lack of consensus regarding one unifying definition of co-creation, it can be described overall as a process that prioritises the participation and involvement of a range of actors with the intent to establish collaborative creative solutions (Lindberg et al., 2020; Teder, 2019). As co-creation has become a popular concept in different sectors of society, its promise lies in breaking down hierarchies between local

government, the private sector, citizens, and other stakeholders (Leino & Puumala, 2021). Instead of being exclusively a top-down or bottom-up process, co-creation involves a multi-directional approach to providing creative solutions (Leino & Puumala, 2021). For instance, Teder (2018: 181) understands this multi-directional approach as a “new professional self-image that is accepting of the idea of shared authorship over ideation and design”. According to her (Teder, 2018: 103), “co-creation requires all participants - professional as well as non-professional to leave space for others to get involved and thereby share influence over the outcome”. This understanding of participants’ involvement in the co-creation process will be a focal point in our analysis of the ‘Inclusive Arctic Urban Space’ project organised by NODA. Conceptualising participation as co-creation has consequences for the roles available to urban planners, citizens, and other stakeholders. Teder (2018: 105) emphasises that the co-creation method implies a “coaching attitude towards those formerly called clients or users; these individuals should be instead considered as co-creators”. As part of this, planners, designers, and architects have to grow into a new role:

*“Apart from the traditional tasks of a technical and organisational nature, important features of this new role include: initiating and curating co-creation projects; involving non-professional participants in the creation process from the very beginning; providing design tools for the non-professionals, in order for their ideas and desires to take spatial shape; motivating and keeping spirits up when time and resources might be scarce; and assisting in trying things out at full scale and on site (i.e. full-scale prototyping) before final designs are agreed upon”* (Teder, 2018: 105)

She refers to her own empirical data from an urban laboratory where “co-creation and active, bodily involvement was a way of inviting a larger part of the population into an urban development process” by “acknowledging young children as active citizens with valuable perspectives on their environment” (Teder, 2018: 102).

Co-creation, as a form of participatory planning, has been adopted in connection with urban living labs, as in Teder’s (2018) example and open workshops, among other forms of participation (Leino & Puumala, 2021). As we are interested both in the qualities of public spaces and co-creation, we are also making use of the term *placemaking*, a concept, according to Teder (2018), that connects co-creation processes and the making of public spaces. Teder (2019), whose article focuses on the roles of professionals as well as participants’ experiences in co-creation processes, understands the overarching theme of these collaborative processes in shaping public spaces as placemaking. Her point is that “placemaking in public spaces implies engaging in the practice of urban planning and design beyond an expert culture” (Teder, 2019: 289). Such collaboration with other stakeholders

can then be described as co-creation. “Placemaking is a process that produces a new (or renewed) sense of place by connecting a space with the communities that inhabit it” (Manzini cited in Teder, 2019: 289); this can both include a reimagining of places that already exist or places that are being planned for (Teder, 2019). In the case of the ‘Inclusive Arctic Urban Space’ project in Hansnes, it is about the planning for a new public outdoor meeting place. According to Teder (2019: 290), “placemaking has the site and people scale as its point of departure, seeking to maximise the shared value of a place”. Therefore, jointly exploring and addressing needs for improvement by a group of mixed actors is central to inclusive planning; it is about the creative rethinking of public spaces. In Teder’s (2019) paper, she discusses that the extent to which citizen initiatives and involvement are possible depends on the way in which professionals work; thus, she emphasises that “it is in the open exploration of possibilities that designers and non-designers have to lay the foundation for co-creation” (Foverskov and Dam cited in Teder, 2019: 292). For this to succeed, she emphasises that “co-creation requires *all* participants - professional as well as non-professional to leave space for others to get involved and thereby share influence over the outcome” (Teder, 2018: 103).

A critical examination of the existing state ‘what is’ and a creative envisioning of an alternative future ‘what might be’ is part of a co-creative process to provide solutions to a specific challenge or need (Lindberg et al., 2020). These co-creative processes could mean the creation of a new public meeting place, as in the case of Hansnes, as well as the examples from our literature. These include the planning and building of a public sauna in Tampere (Leino & Puumala, 2021), and the production of knowledge from a local viewpoint on an urban infill (Leino & Puumala, 2021), or the co-creation of culture in Umeå (Hudson et al., 2017).

*“The city as such should be considered as something that can be collectively developed in a manner that seeks to combine the knowledge of professionals and locals alike, to produce spaces that are adaptive to the needs arising in said cityscape” (Leino & Puumala, 2021: 795).*

As co-creation itself is a method and a concept that has a relatively recent history within urban planning, it is worthwhile to highlight case studies on how co-creation is utilised and operationalised. The co-creation processes described in the articles further down vary in their intention, scope, and field in which they were applied, however, they are all relevant for the planning of public spaces.

The concept of co-creation has seen a particular increase in usage over the last decade; therefore, Leino & Puumala (2021: 785) point out that the: “rhetorical success of co-creation is undisputed”. Leino & Puumala (2021: 784) argues that with its “embedded promise of citizen engagement and participation, it is no surprise that the concept of co-creation has been picked up by public sector policymakers”. However, they emphasise that “as a *practice*, its success requires more critical analysis through an empirical exploration of the *implementation* and *impact* of co-creation and the interrelation between these two”. In one particular case, Hudson et al. (2017) scrutinise how co-creation was used when Umeå was awarded the title of European Capital of Culture (ECOC) in 2014. The co-creation of culture was central to Umeå's bid to be awarded the title ECOC. During this, Umeå emphasised the notion that both culture and city are best built by the inhabitants themselves (Hudson et al., 2017).

Co-creation came to be used as an uncontested concept; therefore, Hudson et al. (2017: 1538) argue that it is important to “scrutinise how the concept of co-creation is used and given meaning by looking at the way it is operationalised both by the city officials and by those engaging in cultural activities”. By studying how co-creation is understood and represented, as well as focusing on the power dynamics within such a co-creation process, they offer an important analysis of participatory processes in municipal planning. Hudson et al., (2017: 1539) point out that there has been a tendency within discourses on citizen participation “to gloss over the asymmetries of power in society and to regard all participants as participating on equal terms”. A significant finding of their research was that there were some diverging opinions as to whether the co-creation process was successful in regard to opening up the participation and collaboration possibilities within Umeå (Hudson et al., 2017). The municipality understood the process of co-creation as a complete success. Hudson et al. (2017: 1544) cite one city official that was echoing this sentiment: “We have had by far the smallest office in charge of a Capital of Culture year, this has been based on a method where everyone participated and delivered, and delivered amazingly”. However, from the participating actors’ view, “the idea that the ECOC should be based on voluntary participation turned into a contested issue during the year” (Hudson et al., 2017: 1545). The municipality stressed that ECOC was a collective project that was co-created by a wide range of organisations. There were no private individuals involved in this co-creation process (Hudson et al., 2017). According to the municipality's description, the municipality's role was “to support but not control” (Hudson et al., 2017: 1544). On the basis of a statement from an interviewee working in the cultural sector, Hudson et al. (2017) illustrate the discontentment regarding the opportunities to participate as well as the problematic issues concerning power relations made invisible:

*“[Umeå2014] was supposed to lead to an enormous investment in our activities [...] If I'd known that all those Open Source meetings meant was that all those engaged in culture in Umeå would work for free so that the city could get the title of Capital of Culture 2014, then I would never have set my foot there.”* (Swanström cited in Hudson et al., 2017: 1545).

Ultimately, Hudson et al. (2017: 1549) conclude that there were conflicting expectations as to what was meant by co-creation; “there was an ambiguity that prevailed concerning what co-creation is and who should participate in the co-creation of the Capital of Culture year”. Differences in power and influence were not explicitly discussed and taken into consideration (Hudson et al., 2017). In addition to this, the framework for co-creation was initiated from above by city officials and politicians, which also led to general dissatisfaction with the overall organisation of Umeå2014. An important point the researchers emphasise is that:

*“co-creation risks becoming an empty signifier, a vague concept that does not point to any actual or agreed upon meaning - something that becomes whatever it is filled with by its proponents”* (Hudson et al., 2017: 1552).

The case study from Umeå on the co-creation of culture, despite its potential for alternative forms of planning, has highlighted issues connected to power imbalances, diverging expectations, and different understandings of what co-creation means. Their paper has contributed to other critical voices scrutinising the objectives and usefulness of top-down led co-creation processes, thus leading to a risk that co-creation will represent more a trend of participation for participation's sake, rather than an avenue for a radical change within urban development (Hudson et al., 2017; Leino & Puumala, 2021). The issues which the paper highlights are applicable to co-creation processes in general. While the case from Umeå is not concerned with the creation of a physical place, thereby different from the topic of our thesis, it holds relevance for our thesis too.

To provide further insights into how different co-creation processes are utilised in urban planning cases we want to refer to additional examples from the Nordics. Leino and Puumala's (2021) article on *Applying co-creation for the promotion of participation in cities*, focuses on three empirical case studies in Tampere in Finland where co-creation has been used as a concept and method. In regard to the implantation and impact of these co-creative processes, we particularly want to highlight one case study in further detail: their study on the production of knowledge from a local viewpoint on an



urban infill in Tampere (Leino & Puumala, 2021). Cities like Tampere are starting to utilise co-creation platforms to tackle a range of challenging issues in connection with urban development; for instance, in the cases of Leino & Puumalas (2021) article, the city of Tampere was aiming to increase citizen participation and knowledge co-creation in a few particular areas (Leino & Puumala, 2021). The first case describes how the city of Tampere had run into problems developing new housing on an urban infill plot. The plot itself was not owned by the city but by the residents in the nearby housing collectives next to the urban infill area (Leino & Puumala, 2021). Previous planning processes in the area had not been fruitful as city planners and officials had not made any efforts to take into account the wishes and opinions of the local residents. This sort of traditional top-down planning was not well received by the residents and ultimately led to a general distrust of the city planning department (Leino & Puumala, 2021). In light of this apprehension, the city first needed to create better contacts with the residents who owned the land to plan for the urban infill project. As the prior contacts had been weak and the city lacked methods and tools to deepen the relationship with the residents meaningfully, a group of researchers, including the authors of this paper, were approached by the city for suggestions (Leino & Puumala, 2021). A need for more inclusive and participatory planning was identified. Thus, a co-creation process was initiated to understand and plan for the future of the area and the neighbouring housing collectives instead of top-down and hierarchical planning (Leino & Puumala, 2021). In this context, the co-creative process clearly emerged and evolved from a need for a change in how the municipality did the urban planning in Tampere. Through continuous contact and dialogue, which is a key feature of co-creation, the city and the researchers overcame the residents' initial distrust, and people started to participate more frequently in the co-creation process. During the co-creation workshops, the researchers were taking on the role of mediators, and the experts from the city were partaking in discussions on a range of different topics together with the local residents on the possible future of the urban infill area (Leino & Puumala, 2021). Engagement from the residents took on different forms. For instance, some were taking the city planners and researchers for walks to nearby areas, and others brought materials in relation to possible ideas for the urban infill area (Leino & Puumala, 2021). Based on this, the co-creative process facilitated all participants to grasp the variety of meanings given to the area (Leino & Puumala, 2021). Overall, it was understood by all the participants, including researchers, city planners, and residents, that the urban living lab and the co-creation process were a success in inclusive planning. However, according to the researchers, soon after the workshops had ended, the city department seemed to have lost interest in the co-created knowledge, specifically when the “citizen’s co-created knowledge implied revisiting existing policies”, thereby clashing with predetermined urban infill goals by the city

(Leino & Puumala, 2021: 789). The results from the co-creative process seemed to conflict with the original goals as well as “not producing easily digestible findings for the official planning process”; thus, the co-created knowledge became secondary to them (Leino & Puumala, 2021: 789). The different city departments neither discussed the results of the co-creative workshops nor was the co-created knowledge analysed from the perspective of a possible novel collaboration between the city department and other actors (Leino & Puumala, 2021). Consequently, the researchers concluded that “co-creation is ill-suited for strictly outlined planning processes that have predetermined objectives” (Leino & Puumala, 2021: 789). Openness and change lay at the heart of this co-creation process, but in the end, the public sector actors were having difficulties adopting an organisational model that relies on the engagement of other stakeholders, such as the local residents.

## Arctic Planning - How to Live with Snow and Darkness?

In the previous paragraph, we have described how the concept of co-creation has been utilised in two different cities in the Nordics. As our research case is located in the Arctic, we would like to shortly highlight another co-creation process from Kiruna, also located in the Arctic which focuses on its location and place identity. In Lindberg et al. (2020) article, they describe how co-creation can facilitate the renewal of an Arctic town (Lindberg et al. 2020). By comparing three cases of co-creative processes for place innovation, Lindberg et al. (2020) reveal how these studied cases have made use of Kiruna’s centre’s relocation as an opportunity to make the city more attractive to residents and visitors. Specifically, they describe how the envisioned solutions resulting from the co-creation process innovatively exploit Kiruna’s identity as an Arctic town characterised by, among others, the harsh winter climate, vast natural surroundings, and traditional extraction industries. The envisioned solutions of the different co-creative processes, which included local actors, i.e. residents, entrepreneurs and civil servants, incorporate categories for inclusive urban design that promote Kiruna’s winter setting and natural surroundings and harness Kiruna’s urban potential during all seasons (Lindberg et al. 2020). The results from the study by Lindberg et al. (2020) on co-creative place innovation underline the potential to harness the Arctic and rural characteristics to promote urban attractiveness and public well-being, thereby increasing the liveability within Kiruna. One of their informants describes this as such: “We should keep what’s best with Kiruna and develop it further. I don’t want the town to become a Stockholm wannabe” (cited in Lindberg et al. 2020: 459).

The close relationship to nature is an essential element in settlements in the Nordic countries. Arctic settlements, such as Hansnes, are distinguished through a set of environmental characteristics: winter darkness, low temperatures, and long-lasting snow and ice (Hemmersam, 2021a; Costamagna et al., 2019). When it comes to urban planning in the Arctic, environmental factors have to be considered when planning for public spaces. In the introduction, we have already highlighted our focus on public urban spaces and co-creation processes and the significance we think they hold in shaping attractive and liveable places. The question is, what does planning for public urban spaces in the Arctic actually entail? Should public spaces be planned and designed differently compared to places with other climatic conditions? For the public to use urban spaces, there is a need to tailor them to fit the areas in which they are placed, addressing different issues or needs in that specific area. While Arctic cities belong to different countries and vary when it comes to size, urban planning regimes and economy, most of them share northern characteristics, such as ice and snow cover, winter darkness and remoteness (Hemmersam, 2021a). We have referred to a case from Umeå in Northern Sweden that shares lots of similar environmental characteristics with places in the Arctic. In another case from Umeå, Costamagna et al. (2019) analyse and explore the questions on how urban planning relates to outdoor public spaces in cities with a harsh winter climate, as well as the issue of how to make outdoor urban public spaces more liveable during the winter. The case from Umeå on the relation between urban structure and the use of public spaces during the winter season is also relevant for consideration in a place like Hansnes. Qualities and characteristics that define good public spaces include issues of “accessibility, sociability, as well as activity and use” (Costamagna et al. 2019: 135). Umeå’s winter climate affects how people experience the city, determining the quality, pleasure and comfort of public spaces (Costamagna et al., 2019). Thus Costamagna et al. (2019) argue that cities that experience subarctic/arctic climate should develop a systematic approach to design and plan public spaces in accordance with the climate to make them more liveable during the winter (Costamagna et al. 2019). Their findings include general and broad climate-related considerations, such as creating public spaces that provide shelter from wind, maximising solar access, but also the issue of managing snow in outdoor spaces (Costamagna et al. 2019). In the case of Umeå, the studied places are not particularly designed with the climate in mind, as the common sentiment echoed among interviewees was mostly that urban spaces “were really nice and/ or beautiful ‘in the summer’”, but rather dull during the winter (Costamagna et al. 2019: 145). Costamagna et al. (2019: 144) conclude that the design of the urban spaces in Umeå “suggests an assumption that the people of Umeå would rather stay inside during the colder parts of the year”. Their findings include that:

*“design elements that encourage encounters and lingering in the urban spaces during the warmer periods were removed during the cold season without the provision of other such elements more suited to the colder climate”* (Costamagna et al. 2019: 144).

Their study demonstrates that when urban public spaces provide pleasant environments by providing sufficient shelter and seating, “they will also be used in winter time and social encounters take place regardless of the season” (Costamagna et al. 2019: 145). The close relationship to nature is an essential element in settlements in the North. In Umeå, for example, there are places designed for winter use in its surroundings, such as ice-skating rinks, downhill ski slopes and prepared cross-country skiing tracks (Costamagna et al. 2019). However, Costamagna et al. (2019: 144) emphasise that “while these facilities are an important part of outdoor life, they serve a different purpose than the urban spaces”. They further elaborate on how: “recreational public environments are a complement to, not a substitute for, urban public space” (Costamagna et al., 2019: 144).

## Conceptualising Urban-Rural and Centre-Periphery

In our thesis, the case studies from our literature, as well as the Tromsø 2021 project, are from urban settings, however, the Hansnes project in 2022 is set in a place much smaller than the other examples. Therefore, it is worthwhile to reflect upon how urban and rural can be understood in the context we are working in. Throughout our thesis, we are making continuous references to the ideas of *urban*, and *rural*, and the ideas of *centre* and *periphery*. Overall, “it is common to see the northern rim of Europe as a periphery; for most people [...] the North is far away”, as Nyseth and Viken (2009: 229) point out; this would apply to both Tromsø and Hansnes as a place. “Periphery is defined in relation to the centre or core, not the opposite”; the periphery is a loaded term whereby a whole set of characteristics is attributed to geographically peripheral areas, according to Nyseth and Viken (2009: 229). “Questions of distance, population density, power as well as degree of modernity” are part of the symbolism and semiotics attached to the term (Nyseth & Viken, 2009: 229). In Munkejord’s (2009) chapter on *Reinventing Rurality in the North*, she describes how in the context of Norway, “the North has traditionally been constructed to a North-South axis, with ‘south’ as the centre of power and decision-making, and ‘north’ as a suppressed and exploited backyard” (Kraft cited in Munkejord, 2009: 204). Munkejord further contends that there are

symbolic differences between rural and urban. According to her, the symbolic dichotomy “is often interpreted as providing an unequal status; the urban as the normal, the rural as deviance, the urban as modern, the rural as traditional” (Munkejord cited in Nyseth and Viken, 2009: 229).

Northern Norway as a whole has often been described within a discourse “emphasising smallness, periphery, nature and tradition” as well as a description of out-of-datedness and simpleness (Kraft cited in Munkejord, 2009: 204). According to Paulgaard (2008: 52), this “is not just a Norwegian or Northern Norwegian phenomenon: it has to do with the hegemonic understanding of the distinction between the civilised centre and the more backward and primitive periphery”. On the basis of her field study among young people living in coastal communities in Finnmark, however, she describes how this centre-periphery dichotomy is a dynamic and relational process (Paulgaard, 2008). For instance, she describes how young people in a place called Båtsfjord distinguish themselves from young people living in another place in the vicinity called Berlevåg (Paulgaard, 2008). From the perspective of the young people in Båtsfjord, “their own place is much larger and more *modern* than Berlevåg” (Paulgaard, 2008: 54). In another case, Paulgaard (2008: 54) describes how young people from Honningsvåg characterise other people living only a few kilometres away as “de ville bak fjellet’ (the wild ones behind the mountain)”. In both cases, the concept of ‘modern’ and ‘up-to date’ is used in contrast to that of ‘outdated’ and ‘the less civilised other’; Honningsvåg and Båtsfjord become a ‘town’ and a centre and the other places the periphery. The young people in both places “live in the periphery in relation to national and international centres but in a local context, the situation is experienced otherwise”, as Paulgaard (2008: 54) points out. Torill Nyseth (2017: 59) contends that “Arctic cities can be seen as an urban paradox, challenging what we know and think of what urbanity means”. Other researchers have also dealt with the concepts of urban and rural in the context of the Arctic. Hemmersam (2021a) in his book *Making the Arctic city*, questions the notion of seeing urbanity as antithetical to the Arctic. This is also elaborated through Munkejord’s (2009) empirical examples from Vadsø in Finnmark. She explains how “rurality is reinvented by her informants in such a way that what is popularly referred to as rural and urban meanings and dimensions are perceived as interrelated rather than opposed” (Munkejord, 2009: 204). Based on her fieldwork, she highlights how many living on the northern rim, in a rural district, live a rather urban life (Munkejord, 2009) thereby emphasising the nuances within the concepts of rural and urban.

Throughout this review of the connection between the different terms, equal characteristics are found between ‘urban’ and ‘central’ and ‘rural’ and ‘peripheral’. Centre-periphery and urban-rural

are intimately connected in their conceptualisations, overlapping in their symbolic meaning. To each concept, there are a set of particular characteristics attached. However, to define a place as either central or peripheral, urban or rural, relational aspects have to be considered. The description of the relationship between the young people of Båtsfjord and Berlevåg exemplifies this relationship between the concepts. Here we see how being rural or urban, peripheral or central, is based on their own perception and relationship to the surroundings. These perceptions are based on the context in which they exist. It then becomes relevant to understand these perceptions to understand how locals perceive their own situation to grasp the identity of a place. We are aware that while the concepts are interconnected, they are not synonymous. Central and peripheral can be connected to distance, without regard to other factors, whereas urban and rural can not. Similarly, we will use the terms in the analysis not as synonyms but as relational terms; thereby, we draw lines between being central and urban, and being peripheral and rural. Rural and urban will function as a means of identifying differences between one place and another, in this case, Hansnes and Tromsø, while the centre-periphery dichotomy will function as a tool to understand the people's perceptions of Hansnes and how they define their area. The understanding of the urban-rural as being relational, is further used to define Tromsø and Hansnes in relation to each other. This distinction is based on the relational properties of scale and size. Tromsø is then referred to in this thesis as a city, the urban, and Hansnes is referred to as a town, the rural.

## Analytical Considerations

The terms and concepts described in this chapter will provide the basis for how we analyse our data in our three analysis parts, chapter 4, chapter 5, and chapter 6. Analysing the data through this framework provides us with means of understanding the processes by NODA. Furthermore, it enables us to conduct a more in-depth analysis of Hansnes in relation to these processes. Not all concepts described in this chapter are related equally to the different parts of the analysis. Co-creation is mainly applied to the analysis of NODA and the processes, and the centre-periphery dichotomy is mainly used in the analysis of Hansnes. The description of Arctic planning is used in both but is expressed differently according to the research topic. In the chapter on NODA, we use Arctic planning as the background for understanding their focus on this subject. In the analysis on Hansnes it is used as background for why it is important to understand how Arcticness is present in Hansnes. In chapter 6, all findings in the two previous analysis parts, chapter 4 and

chapter 5, will be used in a discussion, drawing on all sections of the theoretical framework. Still, we argue that the different concepts and terms should be seen as a combined basis for our research, seeping through the entirety of the thesis as well, as they have been used as our basic understanding and entrance to the field.

## Chapter 3 - Engaging in the Field

The following chapter will introduce the exploratory methodological approach used to gather data for this thesis. These include observation, interviews, and mapping of the field, all in relation to conducting a field study to gather information on Hansnes as a place. First, we will introduce observation and interviews, as well as how we got inspired to use and mix these in our approach. Then we will introduce our initial mapping of the field, which helped us structure our methodological considerations. Hereafter a more thorough walkthrough of our field trips will be presented. It will incorporate more or less detailed aspects of our three field trips. Since the mapping was our initial research of the place, it functions as the first method used for this research before accessing the field through observation and interviews. Still, we have decided to place it after the descriptions of observation and interviews as we find it important to explain these aspects in order to understand how our initial mapping exercise structured them.

Furthermore, while the fieldwork was conducted after our mapping, our timeline more closely resembled that of the structure presented here in this chapter: researching ways of understanding a place, deciding on which methods to use, mapping the field to gain knowledge on how to structure, and then conducting said research through our field trips. As such, the structure is reminiscent of the thought process, not through the use of methods but through the realisation of how we wanted to use them. Concluding this chapter, we will reflect on our role as researchers in the field as well as how the data we have gathered has helped us understand and respond to the overarching problem formulation.

It is important to mention that the data collected through the methods presented here will mainly be featured in chapter 5, the analysis of Hansnes. We concern ourselves with the study of a place, Hansnes; we relate primarily to the data of methodological approaches that help us define this. Herein lies our primary data collection. Therefore, it is also here that we focus this chapter on methods and how we used them. As we also focus on a process that unfolds in Hansnes, our data collection contains elements to support an analysis of this as well. The data to understand the process is based on various meetings and documents associated with NODA and their past, as well as current process. These are descriptive documents of either the processes or the vision of NODA and will be used as such. Since initiating contact with NODA at the beginning of our research, we have had several informal meetings with them in an attempt to gather information on



the process to be explored. Through this, we further learned how the process in Hansnes has been delayed several times. This, in turn, means changes to, for instance, the timeline of how the process is planned. Due to these changes, we have included several timelines into our documented descriptions to provide the most accurate presentation, noting these changes as detailed as possible. Online and publicly accessible websites and private email correspondence with NODA contribute information to the analysis of NODA.

## Observation

To enter the field of research, we made use of observation as one of our primary methods. The first step was then to figure out how to structure our approach. To investigate how observation can be used to explore a place, we looked into strategies for similar approaches to similar research projects. We have limited our research into how observation can contribute to our data collection; thus, we focused on examining academic articles researching urban spaces.

Observation as a method of data collection has been widely used in ethnographic studies, connecting spatial circumstances with the experienced world around us. Observation is a way for us to access the lived space. “The core method for studying everyday life in public spaces is direct (yet discreet) observation of behaviour, with a particular focus on how it relates to spatial features.” (Stevens, 2014:279). It is a way to identify the links that connect people's behaviour with the physical conditions of a space. Thereby we get to form a deeper understanding of how the spaces can affect the people as well as how the people affect the spaces (Stevens, 2014: 280). Two aspects of observing the space would then be required. We would need to study the physical environment and how it is used. To observe space is not merely observing the physical environment. According to Klaske Havik and Kristen van Haeren, in their study ‘A story of three’, a way to access these aspects of a space is through the examination of the ‘atmosphere’ (Havik & Van Haeren, 2016). The article is a product of an analysis made of three different neutral spaces in Rotterdam. They sought to research the effects of placing an architecture installation in an unused space. How would it affect the atmosphere of the place? In their article, they state that atmosphere is made up of: “[...] the assemblage of both subject and space, is the coming together of objective, spatial and material arrangements, and the embodied, perceiving subject” (Havik & Van Haeren, 2016: 6). The atmosphere is then a product of the observed, physical environment and the felt and perceived environment. We as individuals can observe the objective space but will simultaneously apply our own perceptions onto this. From this, we can derive that the atmosphere of a certain space should

be observed through ‘being there’. If the atmosphere of a space, or the observation of this, is dependent on how we perceive it, it would require our presence to research it. We need to put ourselves in the situation to feel the atmosphere. The approach then relied on nine characterizations of what makes the atmosphere of a space. All are related to physical or felt environment, such as sound, temperature, and material (Havik & Van Haeren, 2016). By doing this, Havik and Van Haeren identified the atmospheres of the different spaces, using this knowledge to produce the installations to fit the needs of each space. The term atmosphere will not be used in the analysis of Hansnes. However, our approach builds upon this understanding of spaces as constituted by the physical and felt environment, rendering the approach described by Havik and Van Haeren relevant for our research.

While this provided information on a way for us to access the physical and felt dimensions of Hansnes, it fell short in the observation of usage of space. What this approach lacked was the focus of the people. Furthermore, it was too set on the architectural aspects of space, neglecting the social. We needed to incorporate the people and their use of the space, to understand how to proceed with the research. For this, we went back to the study by Quentin Stevens, ‘Public space as lived’ (Stevens, 2014). According to him, social life and the use of public spaces are difficult to capture; nonetheless a critical aspect of what makes a public space. He presents various ways of attaining this data, one of them through photographic and written fieldnotes, allowing the researcher to document happenings as they are, combining the visual aspect and the written to get a more elaborate idea of the experiences. The duality of having both helps the researcher explain the field more in-depth (Stevens, 2014).

Since our field of research is not confined to a single space but rather the whole of Hansnes, we would not be able to limit ourselves to only a select few. Through the initial mapping of the space, we identified our focus points for observation and interaction, although the space between these areas would be just as valuable as a source for understanding Hansnes. The identified places of focus will be explained more in detail further down. Thus we wanted to structure our observation studies in a manner that would include this space. As a suitable method, we decided on utilising the act of walking. By moving between the different places that make up Hansnes, we would be able to document data on the physical environment and the perceived or felt environment. This includes social interaction, usage of space, feelings conveyed by the spaces we were in, as well as the physical attributes and how they affected us and the space—all at the same time.

The act of walking as a method for engaging in a field is not uncommon in the sense that multiple studies concerned with understanding a place have been using this to explore a place. Stevens

(2014) presents a partly unstructured, critical wandering method through the urban space to be researched. Peter Hemmersam and Andrew Morrison (2016) research landscapes through transect walks. Henrik Schultz (2016) provides insight into using experimental walking to identify particular places. All are working with different variations of walking as a method for accessing a field. Stevens argues that walking can allow the researcher to develop data related to in-depth knowledge of urban space's sensory and social aspects. He states that the way we walk can be directly linked to our experiences of the research site. By letting ourselves walk with an open and easily distracted mind, we get closer to this specific space-related knowledge, relating to the emotional ambience of space (Stevens, 2014). We get the social, the physical and the sensory aspects by observing, participating, experiencing, feeling and letting ourselves 'get lost' in the space.

Hemmersam and Morrison (2016: 33) argue that while walking can do all of the above, it simultaneously “[...] enables serendipitous discovery, which is not just random encounters and events, but the activation of knowledge and theory in the individual and in a group of researchers”. Walking as a method allows for reflections by us as we walk, adding an extra dimension to the seemingly random direction of the walking itself. The simple and uncoordinated nature of the method makes this possible by letting the researcher engage with the walked space, aware of the participatory aspects, the participation in the field, as well as the intent to research (Hemmersam & Morrison, 2016). Similar notions are stated by Schultz (2016), while he explores the uses of experimental walking to identify places. The flexibility of the approach is vital for him as well. By staying open to change, we get to explore the place we research and experience aspects of it that we would not have found otherwise. We get a chance to discover the unknown. Especially for a place like Hansnes, a place we ourselves know very little about, it would then be vital to let ourselves be directed by chance in the area we walk.

Walking allows us to feel and explore the space in question as a whole. It allows us to participate, analyse, and glimpse the overall qualities of a city, not just its different spaces (Schultz, 2016; Stevens, 2014). Furthermore, an interesting conclusion by all of the articles on walking was that the act itself, the research itself, was more valuable than the data collected when it came to an understanding of the places or spaces in question (Schultz, 2016; Stevens, 2014; Hemmersam & Morrison, 2016). Especially Hemmersam and Morrison emphasise this discovery:

*“It was the mapping activity itself – not the mapping data or an expressive map product – that was ultimately important in the course of development. This was enabled by what may broadly be termed the serendipitous and emergent dimension of our approach that triggered connections between physical, visual or ephemeral occurrences, community and stakeholder perspectives, and the individual and collective knowledge*

*and theory apparatus of the researchers – in the form of narratives that made sense – and helped us make sense of place.”* (Hemmersam & Morrison, 2016: 34)

Understanding a space is not solely formed by the data collected through notetaking and photography, but equally, through the act of the method itself; this understanding will figure as part of our research too. The data does not only consist of the obtained physical data but also the reflections done along the way. That said, notetaking and photography are a vital part of the data we collect through observation, as was explained by Stevens (2014), and this method of gathering data will be utilised as the main referencing system for our research. Notetaking is then done with a mixed focus on both the observed physical environment, the way we felt walking the space, the usage of space that we observed and the discussion we had along the way. Photographs were taken throughout the field trips to back up the written data and help us recall and visualise the feelings and observations as well.

Due to time limitations on the thesis, we realise that a full investigation like the one conducted in each of these articles would not be possible. Despite this, we have structured our research partially on the approach to walking since we find it overall to be useful for our research. We want access to the lived space, we want physical and sense-based observations to be present, and we do not want to be confined to a stationary state. This exploratory method of walking incorporates the needed aspects and does it in a way that allows for the flexibility we seek to apply. As stated, we did not know much about Hansnes prior to our research, and as such, it could prove fruitful to keep an open mind, allowing ourselves the benefits of flexibility in our research.

Our approach to observation is then based on all these aspects, as mentioned above. We wanted to walk the area, feel the atmosphere, observe the usage of space, and interact with the field flexibly to allow us to discuss and learn simultaneously. We began this observation study by identifying some key points in Hansnes through our mapping, as briefly touched upon earlier, but kept the overall planning of our walk to a minimum. Since we wanted to incorporate interviews as an added data collecting method, these identified areas proved useful as research sites.

## Interviews/Conversations

Interviews as a means to gather data have been used widely for all kinds of research. It is a varied and versatile approach, as it can be tailored to fit almost any qualitative research concerned with the human world (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The qualitative research interview consists of

various branches, each concerned with gathering different kinds of knowledge. This contributes to the overall versatility of the interview and stems from a notion that the approach should be tailored to the needs of one's research. There is no right way of conducting an interview, “[...] the appropriate mode of interviewing depends on the topic and purpose of the interview, on the interview subjects and the epistemological conceptions of knowledge sought.” (Kvale, 2011: 76). Since our purpose is to gather knowledge on what values are tied to Hansnes as a place by the people we meet, we should structure our approach accordingly.

Interviews have its strength in enabling the researcher to get a unique view into the particular perceptions that people associate with a given subject, inaccessible through any quantitative data collecting methods (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Trying to understand a place would relate to the experienced atmosphere as described in the section on observation. Nevertheless, while the atmosphere aspect of the observation study would rely on our own perception, the interviews would relate to the perception of the place by the people inhabiting it. Getting a hold of this data can be done in different ways. For the doctoral thesis “Hello Stranger” by Sverre Bjerkeset (2021), observation and interviewing were combined to understand the interaction between people in two public spaces in Oslo, Norway. The approach was structured with interaction in mind, and it relies on a similar objective as we planned for; understanding personal perceptions of a given subject. For Bjerkeset (2021), the informal interviews carried out were meant for understanding the informants' experiences of interacting with strangers in the public space. This then allowed him to discuss how different circumstances and environments can significantly affect the chances of interaction between strangers in public spaces. He practised interviews as part of his main focus on observation (Bjerkeset, 2021).

The informal interviews then served as a contribution to the differences observed in the two public spaces by adding a level of public perception to the data gathered. While we wanted to utilise a similar approach, having observation as the main entrance to the field and using interviews to grasp Hansnes better, we found that being stationary in just a few spaces would not be beneficial for us. As mentioned in the section above, we found that walking the streets and spaces of Hansnes could prove to be fruitful in our specific case. For another perspective on how to research spaces based on an approach utilising observation and interviews, we relied on the thesis by Carley Rickles (2019), ‘What is leftover - The residual space’. In her thesis Rickles (2019) seeks to understand the value and importance of residual space in the urban context they inhabit, using Atlanta in Georgia, USA, as her case. For this, she used methods of observations, walking and experiencing the different areas she identified as residual space. Rickles’ (2019) focus was on observing and

participating in the different spaces, but as she was there, people would approach her, allowing her to initiate what she describes to be informal interviews. This, in turn, gave her (2009: 48): “[...] greater insight on the experience of living on and in-between space”. Once again, the interviews acted more as a side note in the research design but proved to be effective in allowing for a more profound emergence into the field of research, similar to what Bjerkeset (2021) experienced. Many examples of research into something spatial can be identified, done based on a combined observation-interview approach.

Furthermore, multiple research papers read for this thesis have a similar focus. We have chosen to focus mainly on these two, as they combine two important aspects that we want to illuminate when conducting our research into Hansnes: the values connected to a place, such as Rickles (2019) aims at uncovering, and the kind of interactions happening in the place, as Bjerkeset (2021) researches. Even with some clear differences in their end objective, we found these highly relevant for our research. With Bjerkeset (2021) examining two demarcated public spaces and Rickles (2019) researching the space between spaces, they research quite different subjects than us. We are not confined to a specific area in that we try to grasp Hansnes as a whole, but we are still trying to understand a defined space. Combining these two approaches of incorporating interviews into observation could then create the basis for our further research. Thus, letting us gather data on something more tangible than residual space but broader than an already established public space. With that in mind, we structured the interview approach to provide the data on how people perceive, experience, and, most importantly, talk about Hansnes as a place.

Similar to both articles mentioned in this section, we wanted interviews to add to the data collected through observation. The two sets of data should be combined to help us establish an understanding of Hansnes. Due to a more limited time frame than the above-mentioned articles, our approach to interviewing was to be part of our walking, allowing us to conduct several methodological approaches simultaneously. While this decision was made due to a limited timeframe, we found it would provide an additional added aspect to our walk. Instead of limiting ourselves to only our observations and discussions, we would use the knowledge gained along the way to add to our observations, learning from the interactions with the field and the people we met. Furthermore, we wanted the interviews to be informal to the extent that they allowed us to get the information we sought while still allowing for more spontaneous and flexible conversation. Even though we rely on the above-mentioned article for inspiration on how we could implement the method in our fieldwork, we refrain from calling it *interviews* in the research, but rather refer to

it as *conversations*. The reason for this is that the term conversation better defines the loose, spontaneous and unplanned manner in which we wanted to initiate the conversations in the field. While some did resemble interviews in the way that they were geared towards a certain kind of knowledge, most became more of a conversation in passing or supplement as an underlying aspect of our observations. From here, we will then refer to these as conversations.

We created a checklist consisting of thematic questions of which we wanted to gain knowledge. These themes included person-related aspects, such as if they were local or outsiders, and themes connected to the location where the conversation took place and, in general, the spaces in Hansnes. After each conversation, we went through the information we got by discussing it amongst ourselves, using this checklist to allow for a more directed discussion. These field notes were then recorded in audio form as we had the discussions between ourselves. Some were made by the two of us, but when we had multiple conversations in a row, we had to divide and go through the information collected separately and individually, recording the field notes while the conversations were still fresh in our minds. Since the recordings were made with the notion that it should be our reflections, each got to obtain information from the particular conversation as well as analytical comments based on previous observations and information. They then function as field notes, including a mix of observations, field notes and reflections. They incorporate all aspects and then work side by side with the way we wanted to incorporate observation through walking as our main way of engaging the field, imitating a similar approach by allowing all aspects of our research to be noted as a whole instead of fragments of the setting. All recordings are transcribed and presented in Appendix 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. These recordings will further be used in quotations in our analysis, similar to that of an interview. Despite this, it is important to state that these are not quotations of interviews, but merely transcriptions of our own reflections, not personal statements from informants.

The method of observation still takes a central role in how we engage the field, and the conversations function as the supporting data, similar to the approaches we have described in this chapter. Still, an important aspect for us was to engage in the data collecting with an open mind, not searching for a specific kind of data, but embracing whatever we would meet. That said, we have a background that informs our research in the first place; our theoretical and practical knowledge that shapes our approach. Furthermore, as outsiders and foreigners, we carry another bias that would affect the way we observe and discuss the place. These aspects will be reflected further down in this chapter.

## Before the Research - “Mapping the Field”

As described, we wanted more knowledge about Hansnes before going there, to properly understand how to commence the fieldwork. To get this initial understanding of where and what we were setting out to explore, we made use of mapping as a method. This we did with the notion that the geographical circumstances hold great importance for an area. Being in the Arctic, in the rural, the size of the area, the form of the area, are all examples of this. Furthermore, the mapping was done to provide info on possible starting points relevant for initiating our field trips, as described in the two sections above. As such mapping as a tool, functioned as both a methodological approach and an analytical aspect, in that it helped us visualise the scope of the area and the fieldwork. The maps are presented where we found it fitting for visualising the case, when making a point. The maps are also in Appendix 1. Another aspect which was important for our initial understanding of the place was the research done to explain the case. That research helped provide the background of how to structure our methods alongside the mapping. In this section we will explain how and why we used mapping as a tool, as well as how it was used to structure the initiation of our fieldwork. Furthermore, we will briefly describe how relevant statistical datasets also contributed to shaping our understanding of Hansnes, before going there. The data collected will be incorporated in the description and analysis of Hansnes as a place.

Visualisation through mapping can be a great way to showcase the perspective of various aspects of our case. It helps us understand the scale and how the different parts of Hansnes are located and thereby how they can be related to each other (Bjerke et al., 2017). This overview was useful when talking to inhabitants. Having some knowledge about the whereabouts allowed us to ask more in depth questions when approaching them as well as making us feel more at ease in the surroundings. This provided us with some feeling of safety which we believe made us much more approachable in turns. The mapping also functioned as a means of analysis. While creating the maps we get more and more understanding of the dimensions with which we work (Bjerke et al., 2017). As such the mapping helped us narrow down our subjects of research. All the maps were done in ArcGIS Online, a web based tool for using geodata to create maps of various types. All this provided an initial understanding or the background for our preconception of what we were going to conduct research on.



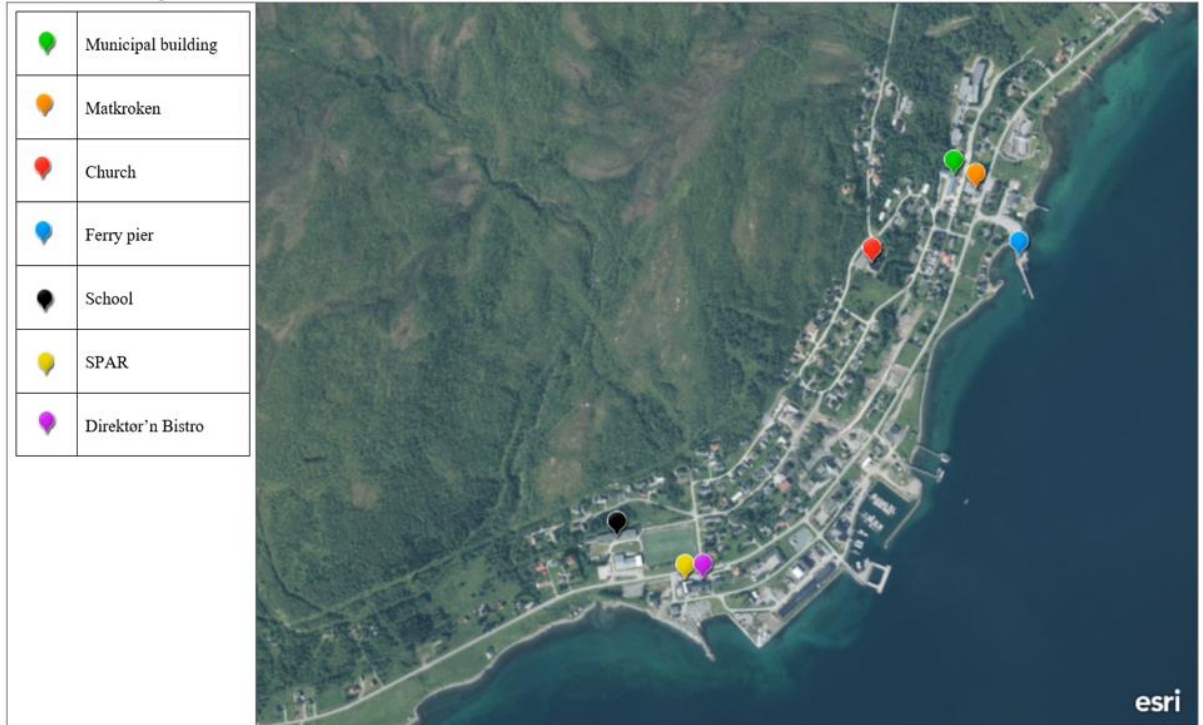
When producing maps several aspects are important to include in the process, depending on how and what we want to visualise. Aspects such as colours, scale, elements present on the map etc. are important for how they can be used. Furthermore a clear idea of what they are to be used for would then be required as well, for the maps to be able to provide the intended visual (Nilson, S., 2017). For maps that are to show very specific information of a location, we used a greyscale basemap and made the information we wanted to convey stand out in colour. This was done to clarify what information should be derived from them. These maps include the placement of Karlsøy Kommune on the map of Norway (Map 1) as well as Hansnes within Karlsøy Kommune (Map 2). For the maps that are zoomed in on Hansnes (Map 3) and Tromsø (Map 4), we wanted to provide a fuller perspective, showing the built environment versus green space, making the contrast stand out, while still having colours showing which is which. We chose a map showing the elevation of the landscape to convey the feeling of the landscape around the different places. Same measures apply to the maps showing size comparison (Map 5 & Map 6). For the maps showing Hansnes with either the data points for the identified locations (Map 7) or our routes when conducting our field trips (Map 8 & 9), we chose a satellite basemap. This we did to provide an element of the actual world in which we were to participate, providing as much recognizability as possible. What should be noted here, is that all satellite imagery we found through ArcGIS was done in summertime, meaning the map does not contain snow and therefore it is not a direct representation of our experience there.

Delving into the maps of Hansnes, we noted a few prominent locations. We noticed how it seemed to be the only settlement with any grocery shopping option of the island of Ringvassøya, making these a relevant ground for observation and meeting possible informants. Close by one of the supermarkets, Spar, we found Direktør'n Bistro, a local pub/bistro/takeaway place, bound to have some insight into the place as well as harbouring more possible informants. Finally we wanted to know more about the ferry pier, which we had found to be a major transit point in the municipality. Looking into data on the usage of the ferries there, it became apparent that that too would be a possible location for observation and talks as well. For the month of March, 9.014 passengers were registered to have taken the ferry from Hansnes. This shows us a frequent use of the ferry considering how Karlsøy Kommune is made up of 2.200 inhabitants in total. Alongside this the schedule of the ferries from Hansnes also suggests frequent use, by having fairly regular departures and arrivals throughout the day (Troms Fylkestrafikk, n.d.).

When considering how to go about our fieldwork, this was our starting point. We used this knowledge found through the mapping and the initial research of the place, to pinpoint locations for possible meetings with the locals. For instance around the supermarkets, the school, the

church, the municipal building and the ferry pier. The reasoning behind the supermarkets, Spar and Matkroken, the bistro and the ferry pier is explained above, while the choice of the school, the church and the municipal building were based on a notion that these would be key locations for people in Hansnes. We then decided to structure our methodological approach around these areas. Walking between our focus points and attempting to establish conversation with locals and travellers in and around these areas. The placement of these on the map of Hansnes is shown here:

#### Identified Important Locations in Hansnes



Kartverket, Geovekst, kommuner - Geodata AS

While we did not want to limit ourselves by making a predefined route to follow exactly, we decided to make an effort to visit each space on our trip, but allowing ourselves to be occupied by chance as we went along. This meant a semi-structured approach to walking as a method described in the section on observation.

## Field trips

We planned the fieldwork based on the above mentioned approaches to observation and interviewing, and with the initial mapping of the field in mind. In total we went to Hansnes three times. The first was a brief introductory field trip to help us structure the further research. The following field trips consisted of our combination of our above mentioned methods. All data

collected through these field trips are the basis of our analysis of Hansnes, alongside the knowledge gathered through the mapping and the initial research to understand Hansnes. The description of the fieldtrips is done through a narrative approach. We do this because we believe that the way we conducted the methods is a finding equally important as the actual data collected through the methods. Through the narrative description we seek to convey reactions to the field and how they influenced and changed the strategy of the approach along the way. Describing the happenings as they took place, accentuates the flexibility and thoughts put into the execution along the way, which we found vital for the approach.

The first field trip was primarily done as a way of gathering more info that would contribute to our initially formed understanding of the place. We were not going to conduct any of the earlier described methods, but were there to further establish our feeling of the place, so as to better structure the next trip. Due to the placement and limited connectivity of Hansnes, we went by car. Upon arrival, we went to see the different locations that we had identified from the mapping of Hansnes. The ferry pier was especially a focus point for this trip, as we were interested in finding out more about its role in Hansnes. We further noted how small the place was and found that walking the entirety of Hansnes would be possible throughout a day, allowing us to reach all locations identified and with time to wander as well. Driving through the town we noticed very few people in the streets. Additionally, hardly anyone was using the public space at the ferry pier. From our initial research we know that the ferry was used frequently by many people, therefore we saw the ferry as a potential arena for meeting people.

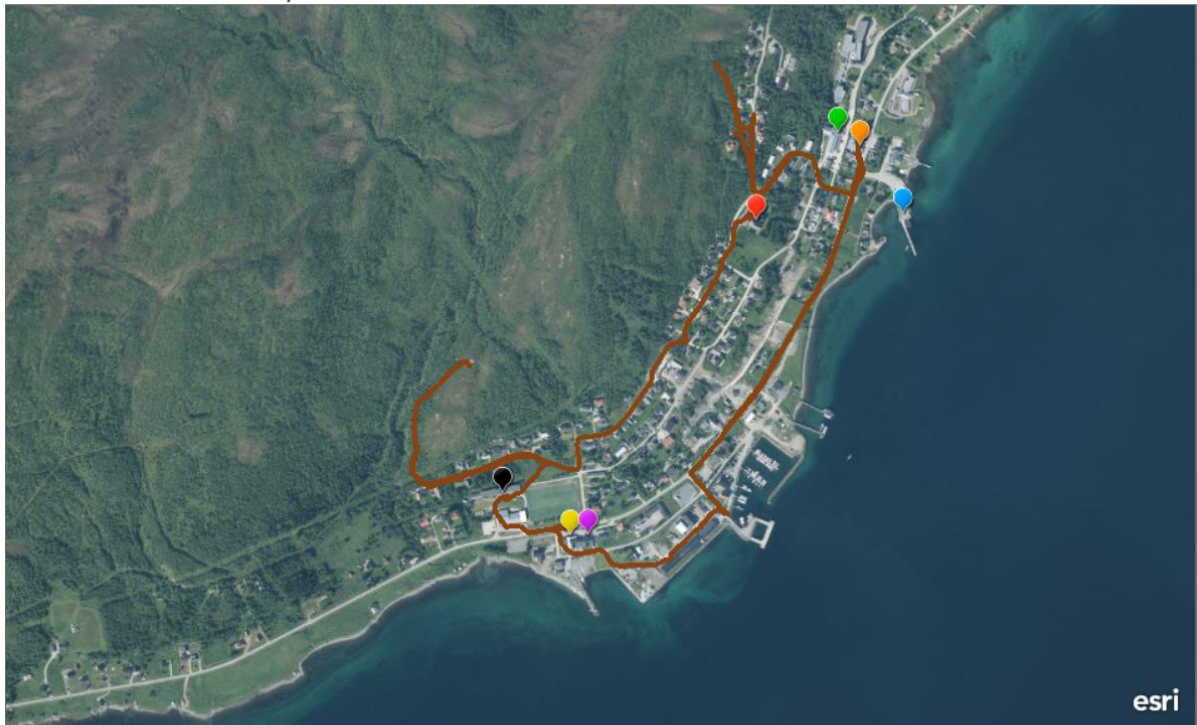
As such the first field trip helped us tailor the approach further to the site. The lack of people in the streets made us reconsider our initial approach to engaging people. We wanted to casually strike up conversation with people we met, but since we were not going to meet that many people, we decided to focus our attention on entering the different sites such as the supermarkets and the bistro. We decided that the walking and initiating conversations should be conducted over the span of two full days. One on a regular work day and one on a day off. This was to get a feeling of Hansnes in different settings and situations.

The next two field trips took place on Thursday 7th of April, and Wednesday 13th of April. Wednesday 13th was the day before the Easter holiday Maundy Thursday. A day where most Norwegians have a day off. Wednesday 13th was also chosen because we found there was to be a concert at the local pub, Direktør'n Bistro, which could prove to be a great setting for getting to feel the atmosphere of a day when Hansnes would be more lively than usual. It was also the day

where we had learned that a lot of Norwegians are going to their cabins for the holidays, meaning the ferry pier would potentially be teeming with people as well.

We walked the streets of Hansnes both days, collecting our data through conversations and observations, recorded as handwritten and audio notes. On Thursday 7th we focused our attention on getting more acquainted with the area, walking a route where we got around each of our initially identified locations (Appendix 1: Map 8).

#### Tracked walk in Hansnes, 7th March 2022



Kartverket, Geovekst, kommuner - Geodata AS

Again there were not many people using the outdoor spaces of Hansnes. Thus we decided to move inside to where we felt people would be, as we already considered after the first trip to Hansnes. This included the supermarkets, SPAR and Matkroken, as well as the municipal building. In the supermarket we talked to a number of people that we could easily talk to. Thereafter, we moved to the ferry pier, where less people were approachable. Most people would wait in their cars for the ferry, despite the weather being relatively nice. We decided to take the ferry as we had already contemplated it after the first trip. On the ferry we found in some ways difficult striking up conversation with people. The few people we talked to there were either foreigners that had a limited knowledge of Hansnes, or others who showed no particular interest in conversations. Once again we had to change the approach. For the next trip we would focus only on spaces in Hansnes and we would not take the ferry with the intent of meeting possible informants again. Throughout the field trip on Thursday 7th we wrote extensive field notes, registering observations, talks and

reflections.

Wednesday 13th we got to experience a completely different side of Hansnes. It was 'buzzing' with life. Walking the streets again, we had much more luck with getting to talk to people through the simple act of being there. For the third field trip, we began the research similarly as for the second, by walking our identified route. But soon we decided to keep to the areas where we found people to hang out, changing our walk to focus on the areas close by the ferry, the SPAR, the bistro and the main road. The recorded field notes proved much more versatile and we made use of them more extensively than previously anticipated. As such most field notes from Wednesday 13th are incorporated in the recorded note taking in relation to each conversation. From a few people we learned that skiing was a common activity for a lot of people in and around Hansnes. Deciding to go skiing we understood this to be an important part of the activities of people in Hansens. We were pointed towards local skiing tracks by a woman visiting Hansnes. After skiing we returned to the city centre, resting up in the car before the concert at Direktør'n Bistro in the evening. A local band was set to play at 8 which we had decided to attend. When arriving not many people were there, but slowly as the hours passed, more and more people of all ages showed up. The concert went on until late night and the festivities were still going when we left to sleep in our car. While all other encounters with the field were recorded based on a single conversation and with reflections connected to the situation, the recorded field notes from the concert included a more extensive reflection on the field trips as a whole.

## Reflections

Having to rethink and tweak the measures of our data collecting was a constant during our research, having considerably influenced our methodological approach. We started out with a preconceived idea of what methods could benefit our research. These were all methods that we had utilised before on other similar projects and which we had read about in papers with similar research designs as ours. During our field trips we met several issues that made us reconsider our approach. While the general methods did not change much, the way we conducted them did. The way we engaged with people, the way we talked about the place, the way we observed and participated in the place. All this was tried, reconsidered, and tweaked to fit the different circumstances and situations we met. The proper ways of engaging the field had to be flexible for us to gather the required knowledge of the place. We had already planned for some flexibility with the approach as it is described in the sections above, nonetheless, what we encountered in Hansnes was beyond what we accounted for.

It does not take many people in a small space to make it feel lively, however at the same time when no one else is around while walking the streets the same space can feel empty. What this implied was a restructuring in how to meet people in the field: One was to enter public and semi-public buildings like the bistro, the supermarkets amongst others. Another came from the notion that the ferry would be good for striking up conversations as a semi-social meeting place. Although we found that it was not ideal for encountering people who use the spaces in Hansnes.

But what we did expect was some sort of consistency in the use of outdoor spaces in Hansnes, based on our preconceived ideas of Hansnes resembling other rural communities. Both of us are from small places, relative to our respective countries (Vallekilde, 833 inhabitants, Denmark; Goslar, 50.554, Germany). For one of us Hansnes was expected to be a place that resembles what he came from in terms of size and makeup of the town. When walking through Hansnes it felt both bigger and smaller, due to the amount of retail services and public amenities, while still smaller in scale and population. Here we could really feel the urbanity that comes with being the centre of a municipal area. It amounted to a place that seemed comparable, but had a completely different culture and use. This greatly affected our pre-understanding of Hansnes, which directed our preliminary strategy. None of us had experienced a place like Hansnes in terms of research, it was both a novel experience in regard to scale and location. We were certainly outsiders. We did expect this, therefore we focused on gaining knowledge during our first field trip to help us structure our methodological approach. The first field trip did provide us with much needed insight for further research, we understood that such a process includes more than just having a 'quick look' around. Our experiences in the field echo Teder's (2018) sentiment on the difference between a physical location and an experienced place. She (2018: 27) argues it takes a user, an empirical subject, in order to turn a location on the map into a true place. This applied to us as researchers in the field, making sense of Hansnes as a place. Had we instead built our research solely on expert interviews, maps and readings, we would have not been able to gain the observations made by our engagement in the field. To constantly learn and adapt to the changing circumstances and scenery we engaged in provided us with a better understanding of the place. The data we collected were not just written parts and photographs but also consisted of our own experiences; while some notes were written down in our field notebook, others were more subtle and informed through us being in the field. Experiencing Hansnes allowed us to make changes, that in turn refined our methodological approach. The role of us as outsiders became apparent in the ways we had to adjust or approach, affecting the data we collected. Us in the position of the outsider, we believe that we bring a unique perspective to this research. Having a different conception of the space, we look at the space differently, react to it differently, interact with the surroundings differently and structure our

approach differently. Being outsiders in this place affected how people interacted with us, some were open to us approaching them, some others seemed more reluctant to interact with us, others again were particularly curious and initiated conversations with us. We embraced this role during our fieldwork, as it seemed to benefit our research purposes; we were recognisable through physical appearances and our language. Hansnes being such a small place would mean that people living there would easily recognise us not from there. Researching a place that we initially do not know much about, requires extensive investigation to develop a fitting research structure. Our finding of how we lacked knowledge of a place like Hansnes, to properly structure our approach, is an example of this argument. When entering a field for any kind of research, obtaining knowledge of it becomes apparent and this knowledge in turn strengthens the strategy of how to research it. That we would argue as a finding is just as important as the collected data.

The data connected specifically to Hansnes as a place, will not be generalisable, as it is specific to only that location and the circumstances in which they were gathered. However, the methodological approach, our reflections of these as well as our findings on how to research cases in relation to a process like the one by NODA does hold the possibility of being applied elsewhere. Based on the data collected we conduct an analysis into the challenges and consequences that arise in a translation of processes like the one conducted by NODA.

Our analysis of the data is connected to a specific research case and is thereby not generalisable. However, the problem formulation tries to unearth findings that could be applied to other similar processes in relation to translating co-creation measures from one specific setting to another. Furthermore, by describing the methods and what underlying research constitutes these, the measures we take in this research becomes testable by others as well.

## Chapter 4 - Analysis part 1:

### Co-creative Arctic Planning - NODA

Within the following chapter we seek to answer the first work question: “What is the ‘Inclusive Arctic Urban Spaces’ project and how does the process work within the concept of co-creation?”. We do this by first exploring what NODA is, the organisation in charge of the project ‘Inclusive Arctic Urban Spaces’. We will then describe the project in 2021 in Tromsø, including the ideas, the process and the end result. Subsequently we will introduce the plan for the prospective process in Hansnes, connecting the approaches from 2021 and 2022, the projects making up what NODA calls ‘Inclusive Arctic Urban Spaces’. We do this with the intent of understanding how NODA fits within the frames of co-creation and Arctic planning as they are described in Chapter 2. Conclusively in this chapter is a discussion, where we hold the vision and process of NODA up against these concepts as described in the theoretical framework.

#### What is NODA?

The urban space project in Hansnes that we are focusing on is arranged by the organisation NODA. It was founded in 2014 with the aim to advance the knowledge base in architecture and design in Northern Norway. Its foundation is connected to NODA’s aspiration of wanting to make a difference in how urban planning, arts, design and architecture is done in Northern Norway. One of NODA’s primary beliefs is to support and promote locally rooted knowledge and power in shaping one’s own region in the realm of design and architecture (Noda, 2022a). NODA focuses on educational, collaborative, and co-creational aspects within architecture and design in Northern Norway. “How does one envisage the development of Tromsø, and the region in general? What does it take to create good, sustainable solutions for the needs of the future?” was one of the initial questions that brought about NODA (Noda, 2015). As part of its efforts on citizen participation and collaboration within urban planning, the organisation wants to contribute to Northern Norwegian citizens gaining increased knowledge about design and architecture (Noda, 2021a). Thereby NODA hopes that local residents can contribute more easily to the exchange of opinions and participate in public debates, meetings, and other discussions where this competence is relevant and important (Noda, 2021a). An initial pilot project before NODA was officially



founded in 2014 confirmed the interest and need for a membership organisation and collaborative arena that takes care of, develops, mediates, and creates awareness around the field of design and architecture in northern Norway (Noda, 2015). Interest in Northern Norway overall has increased in the last decade due to a number of reasons, such as research in connection with climate change, new opportunities in marine industries as well as an increase in year-round tourism (Hemmersam, 2021a). While the North of Norway is at the centre of international interest, in order to work well with challenging current issues that relate to urban planning generally, locally based knowledge is needed to create functional and sensible solutions instead of relying on knowledge and competence acquisition from outside the region (Noda, 2022a).

This applies to architecture and design in the North, where it is crucial to harness the potentials that the region has to offer according to NODA. In the field of design and architecture NODA wants to promote those that live and work here, allowing them to contribute to decisions about how the region should be shaped (Noda, 2022a). As part of this effort for instance, NODA has started organising events that provide an informal arena for discussions about urban development issues in Tromsø. These events are called BarePrat, best translated as “just talk”, offering a low threshold for the local community to participate and provide an opportunity to discuss various urban development topics with local politicians, businesspeople, architects, and designers, among others (Noda, 2020a). Topics from previous talks have focused on collective housing, the liveability of Tromsø’s old neighbourhood as well as temporary urban spaces as strategy in urban planning (Noda, 2021b). The talks follow the same format each time, first the different topics are introduced after which the moderator takes over and opens up the conversation among the audience (Noda, 2020a). The approach of drawing on the expertise of professionals and committed actors as well the inclusion of all kinds of people with an interest in current issues connected to architecture, design and urban planning in the wider sense, influences all projects of NODA. Besides the empowerment of the local community, NODA aims to foster relationships and networks between the population, industries, and decision-makers thereby contributing to a more co-creational basis for development, innovation, and value creation in the realm of design and architecture in the North (Noda, 2022a).

Tromsø, which sometimes is termed the capital of the North, specifically is a knowledge cluster due to the location of national and international research centres, political organisations, as well as the university (Hemmersam, 2021a). There is a potential to make use of these favourable circumstances. To make use of this potential that the region has to offer it is absolutely crucial to work in close collaboration with designers, architects, the academic environments, administration, businesses, schools, and the voluntary sectors, among others according to NODA (2022a).

As already mentioned, a central pillar of NODA's philosophy of promoting people to shape their regions' future through architecture and design is based on diversity and user insight. This circles back to the questions on what it takes to create good, sustainable solutions; as well as how the people imagine the development of their respective towns, cities, and villages (Noda, 2021a). An attractive place that promotes liveability is a place where diversity is cherished, where everyone can feel that they have the opportunity to participate and their opinions and insights are valued. Good design and architecture can contribute to just this, according to NODA. Since the foundation of NODA in 2014, it has worked on several projects collaborating and co-creating with the local community, including and promoting the people who will use the place, building or product (Noda, 2021b). These include a wide range of workshops in design and architecture for children, teenagers and adults, organisation of regional conferences in addition to public festivals such as the Backyard Festival promoting a rethinking of public space usage (Noda, 2021b). One of NODA's goals is to think holistically about what architecture and design can do to shape sustainable communities. Over the years, NODA has been working with professionals in the fields of design and architecture, as well as businesses, politicians, but equally with ordinary citizens of all ages and from all occupations. In Tromsø NODA has collaborated with, among others, the North Norwegian Architects' Association, The Cultural Schoolbag (Den Kulturelle Skolesekken), The landscape architecture education at UiT and Urban Development's project «Where does Tromsø go?» (Noda, 2022a). This type of collaboration is important in order to be able to reach a broader and more effective force. As described here, this approach closely resembles elements presented in the theoretical framework when discussing co-creation and what it entails.

## Inclusive Arctic Urban Space Project 2021 - Tromsø

The current urban space project in Hansnes is based upon the project in Tromsø from 2021 that is part of a planned series of 'Inclusive Arctic Urban Space - A city for everyone'. The project was informed by the question on how public spaces in Arctic cities can become inclusive and safe so that all members of society experience an increased quality of life. (Noda, 2021c). The purpose of the project was to create more knowledge and establish more awareness on the different aspects of planning for public spaces in the Arctic. The desire was to organise a project that would increase knowledge and creativity around the co-creation of a new urban space in the Arctic. A particular consideration was taken on how public spaces function in the outdoors characterised by the Arctic weather and climate, sometimes seen as uninviting by visitors and locals alike. More knowledge is

needed about how good urban spaces are created and function, particularly in winter cities. Creating good public urban spaces becomes important for those who live and travel in the North, as well-functioning and enjoyable outdoor spaces constitute the city floor to explore and experience Arctic life (Noda, 2021d).

The project was meant to highlight the rethinking and reimagining of underused and underutilised spaces as outdoor spaces with great potentials and opportunities. The project connects to NODAs aims of promoting local communities to take part in the imagining of how public spaces can be shaped and developed, leading to a rise in liveability.

During the project period that lasted from January to August 2021, NODA arranged a number of events through seminars, conferences and workshops engaging different groups of people from Tromsø (Noda, 2021b).

This urban space project underlines NODAs educational, collaborative and co-creational approach within architecture and design. For instance, there was a particular emphasis on engaging children and young people through several hands-on, interactive and co-creative workshops, thereby shaping an awareness already in younger people on what it means to create urban spaces that are inclusive for everyone (Noda, 2022a). Their views, as well as ideas for the chosen area, were taken into account, which is located in front of Tromsø's main interchange between local high-speed boats, long-distance ferries, as well as interregional bus traffic. The location for this project, Prosnaset, was chosen beforehand by the municipality of Tromsø as it was identified to be an underutilised space, and the municipality had already made plans for it to be changed to something benefiting the community (Noda, 2021a). During the phases of the project different methodological measures were used, before the initiation of the public workshops there was a knowledge gathering phase in conjunction with professionals of architecture and design and community planners with knowledge of inclusive working methods and knowledge of the local specific conditions (Noda, 2021a). As mentioned above there was an emphasis on the inclusion of young people in the educational and co-creational workshops; however, adults too were involved in a creative design workshop (Noda, 2021b). For instance, a workshop was organised for people who only recently had moved to Tromsø in order to engage them with the topic of creating inclusive public spaces. The reason for this was to involve groups of people that before were often overlooked in public participation processes.

How to create attractive urban spaces that are not only sporadically used during the summer and can withstand the particular environmental conditions is an important part of NODA's current

project, 'Inclusive Arctic Meeting Places' too. Public urban spaces are the city's commons, and as the 2022 project particularly focuses on creating meeting places, one should think about how to succeed in creating attractive urban places in winter conditions. Winter conditions with ice and snow are a defining characteristic of the Arctic identity of places such as Hansnes. In the neighbouring municipality of Tromsø, where NODA organised their last urban space project in 2021, there is an ongoing discussion on how to plan with and for winter conditions in public urban outdoor spaces. Both of the leading newspapers in Tromsø have published articles which advocate for a rethinking of public space usage in winter. In one of the articles, Tone Myklevoll, leader of the municipal and urban development committee in the city of Tromsø, points out the issue of planning for winter conditions, namely public outdoor spaces that are attractive to use year-round as in the case of Umeå or Kiruna. The environmental conditions are part of the Arctic identity of Tromsø, but what is there to benefit from it she wonders (Myklevoll, 2020) She recognises how inaccessible a lot of the outdoor spaces are in the city centre for most of the year; politicians like her she acknowledges mostly adopt zoning plans with pictures where there is always sun and not so much as a snowflake - knowing that in reality there is a metre of snow for most of the year (Myklevoll, 2020). Public outdoor spaces are primarily designed for play and recreation when it is snow-free, and are turned into a snow dump for the rest of the year according to her (Myklevoll, 2020).

*'Are we forever doomed to sit inside and send longing glances and thoughts to 'those in the south' who can so easily enjoy their gorgeous and lovely parks and urban spaces throughout (almost) the whole year?' (Myklevoll, 2020)*

Myklevoll follows this up by saying that "[...] we can not do anything about the weather, but we can do something about the place where we are going to be" (Myklevoll, 2020). She stresses the point that up until now not enough effort has been done to "finding one's own style" in regards to Arctic urban development in regards to environmental conditions. Underlying this is also the planning for Arctic outdoor spaces, seeking to create inclusive, year-round, public urban spaces for play and recreation (Myklevoll, 2020). Marie Bergset, a professor of landscape architecture at UiT, echoes this sentiment and wonders how Tromsø can better utilise its urban spaces in times of low temperatures and snowfall (Bergset, 2021). In her article she reflects upon the benefits that instead of focusing so much on snow removal, could the snow become something good, something that gives Tromsø an *extra* quality (Bergset, 2021). Successful examples of rethinking urban winter planning, according to her, include the Borealis winter festival in Alta that makes use

of snow and shapes it to create temporary sheltered gathering places. Another good example of making use of the existing spaces of the city includes the Tromsø International Film Festival outdoor cinema, allowing people to use the public square as social spaces in the midst of the winter (Bergset, 2021). These kinds of reimaginings of public spaces, as well as small scale changes, contribute to a greater and more consistent liveability in each of the places all year around. By optimising the snow handling, the same money could contribute to more multifunctional Arctic urban spaces in the future, according to her (Bergset, 2021). In another opinion piece, a group of architects involved in a number of urban planning projects in Tromsø, describes their discontent in regard to a new proposed city centre plan (Haggärde et al., 2020). While the plan heavily emphasises Tromsø's Arctic identity and positions Tromsø as an Arctic capital, they note that the word snow is not mentioned once in the plan (Haggärde et al., 2020). Additionally, the word winter is not used to a significant degree, despite the city having a very prolonged winter season, with as much as 6-8 months of snow on the ground (Haggärde et al., 2020). Thereby, they question what the plan itself means by declaring Tromsø an Arctic capital; what then if not for the environmental conditions makes it particularly Arctic? (Haggärde et al., 2020).

Additionally, to create engagement with the ongoing project and promote a debate on how urban spaces in Tromsø should be designed, NODA invited a number of different people in Tromsø to write a series of articles relating to the creation of inclusive public spaces (Noda, 2021e). These were then published in the North Norwegian largest newspaper Nordlys and included local actors from academia, the public and the private sector as well as professionals with a background in design and architecture. This chronicle series is set in the context of an already ongoing discussion in relation to the urban planning of Tromsø, such as discussions on public access rights, art in the public sphere, as well as debates on the new planned cultural quarter that is the Norwegian Arctic University Museum (Haggärde et al., 2020; Steenstrup & Løkken, 2020; Ramberg & Romuld, 2020). Especially during the last 15 years Tromsø, due to its population growth has seen a notable increase in construction efforts, resulting in many new buildings along its shoreline. In connection with the ongoing redevelopment of large areas of Tromsø there has been criticism that not enough is being done to take into account the wishes and needs of the local residents in shaping these new areas, in particular in regards to public urban spaces (Noda, 2021a). One of such newly created places is Prostneset, the main ferry and inter-regional bus interchange that was built in the mid 2010s. However the public square in front of it remained somewhat bare and underutilised, therefore the hope was to implement a measure on a more permanent basis; creating a space that is lively and attractive, ultimately making a place where people want to stay (Widerøe, 2021). In

their part of the chronicle series three municipal planners from the city planning and culture department highlight the social function of public urban spaces. More people want to live and work close to the city centre, Tromsø as a city is becoming denser and more compact, underscoring the need for attractive public urban spaces (Romuld et al., 2021). They call attention to creating good meeting places, where people experience themselves as being part of a larger community, allowing for surprising meetings and the exchange of different ideas (Romuld et al., 2021). Anniken Førde (2021), a professor at UiT in community planning, argues similarly, noting the importance of creating places that allow for interaction between people. These places where people can connect both physically and socially with others they do not know are significant for the democratic participation in a diverse city (Førde, 2021). The city's residents need scenes and arenas where all voices can be heard; a place for dissent, demonstrations and also cohesion - freely and independently of political and economic connections, backgrounds and position, according to Førde (2021). The public urban spaces are the city's commons (Førde, 2021).

As part of the pre-project period before the actual workshops there was a clear emphasis on communicating the project and the general topic to the outside in order to nurture a wider discussion on inclusive outdoor spaces in the Arctic. The aforementioned chronicle series was one part of this, another example of this communicative and educational strategy, is the seminar organised by NODA in April 2021 on Arctic urban spaces with speakers from different Arctic regions. The international event was a digital and in-person event held in Verdensteatret, with the idea of learning from Arctic neighbours on creating inclusive urban spaces in predominantly winter cities (Noda, 2021d). The seminar was meant to both increase existing expertise and generate new expertise on local-specific factors that can be used in winter cities across the neighbouring regions in the Arctic, thereby fostering a connection between winter cities through mutual learning. One of the invited speakers for instance included a leader of a non-profit organisation from Quebec, Canada that focuses on increasing the liveability by rethinking cities through urban space projects. Other invited guests were from the public service sector and private companies from Sweden, Norway and Russia (Noda, 2021d). All of these events taken together, bringing people together, working together, proposing ideas and learning from each other about urban planning and architecture in the Arctic were meant to strengthen the holistic thinking needed for creating inclusive public urban spaces.

## Inclusive Arctic Urban Meeting Spaces - Hansnes 2022

For the new process in Hansnes, a set of very similar approaches are planned. The description of the process in Hansnes is based on two different kinds of documents: the descriptions of the project on the official website of NODA and e-mails from correspondences we have had with NODA, as part of our research. It should be mentioned that since the process has been delayed a few times, the description of the process has met changes as well. This is why we rely on different sets of documents to paint the picture. It also means that the process as it is presented here, might not be one to one comparable to the final one as the final process and timeline is not yet set. We will present the knowledge we have on the process, including these changes made along the way. This we do because we research a translation of the process from Tromsø to Hansnes, rendering these changes, occurring through this translation, important information for analysis.

Similar to the process for the urban space in Tromsø, the Hansnes project relies on a mix of educational, collaborative and co-creational aspects. A broad array of the measures used for the Tromsø project, to reach their goal is also presented here. The initiating phase was planned for gathering knowledge on the area and the communities or groups residing in it. A mapping process as they call it. This process was conducted to get a hold of potential actors to include in the coming workshops and meetings (Noda, 2022b). Following the initiation phase, an approach that again resembles the one from the project in Tromsø was planned for: a chronicle series meant to spread awareness of the project by actors local or otherwise, who work with subjects relating to Arctic urban spaces. As such they once again incorporate the aspect of spreading knowledge through collaborative measures, involving people both local and not into their process. This is further expressed in the workshops planned for the process. While the workshops to be held in relation to the process in Hansnes are not as detailed yet as the ones from the Tromsø process, they are explained to be concerned with similar values as the former. They center around bringing in knowledge from a variety of groups from the local area. These groups are not fully specified as of yet (Noda, 2022b). Still the emphasis is put on involving local actors in the process throughout the project, such as elderly, school children etc. (Appendix 3:1). As for the project in Tromsø they again will invite in designers, architects, planners etc. for a design workshop to realise the different ideas attained through the workshops (Appendix 3:1). Aspects of co-creation are then taken into account, through collaboration between multidisciplinary actors. Similar strategies are then utilised

to gather people and co-create the design to be realised as an urban space. Strategies for chronicles and information meetings are also planned in a similar matter, and similar groups are considered relevant for the project. NODA's vision then becomes very apparent in this process too. They commence dialogue on development of Arctic urban spaces, promoting knowledge on design, architecture, and art, through measures of education, meetings and workshops between a variety of actors.

The plans for the co-creation process of Hansnes can then be said to resemble the one for 2021 in Tromsø, to a great extent. There are some differences, nonetheless. One of the major differences would be the decision of location. In 2021 in Tromsø, the location was based on a much earlier identified unutilized space in the city, Prostneset. This year, 2022, the public has been included in this process of deciding a location: "With input from residents of Hansnes, the municipality has decided that the Millennium Square (Tusenårsstedet) will be Hansnes' new meeting place." (Noda, 2022d).

As the process has been postponed a few times, the plans have changed as well. This for instance has affected the end plans for a celebration party for the new space. Initially NODA had planned for two parties, when the space was finished (Appendix 3:2). One in summer and one in winter, showcasing the multifunctionality in terms of seasonal usage that is meant to be implemented in the final product. Due to changes in the timeline, this has become impossible and so the celebration has been limited to one party to be held in fall/beginning of winter, showcasing then only one kind of usage (Noda, 2022b). Another difference is found in the way the workshops are conducted. Based on a conversation with NODA we learned that the project from 2021 was heavily affected by Covid-19, resulting in most workshops being held differently than planned. Workshops planned for larger groups of people had to be performed multiple times, and on a much smaller scale each. The same workshop was then conducted multiple times, with multiple groups of people (Noda, 2021c). In 2022 this is no longer an issue, meaning they can have the workshops planned as they intended. As of now, two such workshops have been held, one physical and one online. Both were planned to be physical workshops, but due to a low number of participants for the last workshop, the meeting was moved to an online forum. Furthermore, the plans for how the workshop was going to be conducted changed with it. As it was now online, NODA asked people to send comments regarding the project digitally as well (Appendix 3:3). This shows a change not based on the changes in timeline, suggesting other factors might be affecting the process too. It further suggests a certain flexibility incorporated into the planning perhaps allowing for more extensive changes as well.



Another difference we find highly relevant in the process is the location. While both processes emphasise a need to plan for the Arctic, NODA does not mention how the difference in size and population will be expressed in the new process. Nor do they mention the differences in terms of Tromsø being an urban area and Hansnes resembling more of a rural space. Interestingly enough, all cases and research papers read for this thesis have been conducted with cases of an urban nature, having no focus on rural communities in co-creation projects, suggesting such a comparison is not made. It indicates a notion that same procedures can be used regardless of how urban an area is; that the differences between the rural and the urban are not overlapping with the idea of how to do co-creation, thereby rendering this difference obsolete in the discussions on how to conduct such a process. Here we would argue that the differences might be more important than it is perceived here. We already see how changes are affecting the process; one being caused by too few participants. Perhaps this is due to some external causes, or perhaps it is due to the much smaller scale that Hansnes is composed of, not being considered in the approaches made to include the locals.

Lastly we identified a difference in how the projects were initiated and in turns how the projects function from completely different perspectives. In Tromsø the project arose largely from there being a need for change. A need to have something at Prostneset, which was already decided as a location, before the process began. A need to change the underutilised space into something else. A need to have something that ties the local population together and a need to incorporate the previously overlooked groups.

In Hansnes some things are similar. They still express a need of incorporating the overlooked groups and they still plan for the new space to incorporate measures to tie the local population together. Where they differ is on the perspective. The Tromsø project was concerned with a location identified by the municipality to have a need of redesigning. It expressed a general perspective of the project arising from a need to co-create something new. In Hansnes the project was initiated by conversation between Karlsøy Kommune and NODA, in relation to the possibility of incorporating an interesting process into Hansnes. The location was not set, but merely found through interaction with locals. The process is then concerned with identifying how it could contribute to Hansnes as a place. It is concerned with being a process that might improve the attractiveness of Hansnes. The possibility of creating an attractive public space and improving upon the overall perception of Hansnes was the initiation factor.

## Approaches to Co-Creating Public Space

The vision of NODA is apparent in its focus, when it comes to the co-creation processes facilitated in Tromsø and Hansnes. NODA incorporates educational and collaborative strategies as a means to co-create. Especially the focus on education is interesting as it allows them to pass on relevant knowledge to the participants, for a process that they facilitate. This provides a possibility of directing the knowledge shared to fit the specific case with which they work.

They place themselves in a duality in terms of their role in the process; holding the role as the planners in charge of curating co-creation projects, as well as the entity in charge of knowledge sharing, ensuring the proper expertise is facilitated to create a space allowing for creativity to flow. As such NODA places themselves in the new role of the planner, as is described by Teder (2019) to be essential in a co-creation process. Furthermore, they seek to mix this collaborative approach with a strong emphasis on local knowledge to be included in the process, alongside actors with specific and relevant knowledge in terms of design, architecture etc. As such they equally seek to provide and gain knowledge, to ensure the best possible outcome of their co-creative processes. By having these various actors, with various forms and levels of expertise, work together in different constellations, they further clarify this collaborative and co-creative approach. It constitutes a strong idea for co-creation in relation to how it is presented in the different papers described in the theoretical framework. Through the evaluation of the planned processes, it becomes apparent how they seek to further improve liveability in the areas where the co-creative projects take place. Both the process in 2021 and in 2022 seek to produce an outcome that benefits the community and takes in design elements based on the workshops with the public. This they do with a clear emphasis on the new public space to include thoughts of accessibility throughout the year, including wintertime. Thereby establishing their position and focus on Arctic planning as a central topic in the projects. This focus on Arctic planning is seen in various aspects of the plans. The initial plan for having two parties celebrating the finished space in Hansnes is one clear expression of this. By having a party planned for both summer and winter, aside from showing the versatility of their product, they add to a notion of how a public space should be usable all year around. Both seasons are equally important, especially in a region where the changes can be as varied as they are in Northern Norway, and they should therefore both be incorporated into the design. By having the people engage in the thought process of creating this product, they not only allow for their creative inputs to be incorporated, they also provide the grounds for a different

view on public space amongst the involved. Unfortunately, due to changes in the timeline, as described, the second party will not be held. Nonetheless the addition of having the two parties directly correlates with the idea of proper planning and design in the Arctic, to incorporate accessibility at all times of the year. The chronicles published in Nordlys written in relation to the process in Tromsø in 2021 shows a similar pattern. While not being written by NODA, they incorporate similar arguments as NODA themselves present. The winter characteristics have to be incorporated into the planning approaches of the North, to develop public urban areas in the Arctic cities that are attractive to use year-round. With their processes, NODA then seeks to produce multifunctional spaces that manage to combine seasonally independent public spaces and collaboratively generated ideas, based on co-creative measures of education, collaboration and co-creation. A vision that is seeping through both the project in Tromsø in 2021 and the project in Hansnes in 2022. Both plans underline this need for a space that enables public usage all year around and strives to co-design this space, with that notion in mind.

## Summary

The project 'Inclusive Arctic urban spaces' refers to a set of processes facilitated to realise the vision of NODA. A vision that incorporates different measures in Arctic urban development. The approach relies heavily on education, collaboration and co-creation. This is clearly expressed in the general structure and approach in the co-creation processes in Tromsø and Hansnes. Both rely on the same structure, but are they really applicable to the same extent? We have found there have already been some changes to the process in Hansnes.

These changes, be it based on the postponed timeline or other circumstances, are very present, but still the general structure is following that of the project in 2021. It is incorporating the vision that NODA has for their processes overall. As such there exists a notion that the same structure for the process should be transferable, despite the areas seemingly being different.

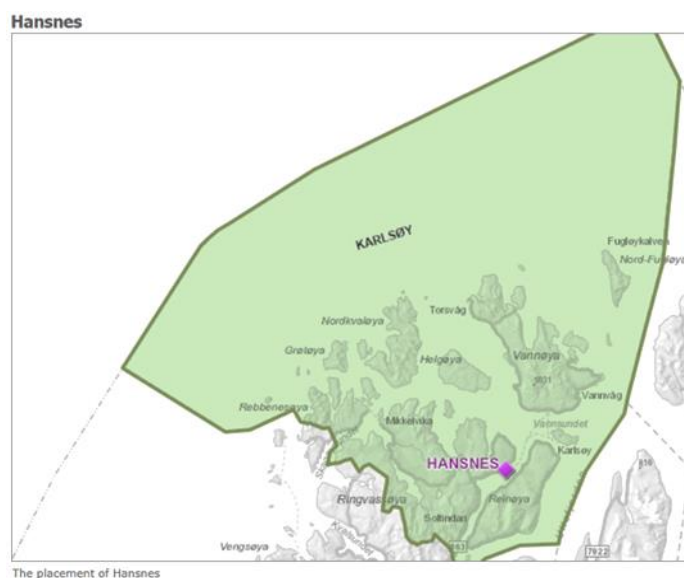
## Chapter 5 - Analysis part 2:

### Hansnes - a Place for Co-Creation

Within the following chapter we will respond to the second work question of our research: “*How can Hansnes be understood as the arena for the new co-creation process?*”

We will present Hansnes and our findings towards it alongside this analysis of Hansnes as a place. By doing that we seek to gain a deeper knowledge of Hansnes as a place, to understand how such an exploration of the arena can be used for a co-creation process. First we will describe Hansnes and explore the setting in which it exists, drawing on the aforementioned initial mapping of the field as well as theoretical discussions on planning in the Arctic. This will consist of a section briefly introducing Hansnes in numbers, before going over to the analysis of how the setting affects the place. Throughout the analysis of the setting, we will use the data collected through our methodological approach, seeking answers to the question of what kind of place is Hansnes, incorporating our perspective as well. Hereafter we will delve deeper into the data, trying to discover connections in our findings that can be relevant for understanding Hansnes. For this we analyse the data from our field trips, seeking connections between observation, conversations and participation of varying degrees.

The municipality of Karlsøy itself currently inhabits around 2200 people spread out on the five inhabited islands: Ringvassøy, Vannøy, Reinøy, Rebbenesøy and Karlsøy. The largest inhabited area of the municipality is found in Hansnes on the north-eastern part of Ringvassøy, the biggest of the islands. Figure 2 shows the placement of Hansnes in Karlsøy Kommune. In 2021 the small town inhabited around 456 people in total (snl.no n.d.; ssb.no n.d.a). As such, Hansnes is the only place in



Karlsøy Kommune characterised as a 'tettsted' or town, meaning it is the only settlement with more than 200 inhabitants and with no more than 50 metres between the houses (ssb.no, n.d.a). The closest large city is Tromsø which has just less than 70.000 inhabitants. Tromsø, as the closest large city, is still about an hour away by car (ssb.no, n.d.b). Public transportation to and from Tromsø is limited to two buses a day on weekdays and one on Sundays. No buses go on Saturdays, making it impossible to move between the two places without a car from Friday evening to Sunday evening.

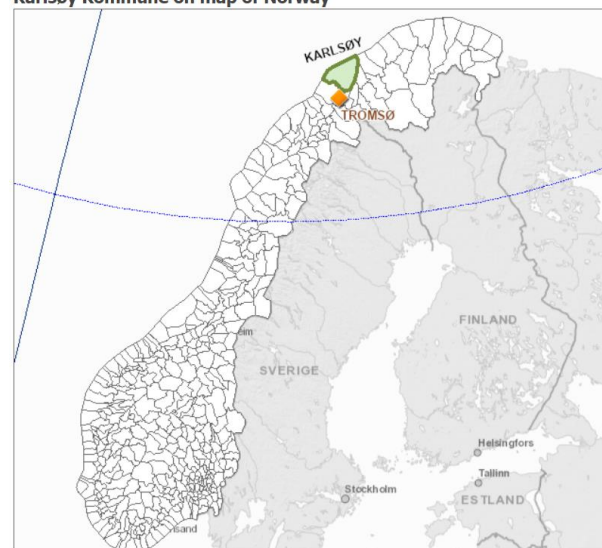
## The Arcticness of Hansnes

As explained in the theoretical framework, being in the Arctic has its consequences when it comes to usability and planning for usability of public spaces. Located at 70°N, meaning it is inside the Arctic Circle, this applies to Hansnes as well. This geographical location is an important aspect of how to understand it as a place for the new co-creation process. Something NODA has managed to mix in with their approach, and focuses on as a main concept in their vision, is planning for

Northern Norway. Planning for the Arctic. But being in the Arctic is not a singular, undiversified locality and we can not define a place solely based on this. NODA, aside from focusing on Arctic planning, includes processes like collaboration and co-creation, and as explained, this requires some tailoring to the specific case in question. Understanding how the setting affects the place then becomes relevant to include. The location of Hansnes is constituted in a specific setting due to the geographical location, which is why understanding this setting specifically from the perspective of Hansnes, is relevant to grasp the place on a deeper level.

Being located in the Arctic influences the characteristics of a place; long winter months with ice, snow, blocked paths have remarkably influences on how different the landscape appears. This too influences the uses of public spaces; some activities might only begin once it has gotten colder and snow has fallen. Darkness too changes how one experiences the surrounding landscape. By walking the landscape, these effects of winter and snow become very apparent. Areas that were

Karlsøy Kommune on map of Norway



The placement of Karlsøy Kommune

designated public use were visible but covered in snow and ice. Multiple times we took note of areas on our walks that prior to snowfall had been easily passable but at other times were unusable due to snow and ice coverage (Appendix 4). Some areas were clearly not meant for usage in winter times.

During our exploratory walks we registered that Hansnes, being the size it is, has a fairly limited amount of public spaces for outdoor recreational use, compared to that of Tromsø. Most of these public spaces were not sheltered from the winter coldness in any way and most were still covered in snow; snow that can fall well into the month of May due to its geographic location above the Arctic circle. When these public spaces are covered in snow, there are hardly any alternatives for outdoor use within the town limits. It does not take many snow-covered spaces for the landscape within the town to appear 'unusable' in winter. Tusenårsstedet, the location which has been decided as the place for redevelopment for the co-creation process, is one such places (picture 1).



An almost empty area, covered in snow, is shown. The benches are pushed to the site awkwardly, providing a feeling of it having been tucked away. A feeling that they are not for use. Furthermore, the snow on the tables and benches, while not much of it, does provide an added barrier, a last hurdle to cross before being able to use the space. It all adds to a feeling of the area as uninviting.

It very clearly brought to mind a place that was packed up for the winter. During our walks in the field we met only one person utilising this space. On Wednesday, when it was sunny and Easter was just around the corner, we met a man seated at the benches while letting his dog walk about the area, getting some fresh air. We then approached him and asked about what kind of place it was:

*“It was not really a winter place. And that it wasn't used for anything really. We asked him and he was like, no, no, not really. He laughed a bit. And then he said that it was not really that used. That he might also be the only one using it.”* (Appendix 8: 8).

On our walks in Hansnes we found two spaces within the town made with shelter in mind, which in turn made them usable in winter. These were meant for providing shelter as waiting rooms. These two shelters were placed at the ferry pier (picture 2) and by the school (picture 3) and were characterised by the one function they seemed to have been set up with: providing shelter for people waiting. The one by the school for instance, had no seating suggesting it a place where people wait for a small period of time, before moving on. It provided no reason to stay there for more than absolutely necessary. Similar could be said about the shelter at the ferry pier. This was clearly made only with shielding against the winds in mind. Having just one bench, no other furnishings providing comfort, and having it face away from the view, all adds to this notion.





Furthermore, the way snow is cleared in the area limits the walkability. Snow clearing is a vital part of living in the Arctic, where snow would otherwise prohibit free movement between inhabited areas. But there is a vital difference between the bigger cities like Tromsø, and a rural area like Hansnes.

In a bigger city, this snow is moved to areas where it creates snow dumps as described in the theoretical framework. When the snow is cleared, it needs to be put somewhere. In Tromsø, the snow is deposited in areas of varying use, including public spaces like playgrounds. In Hansnes, this was not the case. Here the snow was not deposited in a way that would directly make the use of certain spaces impossible, as is described about Tromsø. The snow did not appear to be left within the town limits but seems to be deposited in the uninhabited areas around, creating this line between what was cleared and what was not. This clear distinction greatly affected our use of the space and our feeling towards this use. By having some snow cleared, mainly connected to car use, we as pedestrians in the space felt uninvited, or that we did not belong (Appendix 4). Since these paths were the only ones cleared, to a great extent, they directed our walk. By not having other options presented for us, we were limited to walking the ones cleared. As such we felt that by covering potential walking ground, walking freely was not possible the same way. This naturally occurring resource, now created an obstacle limiting our use of space.

Now this feeling might not have been there, had we known the place ahead of our walk in winter, as we would have then recognised areas that are in fact walkable, though currently covered in snow. Thereby we would be able to use them, even if they are not prioritised for snow clearing. As such a local might not have the same experience as us, walking in these areas.



Even spaces that had clear markings as places for pedestrian use (picture 4), bore a feeling of unusability. The picture is taken by the ferry pier and shows the pathway to Tusenårsstedet. As seen in the picture, the path is there, signed and all, but still we did not feel as if it was inviting to enter the space. The footprints in the snow are made by us and as such we are clearly the only ones who have walked in this area since the last snowfall. It is not a widely used space in the area, as it is now. The entrance also clearly shows signs of it being affected by snow from the road beside it, suggesting that snow has actively been deposited there, without a notion that the space is used by others, suggesting again that it is not used regularly.

The way snow had been cleared or not cleared greatly affected our understanding of where to go or not. That said, it becomes an important point to make in relation to how we utilise or limit space during the varying conditions of seasonal change. This change happens all over the world, in areas where those seasonal conditions are present, as is also touched upon in the theoretical framework. We found that they are expressed very differently depending on the place, and so the way a place is affected by this, also differs. As described earlier and is also clear through our walks in Hansnes, the snow has to be dealt with and the way we handle it impacts the use of the areas. But the different inhabited areas in the Arctic are different and as such the approaches and

solutions to snow use/clearing should be too. Hansnes has its own aspects of winter issues, it is a winter area, an Arctic place, but the issues should not be dealt with similar to that of Tromsø for instance. The issues might be connected by the same origin, but the solutions should be tailored to the problems that arise in the specific area.

## How Rural is Hansnes

Hansnes itself is located in the very north of Norway. Karlsøy Kommune is small compared to Tromsø Kommune, but Hansnes is even smaller, therefore it could be labelled peripheral in connection to Tromsø. However, Hansnes is also the municipal centre and the biggest settlement in Karlsøy Kommune, thereby it is equally in the centre and in the periphery. It is the context which changes the perspective. Even though Hansnes is the centre of the municipality it is also very much rural. As already discussed above, factors, such as size, population and density play a part in the definition of what is considered to be rural (Munkejord, 2009). While people of Tromsø might view Hansnes as rural, the people from smaller settlements of Karlsøy Kommune might not. As with the centre-periphery dichotomy, the notion of what is rural is dependent on how the people perceive it. Therefore, the way a place is perceived as rural or not, as peripheral or not, is shaped by the people who inhabit, visit and pass through an area. After having arrived in Hansnes we reflected upon this centre-periphery dichotomy, the spatial metaphor that seems to be underlying the different understandings of rural and urban places. We came directly from Tromsø and the relative emptiness and secludedness was what we noticed first in Hansnes. Almost no people walking in the streets, only a consistent stream of cars and lorries going to and from the ferry pier. Few people were either working or going to the supermarket (Appendix 4: 2), what we were left with was a feeling that Hansnes was a place of going through, not exactly made for lingering. This was further highlighted by the road being cleared of snow but no cleared walking path was cleared of it. This then suggested even more so that Hansnes was a palace for passing through. For us it seems it was a place to move from one place to another, by car but not by foot. The main road is the one connecting infrastructure of Hansnes; not per se an inviting place for lingering. Having a focus on car space and not on pedestrians can suggest that not many people walk in the area regularly, indicating that people do not use the urban outdoor spaces of Hansnes, as a place to linger, socialise and hang out. Our observations provided us with a feeling of the place as 'underutilised' and 'abandoned'. It felt like a rural place similar to how we understand rural places ourselves: slightly unused and underutilised in the sense that it is just there and nothing more (Appendix 5: 5). Our own perspective on what is urban and rural, can affect the way we

perceive a place as periphery or centre; certainly something we became aware of as we moved through the field.

Conversations with people at Direktør'n Bistro underlined the preconception of Hansnes as a peripheral place, as multiple people described Hansnes as having a 'country vibe' and a place to visit outside the city (Appendix 5: 6). At the concert we talked to a few young people originally from Hansnes and the surrounding islands, who described how they all had moved to Tromsø, but when coming back for easter, they enjoyed this little escape "[...] from the stressful buzz of a city." (Appendix 5: 5). As such, Hansnes was seen as the periphery in a sense that it would be the retreat from the centre. These people had moved from what they perceived, or had come to perceive as the periphery, the countryside, to what they felt to be more of a city, a centre. Similar tendencies were seen among the people who chose to move to Hansnes.

*"[...] they were there to just experience the local vibe again, having moved there some years ago, when they got their first child and to sort of get this country vibe, again, moving out of the city, want to raise their children in a more calm environment?"* (Appendix 5: 6)

They seemed to perceive Hansnes as the escape from the busy city, similar to the young people coming back for easter. Only here it provided a more relaxed atmosphere for raising a family. While not necessarily mentioning Hansnes as peripheral, they all connected Hansnes to that of the countryside, suggesting its location to be outside the city; outside the centre.

## Hansnes as the Centre

Hansnes, as the biggest town and the place of the municipal seat, is the centre of Karlsøy Kommune, thereby drawing in the inhabitants of surrounding islands and villages. The town features a space of urban qualities in the midst of nature. This includes public and semi-public places such as the library, the city hall, grocery stores and the local church creating the feeling of urbanity set in the surrounding nature. It is also the connecting point for the ferry connecting the surrounding islands scattered around the municipal area. As such it acts as a meeting place for inhabitants of the municipality as well as travellers and tourists. All this points to the perspective of it as the centre, not the periphery, at least for some. As described above, Hansnes felt small compared to what we had just come from, Tromsø the next biggest city. But while some conversations had underlined our view of Hansnes as being peripheral, others seemed to look at

Hansnes differently. After talking to these people in Hansnes we began to understand more of how this place could also be viewed as a centre. For instance, multiple people talked about how Hansnes felt like a city to the area surrounding it:

*“[...] we talked to several people [...] who moved to Hansnes as well, to be sort of closer to Tromsø, but also just to experience more of a city life even though it might not be a city, it is very much like the city centre of Karlsøy Kommune.”* (Appendix 5: 4)

While still understanding the context of Hansnes not being the size of Tromsø, they expressed a notion of Hansnes having qualities of a city, based on them coming from even smaller communities.

The notion of Hansnes as a centre is further backed up by the observation of how a person not living in Hansnes regularly seemed to come here for the events and sociality of the bistro. We noted how she seemed to know everyone attending the concert that we ourselves participated in. She seemed to be part of the crowd, acting as a regular in the bistro (Appendix 5: 4; Appendix 5: 7). Again the definition of it being a centre or periphery depends on the perspective. It definitely functioned as a centre for her, being the place she would come to, to socialise. In this case one could argue how the place she lived would then act as peripheral to Hansnes, similar to how others felt that Hansnes is peripheral to Tromsø.

All talk into the theory of the centre-periphery dichotomy. Hansnes functions as a place in this setting. A place that incorporates both aspects. It is viewed by some as the periphery of Tromsø, while others see it just as much as the centre of their area, coming there for the kind of events others would go to the city of Tromsø to find.

As such, Hansnes have a characteristic that combines aspects of both. Should this be planned for? Understanding Hansnes in the scope of it being peripheral to something bigger as well as it being the centre of the small region, becomes a vital aspect of what makes up life in Hansnes as well, and could perhaps be incorporated in the measures that are taken to develop the town as well. Could a future public space in Hansnes be made to connect these people? A space that allows for a certain use by the people who view it as central while also providing the relaxed atmosphere of the countryside for the people visiting from Tromsø? Furthermore, as a place located in the Arctic, it carries certain characteristics that need addressing too. Public spaces should not only connect with the centre-periphery aspects of what makes up Hansnes as a place, but strive to include

solutions that deal with the issues presented in wintertime too. Issues that are not just based on it being in the Arctic, but more so based on the specific needs of Hansnes connected to this location. All of these are expressed above and exemplified through an analysis based on the setting of Hansnes.

## Public Space and Accessibility in Hansnes

Based on a co-creation project NODA seeks to develop a public meeting space in Hansnes. To understand Hansnes as a place in relation to the co-creation process it became obvious for us to focus our attention to the ‘urban spaces’ in Hansnes. As mentioned above, the city centre in Hansnes features some public spaces, though not all are easily accessible. Public spaces are social spaces for interaction, connection and meeting spaces between locals and outsiders. One thing became clear very quickly, the need for truly and accessible public spaces in Hansnes. Environmental conditions can limit the accessibility of public spaces as previously mentioned, however even in a winter town like Hansnes they were inaccessible in winter. We noticed during our exploratory walks that we were the only people trying to access the few open public spaces in the town. (Appendix 4:2, 3). No one was hanging around in the public spaces of Hansnes. Initially we thought this was due to winter and snow, but later when asked about public space use, most of our informants told us that they didn’t even use the public spaces in summer time. Such an example was on the ferry pier; Tusenårsstedet.

*“They didn't use it, that space and no one really does.”* (Appendix 8: 7).

*“no one ever uses that [...] she was even unsure if there were benches there.”* (Appendix 8: 1).

*“I asked him about the square next to the ferry terminal. Whether he knows how it's used, and what it is used for. He said possibly in summer it is used. Otherwise it's not used.”* (Appendix 7: 3).

All expressed how this square was never really used. One was even unsure how it looked, suggesting it to be an area completely overlooked in her perception of outdoor spaces within Hansnes. As noted when explaining the effects of an Arctic setting, we did observe one user of said square. And while he himself did use it, he also had the notion that no one else used it but him (Appendix 8:8). Another benched area we found through our fieldwork, was located by the church. This area, even more so than the others, was covered in snow to an extent that rendered it largely unusable. Furthermore, the fresh snow surrounding them made it even more clear that they had

not been used in a while (Appendix 4:6). One person mentioned a park area close to the SPAR, featuring two benches and a little statue. When asked about how it was used, she stated that she rarely saw anyone occupying the space (Appendix 6:1). The benched public spaces as such were then only rarely used by the public and even rarer in winter. In general we found that people did not use the spaces within Hansnes much at all. Some were not using these spaces because they did not spend much time outdoors in general: “*He himself does not spend much time outdoors.*” (Appendix 7, 2). Some because they would rather spend time in the mountains or somewhere else.

*“She said she didn't really use the outdoor spaces of Hansnes at all [...] if she were to go outside and she did that quite a bit, she always went to the mountains, use the outdoors, the nature areas instead.”*  
(Appendix 6, 1)

Other people responded similarly:

*“[...] he didn't use them (public spaces) himself. He mainly goes skiing, and so does his family in general.”*  
(Appendix 8: 4). *“[...] she liked the nature, they (her and her family) spend a lot of time in nature. They spent quite a lot of time in the areas around the city.”* (Appendix 8: 1).

Having walked up the closest hill, we noticed small paths leading into the forests and beyond.(Appendix 4:5). Following one trail we ended up at a lavvu (rudimentary hut) overlooking the fjord and Hansnes from above (Appendix 4:5). It seemed to be used often as we noticed that the door had been opened recently, pushing the snow aside. This further suggested the use of the areas around Hansnes rather than inside its borders. Mirroring our experiences from Tromsø, it became clear the nature area around Hansnes functioned as the places people used most often, instead of using the public spaces within the city limits. The public outdoor spaces within the ‘city limits’ were not used much, not just because of their inaccessibility in winter but also due to the prevailing attitude of either going out into the surrounding nature, or simply not to use the outdoor areas at all.

Based on our conversations we identified three indoor areas where people would meet up and socialise in Hansnes. Those were the two cafes located in each of the supermarkets, as well as the local bistro/ pub. (Appendix 6:2). Both of the cafes seemed popular, but the bistro was certainly the main meeting place. Most of our informants mentioned the place (Appendix 6, 2; Appendix 7, 2; Appendix 8, 3 & 9). Some people even seemed to Hansnes just for to go to the bistro “[...]”

people coming from Tromsø just to go to the bistro and get the burger.” (Appendix 8: 3). For some people it seemed like the bistro was the main attraction of Hansnes: “[...] he doesn't really use much other areas than the ferry pier. [...] But he does come here to go to the bistro, go to the pub and participate in different events there” (Appendix 8: 9). Instead of a public space, the main meeting space was the Bistro, for the purposes of meeting up/ drinking / and waiting for the ferry (Appendix 6: 2). In the end it was also the place where we got the closest to the locals of Hansnes after having attended a concert in the evening. While the public spaces outside were left unused instead the Bistro was where everyone met up. The role of a public meeting place was taken over by something privately owned; in one way this suggests that the outdoor spaces in Hansnes are not maintained in a way that meets the needs of the residents.

An interesting aspect that we came across when talking about activities in Hansnes were the descriptions of young people. Initially we had spoken to a woman about the lavvu on the nearby hill and its dilapidated state when she mentioned that the local youth had destroyed its windows. She was reflecting upon the limited activities for the local youth in Hansnes, suggesting they simply did it out of boredom and frustration. (Appendix 8: 1). According to her, Hansnes was not a particularly interesting place for young people.

*“[...] when we talked about young people here, she actually talked about quite a bit, because she got a feeling that this was a place not for young people at all. It wasn't designed for young people, there were no activities for young people. And she felt like young people in Hansnes were very frustrated about having no activities to do really.”* (Appendix 8: 1).

As NODA focuses on the engagement of children and teenagers within its co-creative workshops we did find this anecdotal evidence of boredom and frustration of the local youth interesting.

When we asked the young people we met about activities in Hansnes, they did not mention meeting places at all. One talked about how she liked having bonfires, but that she did not feel like there were any proper places for such activity within the town. She would go elsewhere for this (Appendix 6: 1). Another mentioned football and going to the swimming hall as possible activities (Appendix 7: 2). Other people, when asked about activities in Hansnes for young people and children, mentioned football and the swimming hall as well, indicating these were the main activities connected to that age group (Appendix 8: 4). Apart from a football field and the



swimming hall, Hansnes also does have a youth house. However only one person mentioned it to us as something that was used regularly. Questions remain whether it is really actively used by the young people in Hansnes and the other islands (Appendix 8: 4). Despite this, none of the young people we talked to mentioned the youth house as a meeting place, suggesting that there is still a need for a different kind of meeting place within the 'city centre'. Especially something that appeals to young people as they have even fewer places to meet up at and socialise than the adults.

## Summary

The meanings of Arcticness and the understandings of what an Arctic city is, are various and diverse. Arctic environmental conditions have an impact on the use of outdoor spaces in Hansnes; darkness, coldness, and snow can limit the use of public spaces for social functions. In this regard Hansnes shares lots of the same issues with its neighbouring Arctic cities and towns in Finland, Sweden and Norway. As we have described in-depth in this there are local factors that influence how accessible and attractive urban spaces are. As discussed in the theoretical framework the notion of whether Hansnes can be understood as peripheral or central depends on the circumstances. Some informants thought of Hansnes as the countryside, 'providing a relaxed atmosphere', others pointed out the central function of Hansnes and its 'city life'. We do think there is relevance in considering these different understandings of rural and urban life in connection to the creation of public urban spaces in Hansnes. Our research has shown that different groups of people make use of public spaces and the natural surroundings in different ways; but none spend much time within the city limits in public spaces. The bistro, the supermarket, their own homes or the natural surroundings were the places where most of the people spend their time. What this implies is that there is a need for more attractive and year round usable public outdoor spaces that take into account the wishes and needs of the local residents.

## **Chapter 6 - Analysis part 3:**

### **Challenges and consequences**

Within the following chapter we combine the findings from chapter 4 and chapter 5, in discussion where we seek to respond to the third work question: “What challenges might arise in the co-creation process this year?”. This we do to analyse and discuss upon what knowledge has been gathered throughout this research, to ultimately answer the problem formulation of the thesis.

In the previous chapters we have introduced NODA, the ‘Inclusive Arctic Urban Space’ project and Hansens in-depth. Placemaking as we have introduced earlier is the “process that produces a new (or renewed) sense of place by connecting a space with the communities that inhabit it” (Teder, 2019: 289). To jointly explore and address needs of improvement within urban planning by a group of mixed actors is central to inclusive planning, as previously noted. The creative rethinking of public spaces, such as the planning for a new public outdoor meeting place in Hanses is an example of engaging in the practice of urban planning and design beyond an expert culture. Therefore, NODA’s placemaking is what links them via the co-creation of public space to Hansnes. The urban space project underlines NODAs educational, collaborative and co-creational approach within architecture and design. In replicating the ‘Inclusive Arctic Urban Space’ project in Hanses that was done in 2021 in Tromsø, questions remain on the potential challenges and consequences of translating a co-creation process from a decidedly urban context to a rural scale. In our discussion we want to elucidate some of the challenges that can arise during this change from urban to a rural area. Co-creation as a method has seen a particular increase in usage in urban planning during the last decade; “citizens are becoming more and more involved in the creation process” in a number of different contexts, such as urban development projects (Teder, 2019: 289). In our theoretical framework and in our description of urban planning in Tromsø we have described how co-creation is utilised as a method in recognition of the growing discontentment of how urban planning and the planning for public spaces is done. Such cases include Teder’s (2019) own description of her experiences working in the city planning office in Malmö, where local residents often struggled in accepting new public spaces as they felt their voices were not heard or simply did not feel attached to the new public spaces. Leino & Puumala’s (2021) case study of the co-creation of knowledge on an urban infill plot similarly describes a situation where co-creation

as a method was only utilised in reaction to the distrust that the local residents had shown in connection to the new development plans. In their case study the co-creative process emerged and evolved from a need for a change in how the urban planning in Tampere was done by the municipality, where ultimately a change in planning failed to materialise. In all of these cases, the method of co-creation was used because other forms of participatory planning had not been fruitful.

As set out in the theoretical framework co-creation promises to break down down hierarchies between local government, the private sector, and other stakeholders (Leino & Puumala, 2021); however in a place as small as Hansnes, the inhabitants might have less hierarchical experiences with other stakeholders as in a city the size of Tromsø, Tampere or Kiruna.

The co-creation of a new urban space in Tromsø in 2021, had partially risen out of a need for more participatory planning, taking into account the views, wishes and needs of a variety of local residents. Particularly the growth of Tromsø during the last decades has made it clear that there is a need for more inclusive public outdoor spaces within the city, that are attractive to use all year round, as we have already elaborated in the previous chapter. The growth of Tromsø in particular has led to a need for more outdoor public meeting spaces where people can socialise and connect with strangers and familiars alike. The project in Tromsø was initiated to co-create a space with the intention of creating a meeting place. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the project in Hansnes was started through personal contacts between the municipal planner of Karlsøy Kommune and NODA; the idea behind it was to replicate a placemaking project in Hansnes. Concerning the transferability of a co-creation process designed for an urban environment to a rural places like Hansnes raises the question whether Hansnes has the same needs as Tromsø in regard of creating a public space particularly for social interaction. In the case of Hansnes, the project does not build upon prior discussions on the liveability of urban areas and the creation of attractive public urban spaces as was the case with Tromsø. The initiation of the co-creation process was from the ‘top-down’ via the municipality and NODA, which in itself is not something negative. However, this ‘top-down initiation’ has implications concerning the gathering of enough interest within the local community to participate in the co-creation process. This could pose a challenge for the transferability of a co-creation process from a much larger place to a rural area in terms of finding enough local residents that want to get involved in the process. The project in 2022 in Hansnes, for instance, has already undergone changes due to few residents wanting to participate; implying the difficulty in motivating enough residents to participate in the workshops. Placemaking relies on the engagement of participants, e.g. from the local community. To gather interest in a project often means relying on a local contact person that can connect one to interested groups of people.

Teder (2018: 103) stresses the point that “voluntary engagement, rather than seeking to engage a representative selection of people led to enduring place engagement”. Depending on the project and its aims this might create challenges in transferring a placemaking project to a new setting, as the engagement needs to be voluntary and the willingness to participate needs to be present (Teder, 2018). These might be influenced by the participants' level of expertise, creativity or passion for the project (Teder, 2018). In the 2022 project NODA might have to rethink their approach of reaching out to different groups of people.

## Involving Groups in Co-Creation

There is a distinct focus from NODA on inviting young people in the local area as a main group for their workshops and events. This both applies for the co-creation process in Tromsø as well as the planned co-creation process in Hansnes. This particular group seemed to be particularly underrepresented in the decision making in Hansnes. Based on conversations with locals they expressed that young people in Hansnes had no activities to do and thereby became frustrated and bored. When talking to young people in Hansnes, this impression was strengthened by how they explained the activities inside Hansnes to be limited, one directly stating how she did not spend time within the borders of the town. Thus young people could be the ideal group to invite for a co-creation process as NODA is focused on engaging groups that are somehow not feeling included in their local area. As mentioned above there was not a consensus whether the youth house was used or wasn't used by the young people in Hansnes. This could indicate that there is not one singular group of young people, but instead people with individual interests and needs. Some might feel included and have a place to spend time, others may not feel the same; or feel disconnected from others. Instead of focussing on including young people as a group in general, the question is how to involve young people that are in need of a meeting space? This may be just a hypothetical statement, but it does lead to the questions on who to involve and how to motivate the different people/groups in participating in the co-creative workshops?

Research such as ours can help find people who might be interested or whose needs have not been taken into account yet. Research understanding the particular specific location, here being Hansnes can determine who to involve and how. To have local knowledge one might have less problems involving young people in a co-creation process. What is their motivation to take part in such a process? Most likely they have never heard of co-creation before so what makes them interested to partake in such a process? NODA seeks to create a public space using the knowledge and

engagement of the local population; the question is can a co-creation process that engaged children and teenagers in Tromsø be replicated in almost the same way in Hansnes?

Irrespective of age group Munte-Kaas (2017: 292) emphasises that:

*“crafting an invitation to participate in a democratic design experiment is an active and delicate matter of proposing alternative possibilities just clearly enough to intrigue and prompt curiosity, and, on the other hand, to leave enough ambiguity and open-endedness to prompt the participants’ desire to influence the particular articulation of the issue”.* (Binder et al. cited in Munthe-Kaas, 2017: 292).

This quote perfectly highlights the dilemma that might arise when initiating a co-creation process in Hansnes. One needs to map out potential groups of people that might be suitable for a collaborative and co-creative process; however there is no guarantee that they will participate. It is about finding the right tone to spark curiosity, which then hopefully leads to engagement by interested participants. In Hansnes there seemed to be a clear need for a meeting space for young people, but for a variety of reasons they might not be able to participate. These co-creative processes can not be forced upon people, they have to come organically. Therefore, co-creation processes have to be longitudinal and not simply a one evening workshop, through the crafting of relationships between the planner, the citizen and other stakeholders one can foster engagement. In the case of Hansnes, even if there is an intention of creating a space that is attractive for young people, an issue is that most people that are old enough move away to Tromsø for secondary school. Thus, just a small number of young people would be left in Hansnes that can participate in the process. However, it is more useful having a group of engaged people in the co-creative process than just a representative group of people. Who is a new space made for, is an interesting question as is the question on who might be excluded from such co-creative process. Therefore it is certainly of value having done previous research in the place where such a project is organised. Similar benefits of this localised knowledge are seen when it comes to the use of public spaces in Hansnes in general. As this is the focal point of NODA’s co-creation process it could pose some challenges, if knowledge on how the people of Hansnes perceive and use public space overall. Through the analysis of Hansnes we found that a lot of people do not use the existing public spaces in Hansnes. One reason for this was that they would simply rather go outside the city limits, to be in nature. Another seemed to be that they just did not spend much time outside. As with the youth of Hansnes, this could indicate a relevant differentiation between two existing groups of users in Hansnes. One group uses outdoor space, but prefers to spend their free time in nature around Hansnes rather than inside the town. While the other group simply is not using the outdoors much at all. A co-creation process only including one or the other would then by default

only have a one-sided approach to the co-creation and therefore it has a risk of not succeeding in creating a meeting place for all. While it is possible to attract both groups into the co-creation, we see a potential challenge in making this happen. NODA states how they want to include participants based on a focus on inviting forgotten or overlooked groups. These groups are not tied to any category like that. Rather they seem to incorporate individuals from all. How much time is spent outside is not necessarily tied to an age group for instance. Understanding this relation to the outdoor spaces, the reasons behind these two groups and their particular choices of outdoors space usage, could provide the insight needed for this not to happen. How to get people who enjoy nature more than the urban and people who enjoy the comforts indoors rather than the outdoors to both feel connected to the new public space? As such the challenge lies in incorporating their needs for a public space into the process, while the consequences of not understanding these needs could be a one-sided entry point.

## Process versus Product

Furthermore, there is the question of what the co-creation process wants to achieve? NODA aims to empower people in the North of Norway to partake in urban development through increased knowledge on Arctic design and architecture. There is an ambition to contribute to the overall capacity of their involved participants to actively shape their regions urban environment. The same applies to the project in 2022 in Hansnes, as Teder (2018: 34) describes how the process of co-creation itself can be viewed as a “celebration of process over product”. She argues that a common trait is a belief in the value of the creation process itself, which then raises the question of whether the co-creation *process* or the co-created *product* is central. In the project of 2021, NODA has shown a clear focus on empowering especially the often overlooked groups in Tromsø, valuing their contribution and ideas in the development of urban spaces. By actively working with children and teenagers in the workshops in the project in 2022, NODA’s approach suggests a predetermined goal on how the co-creation process should enable these particular groups to voice their opinions on matters of urban liveability. The function of the product is then based on an idea of empowering this voice, thereby emphasising that the *process* already is being valued. An example of this from the Tromsø 2021 project is large scale engagement of all kinds of people, apprentices from the local building company, secondary students, primary school students, amongst others. In the case of the apprentices the aim of the process was letting them try out their skills, instead of hiring professionals. This shows an emphasis on the involvement of actors above the outcome. In the

end the concrete outcome of the co-creation in Tromsø, was not as intended, as only one out of four designed pavilions was constructed, further exemplifying this statement. What the process is to achieve has an impact on which groups to include, as it is defined by a need to include the voices of the overlooked groups. Simultaneously, NODA expresses a vision for the public space in Tromsø, to be a meeting place that conveys a feeling of being part of a larger community. A place that allows for surprising meetings and exchange of ideas, thereby indicating how the physical public space holds significance as well. As such the co-creation process in Tromsø values both aspects of the *process* and the *product*.

As such challenges that might arise could be connected to the general perspective and how they approach the process. We have found that by having predefined groups, could potentially have them overlook other groupings in the area. The predefined groups which NODA works with, might be relevant for Hansnes too, as we saw in relation to the young people of Hansnes, but by focusing their attention on this kind of groupings of the actors, they might potentially miss other important aspects, relevant for that exact case. Similar can be seen when looking at these specific groups. Young people in Hansnes appeared to be split as a group too, indicating they might be included differently too. Tying this back to placemaking as the overarching theme of the co-creation process for a public space in Hansnes, it becomes even more relevant to define the groups involved, based on the local landscape. If the process is to improve liveability through the act of connecting the locals to the new space, understanding the location seems vital. These predefined groups of young people, children elderly etc. are based on an understanding of who existed and was in need of inclusion in the urban environment of Tromsø, analysed to produce a fruitful co-creation process in that particular setting. In Hansnes, due to its different landscape, size, particularities connected to being Arctic or rural, might not have the same defined groups. People use the spaces differently due to these local specifics. We therefore argue that defining the groups beforehand, might be counterintuitive to their approach. It might impose challenges that can possibly be avoided with the correct knowledge of a place.

A finding in this thesis was that the case in relation to how a co-creation should be planned and executed, should be understood to a much deeper extent than anticipated. While all of our data is connected to the specific case of Hansnes and the translation of a co-creation process to that location, we argue that the finding of how valuable our entrance to the field was, for understanding the potential challenges, is applicable to other cases as well. Hansnes was found not only to differ from Tromsø, but to have semi unique characteristics, individual to that place. While

characteristics such as how the snow prohibits free movement and use of outdoor space is not confined to any one place, the composition of people as well as how they act is. Most challenges identified in relation to the translation of the co-creation process from Tromsø to Hansnes are derived from exactly this; the people and how they relate to Hansnes and the co-creation process, be it based on the willingness to participate or the way they use space. This localised knowledge is further expressed through the discussion on how predefined groups can be a hindrance of getting the relevant actors involved. Here the aim of the process becomes relevant again; the planning entity should be clear on why they involve, to structure the actual involvement. This again creates a need for understanding the local context. As touched upon in the methods section, our foreign origin constituted a different understanding of places like Hansnes, and the analysis of the place was also informed by this. Nonetheless the argument still stands. We found a wide array of characteristics we did not know about before, even after researching our case ahead of the field trips, still we learned something new. It suggests a general benefit from conducting a kind of preliminary research, even with some preliminary knowledge into the place, which in turn could help the planners or facilitators of a future co-creation process, to structure their way of involving local actors.



## Chapter 7 - Conclusion

The conclusion aims at summing up the thesis and answer the overarching problem formulation: “What are the potential challenges and consequences of translating a co-creation process designed for an urban environment to a rural scale?”

To answer this we have relied on a case from Northern Norway, a co-creation process of new public space that was first organised in Tromsø in 2021 and has inspired a new project in Hansnes in 2022. In our three analysis parts we have analysed the relationship between NODA, the concept of applying co-creation for the creation of a new public space. Throughout the analysis parts, we have concluded on how the translation of the ‘Inclusive Arctic Urban Spaces’ project relates to Hansnes as the new arena. This was done by first comparing NODA usage of co-creation and their general vision, with the two processes in Tromsø and Hansnes.

We concluded how the vision of incorporating educational, collaborative, and co-creational notions significantly influenced the project ‘Inclusive Arctic Urban Spaces’ as organised by NODA. This vision similarly was expressed in both co-creation processes researched. While changes to the process in Hansnes have been noted, many similarities between the two can be observed. We then concluded that NODA seemed to have the notion of the co-creation process being translatable despite the locations being different. These differences were further analysed through the empirical data connected to Hansnes, in the second analysis part. While Hansnes was described as set in a similar geographical location, the area appears very different in scale and size; as well as how the Arctic climate was expressed. Hansnes not only appears to be different to Tromsø, but also appears to have individual characteristics in terms of how the locals use the urban spaces as well as how they perceive the town as either central or peripheral. The local characteristics of Hansnes were then set in the context with the plans by NODA for the two co-creation processes, to identify possible challenges in the translation of the co-creation process. In this last discussion possible challenges mostly seemed to be related to involving local residents. Issues may arise if not enough prior knowledge has been collected on who to involve and how to involve local residents. This is a finding that can be applied to other similar cases between the process of transferring a participatory project from an urban to a rural scale. Perhaps this could even be applied to all cases of translating a co-creation process from a known place to an unknown place. This, however, would require more extensive research into the matter.

## Final remarks

Researching a process in the making has affected the outcome as well as the process along the way. By having a fluid process as a subject of research, we have been given a chance to follow up on changes as they were adopted into the plan. This has provided us with an interesting and dynamic relationship to the process. But it has also contributed to some challenges along the way. Our approach has changed multiple times, to fit the newly revised plans; one being the subject of research from the actual process in Hansnes, to the translation of said process. As this process is ongoing it has not been possible to incorporate it fully into our thesis. Therefore, this thesis is researching the process as it is now, not the final outcome. This though, could be a very fruitful addition to the overall research. Having the final outcome and an in depth analysis of the process itself, from beginning to end, would provide added depth and reliability to our findings. Furthermore, extensive research into the usage of spaces now and after the meeting place is constructed, could provide interesting data on how the co-creation process manages its aim, as well as analysing this aim in the first place.

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