GUIDED SELF-ORGANIZATION FOR VILNIUS

‘This project is dedicated to planning not for oppression in any form, but for a world with the ultimate in social and personal liberation, for the ultimate experience of personal and collective meaning.’
Acknowledgements

This master graduation project would not have been possible without vast knowledge learnt from many great people. I would like to express my appreciation to the studio Design as Politics mentor team: Wouter Vanstiphout, Marta Relats Torante, Mike Emmerik and Leo van den Burg who guided me through complex process of the project and even more complex theme of the studio. Thanks to my family and friends who supported me during the project. Thanks to Agnė, Mindaugas and Ignas for helping to go through the competition. And special thanks to my mother, who helped me with information, wise ideas and valuable comments.
The graduation project is called "Guided self-organization in Newtown, Vilnius." The study case is Vilnius, capital of Lithuania and it’s district Newtown. The focal points of the project: political agenda behind spatial design implementation in Vilnius, financial streams of project funding, and the concept model for self-organization for context specific neighborhoods and districts.

**Problem description**

The importance of understanding the economy of cities unfolds in the academic domain: theoretical physicist Geoffrey West (2011) – “I can assure you that we desperately need a serious science of cities to complement the traditional social sciences and economic sciences of cities.” Historian of architecture Wouter Vanstiphout (2013) – “Money has become a key issue for architecture and planning. How to plan and build when public and private funds have dried up?” Professor of Anthropology and Geography David Harvey (2012) asks: “How can we stop the city being constructed and reconstructed by the power of the developers, financials and all of those who make profit of speculative housing?”

The next step is to find a way to incorporate academic and integrative approach towards handling cities has to be developed way further theoretically and practically than it is today.

The practice of architecture has always been a function of politics, culture and economy; historically, architects served only those people or organizations who had power and money. Risky financial speculations were driven by a real estate bubble that relied on the production of spectacular, expensive buildings by the architecture industry – Krzyzstof Nawratel (2012). Strong influence of neo-liberal market conditions ignore long-term effects of sustainability, architects and planners tend to serve only those people or organizations who have power and money. Spatial planning becomes capital and profit oriented with direct ties to corporate investors rather than to maintain urban life qualities for all societal levels. Vilnius is taken as a case study to analyze the mentioned problematic in depth.

**Research**

Vilnius is a post-socialist city, which faced the transition of political powers from socialism in Soviet Union to an independent neo-liberal welfare state. Vilnius has a huge social influence and being independent only for a couple of decades in still is in search of ethnic, social, architectural and other identities. In order to promote city as a destination area, Vilnius municipality organized a lot of vague attempts to create it. However no serious attempts were made to establish and promote architectural identity within physical environment. Many of the spatial design competitions for certain major developments in the city end up being not realized for number of reasons: lack of long-term visions for the city, poorly organized project financing, weak municipal administration, political short-sightedness and corruption (Pakalnis 2013). Current planning system in respect to the General Plan and Special plans, which are organized on the scale of the city, while Detailed plans are prepared on the very local levels. Such system does not cover the medium levels of developments of districts in the neighborhood scale. Without coherent implementation of spatial design, issued either by Vilnius masterplan or other strategic designs, it is impossible to fulfill demand for housing and almost all of it’s spatial needs for city dwellers. If we take Vilnius, it’s biggest urban problems are: low and inefficient urban density, sprawling to the suburbia, too much

**Urban planning and design: Newtown**

For sociological and stakeholder analysis i used research theory ANT (Actor-network theory), which is aimed to understand spatial design implementation in Vilnius on the scale of specific neighborhoods and districts. ANT is an economic ideology, which advocates a society marked by widespread collective property ownership. In the momentum of outlined conclusions for regeneration of unique soviet modernism in the area of Newtown, the competition, it’s conditions and the results. One can easily suspect corruption.” - architectural historian Marija Dremaite

The goal of the project is the creation of a sustainable and guided self-organizing community. Graduation project creates such a platform and tests how it could be imposed on people, since it is set up, maintained and expanded by its residents.

**SUMMARY OF THE GRADUATION PROJECT**

The new spatial planning proposal model in my thesis project is being constructed on several core concepts, theories and principles with political and economic ideologies. Project proposes social and environmental change, a collective reflection is taken to minimizing to share sustainable routes to shared and transparent forms, to shared and transparent forms, to shared and transparent forms, to shared and transparent forms, to shared and transparent forms. Political and economic ideologies are interconnected with the concept of Isobenefit Urbanism, where urban design is used not to articulate or represent specific functions, but rather to create an open field where the fullest range of possible events might take place. It activates the context to produce new urban fields, new urban forms, new urban practices, new urban experiences. The concept of Newtown is a city which is a true example of Isobenefit Urbanism, where urban design is used not to articulate or represent specific functions, but rather to create an open field where the fullest range of possible events might take place. It activates the context to produce new urban fields, new urban forms, new urban practices, new urban experiences.

**Conclusions.**

- The strength of cities and urban design derive not from individual heroic efforts, but from the collective sharing of ideas, from in-between relations. New models for organizing the collaboration networks are to be formed: Consortia, associations of financiers, companies, people groups, etc. formed for a particular purpose. In the case of the thesis purpose is to create a sustainable and guided self-organizing community. Graduation project creates such a platform and tests how it could work in the district of Newtown. Consortia: Newtown would take the role of mediator in-between the stakeholders. The proposed design recognizes the existing potential of protagonists and their roles for being civic entrepreneurs in Newtown to form alliance, co-production, co-investment networks. Another very important collaboration, which provides an affordable housing and sustainable way of living is Housing co-operatives, an organizations which are owned and run jointly by its members, who share their profits, benefits, service facilities, gardens and outdoor spaces. Such systemic organizations can be highly productive, resource sustainable and financially risk-free. The model is rich in decreased capital cost and generates social capital in the process. It strengthens existing potential by creating more firm and long-term bonds between communities.

- Urban planning strategies and theories

  - In order to implement self-organization in specific spatial characteristics and provide design solutions, additional criteria and working methods are needed. For evaluation of the current morphological and spatial qualities of the Newtown I used Kevin Lynch (1960) method of 5 Elements: a system of mental maps to identify and if not existent to plan: (1) paths, routes along which people move through the city, (2) edges, boundaries and breaks in continuity, (3) districts: areas characterized by common characteristics, (4) nodes, strategic focus points for orientation like squares and junctions, and (5) landmarks: external points of orientation.

- Strategic design - an alternative spatial planning model

  - This project is designed to construct a comprehensive and speculation-free planning model for the city of Vilnius and its neighborhoods. Explore new forms and urban theories of territorial management, employed in policy making to avoid conflict and to capitalize on opportunities of self-organized groups and the insatiable appetite of neo-liberal global corporations. Districts of Newtown was chosen to test the proposed urban living model of self-organization.
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The first part of the project briefly introduces the reader to the Lithuanian and its capital Vilnius context. The chapter describes framework of the graduation project defined in the beginning of the year. It also explains societal and academic relevance of the project theme and personal motivation of the author to do it. In the chapter “Problem statement” it is summarized problematics of post-socialist cities and how Vilnius is coping with its spatial problems. The chapter is followed by research questions and research methodology to answer them. These research methods were used to gather and conclude information for analysis described in the second part of the booklet. The last chapter of this part explains project goals set in the beginning of the year and followed during entire process.
PROBLEM DEFINITION

Public funds have dried up

The practice of architecture has always been a function of politics, culture and economy; historically, architects served only those people or organizations who had power and money. Risky financial speculations were driven by a real estate bubble that relied on the production of spectacular, expensive buildings by the architecture industry (Nawratek, 2012). Strong influence of neo-liberal market conditions ignore long-term effects of sustainability, architects and planners tend to serve only those people or organizations who have power and money. In today’s reality of financial recession public and private money funds have dried up to be exchanged for goods, it has become the central issue for architecture and planning (Vanstiphout, 2013). Today Vilnius municipality is in a debt of around 434 million euro and every year it’s getting worse (Bardauskas 2013).

Vilnius urban problems

Vilnius biggest urban problems are: low and inefficient urban density, sprawling to the suburbia, too much of unmaintained public space and abundance of derelict soviet heritage. Basically public space is poor and poorly used not in Vilnius parks or public plazas, but mostly in mikrorayons, because of their masterplans with no hierarchy in public spaces (Pakalnis 2013). Also people’s mindset adds to it since its oriented to live in the interior, not exterior (soviet slab housings are designed to have no common space for people to meet). However if to achieve successful collectiveness and creativity in any public space or inside the housing area to make it lively and nice, strong communities are essential. Unfortunately, Vilnius elderships are still very weak and even their number is getting declined making the governance centralized in the Vilnius municipality headquarters rather than distributing the governance at lesser levels. So the existing spatial condition of the city is very political.

Profit oriented planning

Spatial planning becomes capital and profit oriented with direct ties to corporational investors rather than to maintain urban life qualities for all societal levels. System of organizational planning in Vilnius does not work efficiently (Pakalnis 2013). Without coherent implementation of spatial design, either issued by Vilnius masterplan or other strategic designs, Vilnius itself can not cope with any of spatial problems.

Abandoned architecture

Vilnius has abundance of privatized and then abandoned unique soviet architecture, which leaves the city with injured signs of identity. Vilnius municipality itself, regardless of existing spatial plans, does not have a working strategy to cope with mentioned. Why to design new buildings and structures, when abandoned ones are there to be reused: thus this thesis puts an emphasis on disused Soviet objects and tries to cope with them through urban strategies and further design proposals.
Societal and academic relevance

Design and politics are not two separated worlds, but rather politics is an important dimension of design and, simultaneously, design an equally important tool for political action. Spatial perspective of developments in society have to be considered to enrich the existing set of political instruments (Vanspithout, 2013). Wouter Vanspithout urges the need to discuss political issues of planning in wide public: ‘Perhaps our most important ambition is to bring architecture and city planning out of the academic ghettos and the black boxes of politics and the market and return them to the centre of public debate.’

Until now, no integral strategy incorporating development of the city, opportunities and needs of a neighborhood of Newtown have been prepared by Vilnius city municipality, planners or developers. Research, planning and design project worked out in the graduation year intends to offer alternatives how to develop strategy for efficient spatial planning implementation policy in post-socialist city, overtaking coming threats, and satisfying current city needs. As restructuring of soviet modernism is an important topic in all post socialist cities, the proposed strategy and design could become a pilot project for other similar sized cities, in Lithuania, in the Baltic States, or even in all Eastern Europe.

Spatial planning becomes capital and profit oriented with direct ties to corporational investors rather than to maintain urban life qualities for all societal levels of civic society within a city. (Nawratek 2013). Emergence of a particular style of decision-making where there must be sustained co-ordination and coherence among a wide variety of actors with different purposes and views of society, different types of knowledge and different objectives.

Personal motivation

In the aspect of personal knowledge I refer to the general experiential knowledge of the study case with its complexity. The intersection between academic environment and experiential knowledge of the study help to understand the study case of Vilnius from two perspectives simultaneously. The perspective of a citizen gives insights to present processes from its actual societal realm and the perspective of international academic platform requires taking distance from the study case, as a research subject. Moreover as Vilnius is my hometown, the project may have its continuation after the graduation. Presenting it to the municipality, or architects and planners community may start a discussion of new ways to cope with soviet modernism architecture in the very core of the city.

Motivation for this study could be seen as a threefold aspect, which includes elements of academic research, professional interest and personal knowledge of the study case. This thesis could be understood as a momentum of knowledge generation where these components are synthesized by making advantage of each other. Firstly, I find the academic environment of the Department of Urbanism at the TU Delft an engaging academic environment that enables to establish international perspective towards the subject of research. Secondly, studio of Design as Politics is full of new insights to my professional interest in spatial transformations and relation between societal, economic and spatial functions, fields of their most active interaction, the points of connection and friction.

The case is motivating because the city is in Lithuania which a relatively small country where trends of globalization are particularly important in relation with the growth and performance of the local economy and urban form (Hamilton et al., 2005). Studying the context of a small country could provide a clear framework how to approach the trends of post-socialist transformation and globalization in a context of higher complexity. Approaches developed in the thesis might be applied to other cases in cities in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) countries where more than two thirds of the 300 million people live in cities and towns (Stanilov, 2007).

Aims, objectives, goal of design

The objectives of this thesis are to identify the relationship between finance, politics and spatial planning in the case study of post-socialist city Vilnius. Project is aimed to propose an efficient system of spatial planning, organizational change in legal reform and governance in order to achieve efficient spatial planning implementation within different scales of the City. District of Newtown in Vilnius is being explored in detail for it will test the proposed model of alternative spatial configuration and development.

Project is designed to construct a comprehensive and speculative planning paradigm for the city of Vilnius. Explore new forms and urban theories of territorial management, employed in policy making to avoid conflict and tension between the capacity of self-organized groups and the institutions of neo-liberal global corporations. The created spatial planning strategy will be tested in the physical environment in the district of Newtown. The feedback and design results will be used to evaluate the proposed spatial planning system. Role of architect and spatial planner will take an important role in the continuous process from spatial planning documents to their implementation in the specific locations.

THEORETICAL RESEARCH
Research is being put together to form new and adjust existing spatial organization planning systems in municipality of Vilnius. Seek for speculation-free urban policies. (Helps with theoretical background on how to cope with post-socialist city transformations)

PRACTICAL RESEARCH
Analysis
Vilnius as changing post-socialist city/ scenarios
Morphological features of Vilnius
Observation of Urbanity
(Helps to understand spatial qualities and problematic)

Figure 3. Representative illustration of my graduation project final product. Source: own image
Research theme: Governance

The project and research belongs to Urbanism Research Theme – Governance. Main relationship is with the chair ‘Design as politics’ (studio within which my research is being carried out), where future research activities are focusing on democratic legitimization in design and planning and the changing relationship between citizen and government in design and planning.

Research impact of applicable organizational planning knowledge and methods apply to the Governance research project theme of searching for roles and political positions in spatial planning amongst other policies including changing the conditions. Changing conditions are the political/economic shift from socialist to post-socialist city of Vilnius, which deals with new spatial policy making under circumstances of free-market economy.

Project asks and will try to answer in which capacity do actors act, who’s responsibility is to initiate project, how the phasing scheme works in terms of responsibility, where do the finance come from. Emergence of a particular style of decision-making where there must sustained co-ordination and coherence amongst a wide variety of actors with different purposes and views of society, different types of knowledge and different objectives.

Cities need to develop successful and long-term platforms for spatial projects to be vitalized successfully. All parties involved have to work together for the higher goal of developing realistic urban projects based on real needs and not on aims to generate capital. Growth-orientated urban strategies have to be applied and researched further under changing neo-liberal political conditions.

Zooming in method

The project objective might be resolved into three constituent parts referring to the main elements of the project, particularly to research, strategy and design. This thesis aims to understand the role of civil society in taking their part in vitalizing their own spaces. Methodological work-flow would fluctuate between strategic planning and economical issues affecting it with a goal to establish strategies and ways to maintain healthy urban society with sustainable urban structures and public spaces. The proposed model will provide a strategy, by which architects and urban planners would have a stronger dialog between civic, state and urban planners would have a stronger dialog between civic, state and municipal, communities and other stakeholders involved.

To analyze corresponding relationships, analysis of the context is carried out while zooming in throughout different scales: Lithuania, Vilnius, neighborhood of Newtown and cinema of Lithuania. This method is chosen in order to understand connected systematic problematics. Another important stage is to research how finances take part in urban development processes. Challenge is taken to identify and find ways to employ planning policies, which are of essential importance in urban development projects.

Main research question

How to restructure a system of spatial planning for long-term effects in Vilnius?

Sub research questions:

1. What could be alternative spatial planning policies and development models?
2. What are the spatial and socio-economic characteristics of a post-socialist city of Vilnius?
3. How to implement spatial strategies for the district of Newtown for them to work efficiently?
4. What is the role of City Elderships in Vilnius in the system of spatial planning?
5. What is the role of architect, urban planner in decision-making processes when implementing spatial plans throughout different city scales?

Theoretical framework

The literature reviewed includes diversity of researchers from various scientific fields (mostly Urbanism), which include theories and on-going research on socio-economic factors of cities. Chosen bibliography discuss the role of finance, real estate, architecture and planning inside the city processes, as well as analyses urban theories and practices from less successful to more successful. The base of research is based on critique of neo-liberal driven planning: Krzysztof Nawratek, Wouter Vanstiphout, David Harvey, Geoffrey West, Manuel Castells. Patterns of post-socialist city: Kiril Stanilov, Jiri Musil. Urban strategies and theories: Luca D’Acci, David Harvey, Kevin Lynch and Jane Jacobs. The main line and the core of theoretical framework focuses on the post-socialist city in transition countries and particularly Central and Eastern European countries.

Besides academic literature, graduation projects of Tadas Jonasukis, Ignas Rakauskas, Justina Muliuolyte were studied due to similar case studies of post-socialist city transformations.

Practical research methods

Mapping will be used for morphological analysis. The spatial and functional model of the country in European network, the role of Newtown neighborhood in the city will be mapped first. The structural changes of Vilnius during the transformation, combined with predictable positive and negative scenarios will follow. Analysis of the city scale in terms of spatial model, functional model will help to understand the concentration and lack of qualities in the structure. Further analysis will include the characteristics of separate typological areas in terms of ground use, continuity, housing typology and functional programme. Kevin Lynch’s 5 element morphological analysis will suggest which parts of the Newtown area need most attention and a possible location for an intervention. Predicting scenarios and system of spatial planning will be a part of research that will provide insights into positive / negative aspects of the future. Based on this prognosis, vision of the city will be also formulated. Interventions will be reflected according to possible future scenarios in order to evaluate the externalities.
**Literature review**
This method will be applied to explore answers to research questions that consider:
- Changing role of Vilnius during the spatial/economic shift;
- Evolution of the system of spatial planning;
- The main development trends and alternative models;
- Potential ways to redevelop abandoned sovietic structures.

**Mapping**
This method will be applied to explore answers to research questions that consider:
- The role of Vilnius in the national and regional networks;
- The evolution of the structure of Newtown before, during and after socialism;
- The functional and spatial model of Vilnius;
- Different morphological typologies of the Newtown area;
- Major activity areas;
- The main development trends.

**Statistics**
Techniques: data collection and interpretation.
Application: context analysis, insights, support and argumentation.

**Observation**
Types: observation of physical environment and behaviour;
Applications: evaluating existing spatial qualities, physical conditions.

**Drawing and modelling**
Types: conceptual, descriptive, explorative.
Applications: testing design proposals; summarizing conclusions, conceptualizing principles, conditions; communicating strategic elements.

**Case studies**
Application: developing strategic concepts, design proposals, recognizing particularities of conditions, ideas.

**Predicting scenarios**
This method will be applied to explore answers to research questions that consider:
- Shifting role of Vilnius during the transformation;
- Changing system of spatial planning. Prognosis: threats and potentials;
- Possible scenarios of urban development of Newtown;
- Possible regeneration strategies for disused soviet architecture.

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**Figure 25. Testing the strategy with the design. Source: own image**

**Figure 5. This thesis plan working strategy. Source: own image**
Vilnius is a post-socialist city, which faced the transition of political powers from socialism in Soviet Union to an independent, neo-liberal welfare state. Vilnius having a huge socialist influence and being independent only for a couple of decades is still in search of ethnic, spatial, architectural and other identities. The first part of the research introduces the reader with a theoretical paper about the seriousness of finances in architectural world and how it affected real estate, city form, architectural expression itself and in the end the role of an architect.

Second part is zooming to Lithuania, Vilnius and its district Newtown. Context is being introduced alongside with its problematics and urban complexity. Besides that, morphological and historical analysis is provided for better understanding of the urban fabric. Research is filled with existing case studies, urban theories and practical strategies.

The end of a chapter concludes the research with a schematic research scheme and closing paragraph.
Abstract

The importance of understanding the economy of cities unfolds in the academic domain: theoretical physicists Geoffrey West (2011) - “I can assure you that we desperately need a serious science of cities to complement the traditional social sciences and economical sciences of cities”. Historian of architecture Wouter vanstiphout (2013) - “Money has become the central critical issue for architecture and planning. How to plan and build when public and private funds have dried up?”. Professor of Anthropology and Geography David Harvey (2012) asks: “How can we stop the city being constructed and reconstructed by the power of the developers, financiers and all of those who make profit of speculative housing?”. The selection of quotes by renowned trans-disciplinary academics illustrate that integrative approach towards handling cities has to be developed; way further theoretically and practically than it is today.

Understanding of global economy, finances and money flows has to receive much more attention by spatial professionals. The main objectives of this paper are to give reason and understanding of the situation, where and how specifically architecture and urbanism fields should (and why) shift after recent financial recession and how they are interconnected with the real estate and financial world. If the roles of architects and planners have to change (vanstiphout, 2012), then how and in what terms? Roles of main contributors to the city life are examined: how municipalities, governments, private developers, civil society and spatial planners can act in order to help to prevent future economic crises? The literature reviewed includes diversity of researchers from various scientific fields (mostly Urbanism), which include theories and on-going research on socio-economic factors of cities. Chosen bibliography discuss the role of finance, real estate, architecture and planning inside the city processes, as well as analyses urban theories and practices from less developed way further theoretically and practically than it is today.

Understanding of global economy, finances and money flows has to receive much more attention by spatial professionals. The main objectives of this paper are to give reason and understanding of the situation, where and how specifically architecture and urbanism fields should (and why) shift after recent financial recession and how they are interconnected with the real estate and financial world. If the roles of architects and planners have to change (vanstiphout, 2012), then how and in what terms? Roles of main contributors to the city life are examined: how municipalities, governments, private developers, civil society and spatial planners can act in order to help to prevent future economic crises? The literature reviewed includes diversity of researchers from various scientific fields (mostly Urbanism), which include theories and on-going research on socio-economic factors of cities. Chosen bibliography discuss the role of finance, real estate, architecture and planning inside the city processes, as well as analyses urban theories and practices from less successful to more successful. Investigation is exemplified by empirical research.

It is commonly known that in the coming years the greatest challenge for planners, architects and civil society will be to adopt entirely new financial paradigms and specific programmes at the same time transcending linear disciplinary knowledge in order to be free of speculation, alienation and exploitation. There is an enormous potential created by the collapse of the old financial systems (Geel, 2012) to create an architecture that could exist on its own terms. Could it exist either through total reuse of existing material resources, maybe new financial currencies and models or simply by exchange of goods without finances? How to avoid decline-oriented planning?

Finance and architecture

Alongside investment banks and banks, architecture and architects should be blamed for the global financial crisis that hit cities in 2008. Risky financial speculations were driven by a real estate bubble that relied on the production of spectacular, expensive buildings by the architecture industry. Four years later, contemporary architecture (especially in Europe) still fails to engage with or promote socially aware, progressive urban thinking. - Krzysztof Nawratek (2012), dean of Plymouth University, faculty of architecture.

The practice of architecture has always been a function of politics, culture and economy; historically, architects served only those people or organizations who had power and money (Nawratek, 2012). Today public and private money funds have dried up to be exchanged for goods. Lack of funds have become the central corner stone for bankruptcy of many architectural and planning oriented offices (vanstiphout, 2013). Mindset of civic society shifted towards saving money, withdrawing it from banks and leading the economy of cities down the ladder with the sector of construction to be partly or completely halted (Kaklauskas, Zavadskas, Bagdonavičius, Kelpsiene, Bardauskiene, Kutu, 2010). Manuel Castells (2012), Spanish sociologist, argues that economies and societies based on an unsustainable model of speculative finance and political irresponsibility require a transformation of the mindset that led to bankruptcy and despair.

The literature selected for the review ranges from theoretical works of urban planning, policies and urban economy, dedicated to public realm, to empirical research of various urban strategies. Recent studies of real estate bubble and financial crisis are simultaneously compared and juxtaposed with direct influence to urban planning and public space. It has to be noted that researchers from various countries engaged in the analysis of crisis in the construction and real estate sectors, therefore the mentioned analysis must be as important (if not more) to architect and urbanist professionals.

This book is an attempt to analyze three major periods in the history of architecture and urbanism in order to understand the crisis that led to bankruptcy and despair. The literature selected for the review ranges from theoretical works of urban planning, policies and urban economy, dedicated to public realm, to empirical research of various urban strategies. Recent studies of real estate bubble and financial crisis are simultaneously compared and juxtaposed with direct influence to urban planning and public space. It has to be noted that researchers from various countries engaged in the analysis of crisis in the construction and real estate sectors, therefore the mentioned analysis must be as important (if not more) to architect and urbanist professionals.

Financial crisis, real estate bubbles

This section briefly explains how the real estate bubble burst after recent financial recession and how specifically architecture and urbanism fields should give reason and understanding of the situation, where and how they are interconnected with the real estate and financial world. If the roles of architects and planners have to change (vanstiphout, 2012), then how and in what terms? Roles of main contributors to the city life are examined: how municipalities, governments, private developers, civil society and spatial planners can act in order to help to prevent future economic crises? The literature reviewed includes diversity of researchers from various scientific fields (mostly Urbanism), which include theories and on-going research on socio-economic factors of cities. Chosen bibliography discuss the role of finance, real estate, architecture and planning inside the city processes, as well as analyses urban theories and practices from less successful to more successful. Investigation is exemplified by empirical research.

It is commonly known that in the coming years the greatest challenge for planners, architects and civil society will be to adopt entirely new financial paradigms and specific programmes at the same time transcending linear disciplinary knowledge in order to be free of speculation, alienation and exploitation. There is an enormous potential created by the collapse of the old financial systems (Geel, 2012) to create an architecture that could exist on its own terms. Could it exist either through total reuse of existing material resources, maybe new financial currencies and models or simply by exchange of goods without finances? How to avoid decline-oriented planning?

This book is an attempt to analyze three major periods in the history of architecture and urbanism in order to understand the crisis that led to bankruptcy and despair. The literature selected for the review ranges from theoretical works of urban planning, policies and urban economy, dedicated to public realm, to empirical research of various urban strategies. Recent studies of real estate bubble and financial crisis are simultaneously compared and juxtaposed with direct influence to urban planning and public space. It has to be noted that researchers from various countries engaged in the analysis of crisis in the construction and real estate sectors, therefore the mentioned analysis must be as important (if not more) to architect and urbanist professionals.

Financial crisis, real estate bubbles

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Capitalism driven planning

Capitalism driven planning often means no planning at all, but intentionally relies on free-market economy, which controls how the city shapes its economy, thus giving it physical form as it follows after (Nawratek, 2012). In result through history urban ghettos were and are being planned, mostly due the influence from the rich (often the same people, who run strongest corporations or are in power of money). Causes of such chaotic actions and no actions create and lengthen the gap between rich and poor, which is later followed by processes gentrification in some cases.

Urban projects are currently so dominated by the complexity of the political and the financial process that this has become a major issue to an effective collective and public debate on the future of the city (Vanstiphout, 2013). Krzysztof Nawratek (2012) is criticizing urban politics that is too often captured by the “totalitarian logic of profit”, he prompts much needed thinking about how to construct progressive political institutions that empower both cities and their citizens. As Contemporary cities are mostly pools of labor, they are fields to be exploited by global corporations, they are not political subjects, they are not able to govern their own territory.

While the mechanism of capital welfare spins, corporations became increasingly able to take over tasks from municipalities. Therefore municipal institutions become directly dependent on capital appreciation if they are to carry out their public duties at all. The daily maintenance of the welfare state was made dependent upon a perpetuum mobile of appreciation through growth (Vanstiphout, 2013). Construction was needed in order to keep the mechanism working, even without an immediate need and even when there was no money for it. The municipal planning in some cities become the sum of deals and structures over which there is little chance of democratic control and that the civic society merely understands (Vanstiphout, 2013).

Need for alternative strategies

During the last decade economic development opportunities was the overriding concern, pushing all other considerations into the background. The overly permissive attitude of local authorities towards new development echoed the philosophy of the state governments of encouraging new investments at all costs, with little concern for assessing potential negative social or environmental impacts (Stanilov, 2007). Possible policies to avoid real estate speculation, thus empowering feasible city life are needed. The struggle against market driven planning and economy requires certain criteria and efficient, reliable urban theories of how to plan cities. Site-specific land use plans and regulations could help to prevent real estate speculations while also empowering healthy economic activities. We ought to replace tabula rasa approach with models of gradual growth, which would form integral part of the planning (Vanstiphout, 2012).

Communication among the various professionals involved in urban planning has been difficult. The current triangle (architect, developer, builder) still caters to a ‘spatial reality’ that is not efficiently connected with issues related to sustainable economic growth, social diversity and justice, and stewardships over natural and environmental resources (Friedman, 2005). Currently, not all roles, needs, and interests of the various actors are recognized, even when sometimes they overlap. Private developers and investors, on the other hand, have become powerful and important players, whose activities in the land development process should be more efficiently regulated (Stanilov, 2007: 407).

Viavle urban and architectural projects, with series of public network, trans-disciplinary participation and best regard to site-specific conditions are to create and generate safety in financial terms (Vanstiphout, 2012).

Conflict

Now cities are increasingly renewed by large-scale projects rather than by long-term visions. Public-private partnerships are organized to engage complex developments in strategic sites. The developments are comprised of multiple and often conflicting interest over the issue of finance, which is simultaneously negotiated. The traditional tools of architecture and urban planning are simply not equipped to deal with the conditions that arise, nor architects and planners can always withstand the pressure of investors. Wouter Vanstiphout asks: ‘Why to design new buildings, when the existing ones are not even finished or used? Why design public spaces when cities are unable to even care for or maintain the existing parks and streets?’. Conflict arises in todays reality and in welfare state as it is, an architect must create an illusion of naturalness with which to surround it, to build a buildings, large-scale projects without the necessity for the city, whether functional or cultural it should be. The image of a building becomes the priority for both for municipal authorities and the civic society (Vanstiphout, 2013).

Changing role of an architect

Architects (as well as urban planners) need to re-establish civic trust in their profession. The straightforwardness of the site-specific projects could be a much-needed antidote to the degradation of credibility that big plans brought to architecture and urban planning. Wouter Vanstiphout: ‘Being precise about the feasibility and the effectiveness of a plan means being completely accountable’. Thus it would empower architects and planners with the decision-making role as it once was before capitalist oriented free-market economy.

The tradition of socially engaged architecture has almost vanished. Our new cities of austerity require a reassessment of this attitude, and a fresh generation of architects must be educated to address the challenges facing our urban environment (Nawratek, 2012). He presents a theoretical framework of a new paradigm of quite radical architecture and radical architecture education, as a function of a strong social and political positions taken by students.
Complementarity between text and image in Urbanism

By Donatas Baltušaitis, Tomas Kauliauskas

Abstract

The main research questions raised in this text is how smoothly and seamlessly connect academic research and design processes. This question was chosen due to observations on how academic assignments are carried out in different Urbanism track studios in TU Delft. One could argue that syllabus of these assignments are prepared in such a way that it is relatively difficult for students to link the academic research and design part of the project. We make an assumption that there is a crucial link that helps connect these processes and that the importance of this link is not clearly stressed in most of the mentioned studios. We will take the Vertical Cities Asia studio syllabus as an example of how these two processes could be smoothly linked and compare it with other studios in Urbanism track. This as a part of specific creative and scientific category. As a conclusion on our research we will propose a clear strategy of a fluent workflow from research to design.

Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to investigate what could be a clear methodological strategy which fluently connects academic research and design processes, especially in the field of Urbanism, is not usually carried out based only on intuition and creativity. In this case, the importance of research is crucial as conclusions of this process provide logical arguments for design decision. The problem was chosen due to observations of the academic workflow while studying in different studios in Urbanism track, TU Delft. It is important to say that due to high academic standards TU Delft has developed effective methodological program that helps students set design (as rather subjective discipline) in a certain academic research based framework. Almost every studio in the mentioned track has research and design stages in their working syllabus. However some studios tend to choose different ways of connecting these stages. What is more, sometimes different tutors interpret the syllabus depending on their particular style of working. That is why sometimes it is rather difficult to smoothly connect one program stage with another. Our argument towards the answer to the research question will be presented by comparing two programs from different urbanism track studios in TU Delft. If we would place Urbanism in a category of creative and cultural disciplines it is important to mention that a complementary between text and image is an important criterion that defines research in this field. That is why during this research we will use mentioned criterion to compare different approaches. We will begin our investigation by briefly discussing the literature on the subject of research and design in order to set a certain theoretical framework. The work will be proceeded by comparing the projects of two studios: Vertical Cities Asia studio with the syllabus of Vertical Cities Asia studio. The mentioned studio will be presented as an example of clear transition between research and design stages. The essay will be concluded by presenting clear methodological strategy that smoothly connects academic research and design stages.

Analysis of R&D studio workflow

The name of the studio itself suggests the work sequence: Research and Design. We want to look at the transition between these stages, to see how and if they are connected. Our personal experience in different R&D studios in TU Delft (following these studios in Q1 and Q2 of first year Master degree studies) suggests that transition between research and design parts is confusing. The reason for this is that sometimes students jump from research to design avoiding research conclusions. Why could this happen? If we analyze the project stages in the syllabus of Q1 or Q2 R&D studio we would find a coherent sequence of working stages. First step is the fieldwork stage, where students are investigating existing physical surrounding of the project area. Then comes analysis, which in the end is followed by problematic diagnosis, conclusions and design. As we see syllabus offers a clear and organized work structure, therefore we could say that university has established standards for evaluation and that is why the education can be called of high quality. However, confusion exists. Let us see possible reasons why. Following our personal experience we recognized following issues in R&D studios. Firstly, the time period for completion of projects differ from majority of other courses of faculty. Given period of six weeks may cause the projects to be poorly under built from theory to design. If the time frame would be more consistent and more compressed or strictly divided, students would have to complete each stage in time and start another stage following the results of the previous one. Secondly, students have different understanding of academic standards. For example, Urbanism as a term for a broad definition is understood very differently, which sometimes causes misunderstanding of what one has to achieve and follow during studies. Which leads to the second notice: design projects may be radically different, even interdisciplinary as discipline of Urbanism itself. On the other hand it may be risky to explore any scientific field of study while lacking its basic knowledge, the end result may be of naive argumentation. Finally, as stressed before: students are not enough stimulated to practice their critical and unique way of thinking. Curriculum in these studios does not offer kind of supporting subjects that help students practice “their own voice”, ability to reflect and think rationally and critically. Implemented methodology courses are teaching students the importance of being systematic, explicit and arguable, however the courses are not there in the first semester of MCs Urbanism track. Problematic scheme is visualized to a diagram below (Figure 1):

Analysis of Vertical Cities Asia studio workflow

To begin this part it is important to mention that VCA (Vertical Cities Asia) studio belongs to Complex Projects, a scientific field of study. All the studios of Complex Projects share a conceptual approach towards architecture and planning. Complex Projects proposes a fundamental shift of how we define ourselves as ‘architects' stating that traditional linear roles which define Planning, Urban design and Architecture are no longer coherent to today’s demands and needs. Complex developments within metropolitan areas and complex environments require complex projects, for which VCA studio, in particular, invites students from Architecture and Urbanism tracks to conjunct (also engineers from other faculties are invited to participate). This chapter will try to reveal studio purposes, tasks and compare them to R&D studios in a textual framework. Vertical Cities Asia studio is an invited university competition, created and organized by National University of Singapore gathering students from 10 universities. Working methodology in VCA has a clear and fluent structure consisting of weekly group updates on risen questions, weekly readings (topics range from modern philosophy to architectural history) to weekly assignments. VCA syllabus consists of 4 phases: Research, Analysis, Design proposal and Design production, for all of them 23 weeks are given. It might seem that R&D syllabus is quite the same in terms of phasing, however there are differences in appliance of methodology, time given and tutor count (VCA has 4 tutors). For instance, in VCA, research stage is strictly separated from design stage in order to have a fluent transition between phases, while it is not always the case in R&D projects, where phases interrelate. The process itself is described in this studio as “designers starvation”, students are not allowed to design until they complete the research. By completion we mean that the research has reached a critical point when students can form conclusions. It is very important to state that reading exercises (which are selected by tutors following the complexity of the problems found in research) contributes by encouraging students to take their own position (make a statement). Complexity in the studio might also be described as ill to educate students in multitude of sciences forcing to see beyond studying disciplinary, whereas in R&D most of the focus goes to play the role of urbanist. To go a bit philosophical, Urbanism is also described not as a pure discipline, more as a mediator in between disciplinary [ROCCO AND ROOIJ, 2010], but even so there is ongoing process trying to define the role of urbanist, so if there is such an ongoing question maybe urbanist has to be more ‘architect’ as planner and architect, how it was not more than century ago. In any case, that’s the main focus of what Complex Projects are about, trying to connect both disciplines. For the role of text and image in the studio they are very well complemented with the end result of a research book, design proposal book and supplementary booklets. Research book consists of essays written by students, which are then illustrated by collages summing up the issues faced, proposals and other issues. Even video method of teaching is often used to educate as well as promoted for research. R&D studios final result consists of book of the projects required for the materials to be provided are smaller. It seems that the problematical raised by R. Rocco’s and R.Rooij’s text (practitioner and academic conflict) [ROCCO AND ROOIJ, 2010] is more or less covered in VCA, studio is indeed able to combine and value theory and practice. Here experienced architects and planners joined their hands towards solving complexity in projects. To sum up VCA methods are contemporary and at the same time old-fashioned (planner and architect as one), bringing new ideas and insights about multiple layers of society, economy and spatial matters. Figure 2 illustrates continuous working cycle, used in VCA studio.
Workflow practices and methods

This paragraph may be called supplementary, because of its nature to provide new insights into research methods and not to question the problems. To present research and design effectively, certain methods have to be applied. As mentioned before and in the analyzing topic, image and text roles are the primary ones, however more interesting insights and new ideas may be generated through different means of sensing and understanding the environment. What Biggs and Büchler in practice-based research didn’t analyze in their criteria [BIGGS AND BÜCHLER, 2008] are means of research such as moving images (video) and sound. The broad possibilities of various techniques and methods are contracted to a schematic diagram below (Figure 3). However, video and sound methods are poorly implemented and used in MSc track of Urbanism. We do not argue that mentioned other methods and techniques are more important, they are not, but new activities lead to new discoveries. Sometimes some certain tutors might encourage to use recordings and interviewing, but the syllabus and project requirements at the end leave students only with the role of text and image.

Conclusions: how to connect?

For the first part of the paper, we analyzed recommended literature and set up the theoretical framework which we use to evaluate the R&D syllabus with its appliance in practice and compared it to Complex Projects studio VCA. To reflect briefly the lessons learned from the text, it must be mentioned again that R&D (Q1 and Q2) studio syllabus does not always reflect the reality. Students and tutors having different beliefs and scientific backgrounds face the issue of interpretation, sometimes not clear definitions, what causes misunderstandings throughout different project stages. The proposed methodological strategy to connect research and design stages fluently, which answers our central question of the essay, would be similar as described in the workflow of VCA studio. Non-linear continuous processes with fluent transitions throughout working stages based on scientific research: orderly strict cyclical work methods have to be applied in order to develop analytical and critical thinking skills. For that Scientific and Design Paradigms have to be embedded into each other. Design has to be supported and driven by phases of scientific research and inquiry. One must organize structure and methods to avoid chaos and disarray. To make good urban design one needs a thorough analysis of the problem and of the area and surroundings of the design. Designing must include a methodology, which makes the process systematic and adds to the scientific level of design disciplines.

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Figure 6. Schematic diagram between Research and Design. Source: own image
From Soviet Union to European Union

Since 1990 urban changes in Lithuania that were brought by the collapse of communist regimes in the former socialist countries were very intensive due to the fact that they comprise two simultaneously running transformations. One is the complex of transformations from an authoritarian, non-pluralistic political system to a democratic and pluralistic one and from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. The other changes are brought by globalization processes (Musil, 2005). It has been a challenging period of political, social and economic reforms that had similar patterns in all post-socialist countries and it had a particular impact on the spatial organization of cities.

In 1990 Lithuania declared independence from Soviet Union and was accepted to EU in 2004. The position in political and economic networks has shifted radically. Vilnius has faced a transition from industry based economy to service based economy. Centralized ‘top-down’ planning became decentralized, poorly coordinated and market driven planning. Compact monocentric city structure became sprawling and polycentric. Municipalities and therefore cities become dependent on free-market economy and corporate investors, which controls how the city shapes its physical appearance (Harvey, 2013). The topic is important to address because ‘the patterns of spatial organization, which are being established during this fairly limited but critical timeframe of a post-socialist transformation, are likely to set the course of the future development of CEE cities for a long time’ (Stanilov, 2007: 5). Therefore, there is a good opportunity to be critical about the most recent planning practices and their relation to politics.

Urban development in Lithuania

Lithuanian urban development is closely linked with the West European culture. In the recent socialist past of Lithuania, these links had weakened, while after the regaining independence in 1990, Soviet territorial planning and management system lost its force. The new planning system came into force in 1995 after the adopting the Law on territory planning. New system was applied on the developing market and democracy conditions. The impact of a new planning system on the physical environment became obviously visible after 2004, when the economic growth and the possibility to use the EU funds started. (Kaklauskas, Zavadskas 2010).

Lithuania faced a spatial planning shift from Group settlement system with the goal to eliminate social differences between territorial units to a system based on market forces, where cities depend on endogenous economic and social potentials, on their economic base and on the quality of their local authorities (Juskevicius, 2006).

From socialist to the free market economy

The main engine of the development was construction of the housing, cheap debts provided by commercial banks and people hopefulness. The result of this short sighted vision is seen in the new urban forms, in the appearance of monofunctional land-use, separate buildings without the infrastructure required and new life style in “sleeping districts”. Rapid development of green field on the suburbs participated in creating the real estate property bubble (2006 – 2008) (Mulliolyte, 2010). Sustainable development is based on long-term vision, nevertheless, till the year 2009 not all municipalities had Master plans. The development was performed by detailed plans, where citizens or investors had their parcels and own vision. Due to the prolonged restitution and privatization process, city territories that were planned for multistory apartments development, had shown high land prices, burdens on infrastructure. Lithuania is facing transition from socialist to free market economy. However it has brought Greenfield investments to the suburban areas. Effects of real estate bubble and financial crisis affected Lithuanian capital Vilnius the most (Kaklauskas, Zavadskas, Bagdonavicius, Kelpsiene, Barauskiene, Kulut, 2010).
ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT: LITHUANIA

Industry based economy
- Service based economy

Centralized ‘top-down’ planning
- Decentralized, poorly coordinated, market oriented planning

Compact, monocentric city structure
- Sprawling, polycentric city structure

Growing population
- Shrinking population

Opportunities for people to enjoy advantages of capitalism appeared. Car based developments following the needs of a market based economy like expansion of private houses into suburbia, shopping malls, decay of public transport are the characteristics of city in a transition period.

Figure 8. Group settlement system, source: Ignas Rackauskas
Figure 9. System based on market forces, source: Tadas Jonauskis

Fig 10. Historical timeline, source: own image.

1940-1990 Soviet territorial planning and management
Vilnius city extention
Soviet sleeping districts

1990 Lithuanian independence
1995 New planning system. Law on territory planning (free market and democracy conditions)
2000 2004 EU structural funds for regional development
2006-2008 Real estate bubble. Rapid development of suburbs
2007-NOW. Financial recession. Urban, architectural

Pranciskus Juskevicius Planner

Kiril Stanilov Planner

No market based economic relations between cities were formed, which made the whole settlement network very vulnerable to system change.

Fig 11. Position of Lithuania in Soviet Union (top right) and European Union (top left), source: author's reproduction.
**Historical development**

Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, at a first glance like any other modern European city, with a historical downtown, a fancy central business district, a large amount of entertainment and busy street life. Until 19th century Vilnius was a compact European city with diverse neighbourhoods, from 1944-1990 it became a socialist city being heavily influenced by Soviet Union. Now Vilnius is a typical post-socialist city in a period of transition facing serious urban problems. After 50 years of modest lifestyle under the socialism regime, in 1991 countries that com- posed the former USSR regained independence (Juskevi- cius, 2006).

**Opportunities of capitalism**

Opportunities for people to enjoy advantages of capitalism appeared. New habits affected city structure a lot. Car based developments following the needs of a market based economy like expansion of private houses into suburbia, shopping malls, concentration of functions in the centre, decay of public transport are the characteris- tics of city in a transition period. Soviet influence to people mindset is still on-going topic of discussions and research (Stanilov, 2007).

**Vilnius Masterplan**

The most important planning document made by Vilnius municipality for Vilnius: Vilnius City Masterplan for 2015. It outlines directions for Vilnius city development and development priorities. The plan has been developed on the basis of society needs regarding the future of the city. The Master Plan has been developed so as to ensure continuity of the planning work and the constructions in progress and to guarantee stability of investment and socio-economic growth. Many parts and suggestions of Vilnius Masterplan were not accomplished due to number of reasons: financial recession, inefficient planning implementation principle, weak coordination between municipal authorities and decision-makers and real estate speculations.

Current planning system in respect to the city planning consist of: General Plans and Special plans, which are prepared on the scale of the city, while Detailed plans are prepared on the very local levels. Such system does not cover the medium levels of developments of districts or neighbourhood scale (Juskevicius, 2006).
Centralized power

It is a common practice to alter the land use according to the private interests which opens possibilities for real-estate speculations and manipulations in favour of narrow interest groups and for personal profit. Moreover from the year of 2014, Vilnius municipality is declining number of elderships (lesser governance level) from 21 to 16, leaving only few employees in remaining elderships. This is being done in order to establish centralized power in main headquarters. Eliminating lesser local governance weakens the distribution of spatial planning implementations (Source close to municipality). David Harvey (2010) on total transformation of municipalities in neo-liberal environment: ‘It is not only about privileging financial sector, it is also about creating good business climate, but what you do is you say yes, there is a role for municipal services: not to serve the people, but they should create a good business climate.

Vilnius identity

Vilnius having a huge socialist influence and being independent only for couple of decades is in search of ethnic, graphical, spatial, architectural and other identities. In order to promote city as a destination area, Vilnius municipality organized a lot of vague attempts to create visual identity almost from nothing. However no serious attempts were made to establish and promote urban identity within physical environment. If to talk about architectural identity, enormous potential lies in soviet architectural heritage, unique soviet modernism, which served and in some cases still serves public function. However number of them are disused, unused, privatized and even abandoned. Initially conservation of urban heritage is seen as a constraint to the introduction of high-density developments, which make profit, into established inner city areas to contain urban sprawl. There are barely any municipal policies trying to save them and resurrect for a new functional use.

Fig 14. Mass of unconnected, different visions for Vilnius - vague attempts to find visual identity. Source: own reproduction.

Figure 15. Levels of spatial planning, source: www.vilnius.lt
ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT: NEWTOWN

Historical development

Newtown unlike its name says (eng. Newtown), is one of the oldest districts of the Vilnius city. But even considering that, currently it is really hard to define what is the image of Naujamiestis in whole city, as it only started forming its own face, in a organized and clear direction – district for modern, contemporary lifestyle. Previously it was just a combination of separate blocks of industrial, which only seem damaging, and residential development of many varieties.

Rigid urban grid

History of Newtown not only bears the marks of different planning and urban ideas, but also shows different governing powers present in different periods. In 1875 a master plan of Vilnius was approved. This plan included the most drastic changes to Newtown – a regular street network was established, the district was divided into almost similar sized blocks with perimetric development in most parts leaving the rest of urban fabric positioned irrationally.

Morphological analysis

The dominating morphology in the analyzed territory is perimetric (central area representative) and industrial. Spatial structure in the analysed territory is very clear, where most of the spaces have their clear form with slight variations. This is due to the grid like structure of the block and perimetric development. Most problematic areas can be found within the blocks themselves, where conflicts appears between different types of development (free-standing, apartment buildings or homesteads).

The general situation of architectural value of the buildings in the analyzed territory could be described as average, as most of the buildings bear the signs of their original period. There are some buildings bearing the features of the previous urban layout, which was not so regular. This should be used while deciding future development. As a single example of architecture they are lost, but the signs of the urban structure are important.

The majority of buildings only need renovation or slight repairs. The most of the buildings in poor or critical condition are homesteads in the blocks. These are the remains of previous urban structure. The industrial buildings in the territory are also in a poor condition however some of them are being repaired and converted into residential lofts.

Figure 16. Newtown historical growth

Figure 17. Morphological analysis
Disused or unused soviet modernism

Vilnius itself has approximately over one hundred abandoned buildings registered. Abandoned buildings cause decrease of land value in surrounding areas, are not aesthetic, become illegal shelters for squatters, crimes and homeless, city becomes inefficient in terms of sustainable living density. Newtown alone has over 30 registered abandoned buildings. Initially conservation of urban heritage is seen as a constraint to the introduction of high-density developments, which make profit, into established inner city areas to contain urban sprawl. There are barely any municipal policies trying to save them and resurrect for a new functional use.

The project uses soviet modernism objects as signs of identity and reuses the most unique abandoned buildings as for Centrality points for the neighborhood with specific cultural and civic functions.

No vision for Newtown

Currently nobody knows how the Newtown should look like and what physical, social or cultural identity it should have. There were quite some attempts and architectural workshops with the purpose to regenerate Newtown and brainstorm design ideas to make it lively and comfortable to live. However even if there were some interesting and worthy ideas, they were never realized, because there was no funding and very little interest from Vilnius municipality.

My graduation project is intended to generate identity through physical character, entrepreneurship ideas to regenerate abandoned buildings and long-term vision for future development.
NEW DEVELOPMENTS ARE MOSTLY COMMERCIAL

A LOT OF UNREALIZED URBAN PROJECTS

Figure 21. Mass of unconnected visions for Newtown, source: own reproduction

Figure 22. Disused or unused soviet modernism objects in Newtown, source: own reproduction
Theory of 5 elements

For evaluation of the current morphological and spatial qualities of the Newtown I used Kevin Lynch (1960). It is a system of mental maps to identify and if not existent to plan: (1) paths, routes along which people move throughout the city, (2) edges, boundaries and breaks in continuity, (3) districts: areas characterized by common characteristics, (4) nodes, strategic focus points for orientation like squares and junctions, and (5) landmarks: external points of orientation. The elements will be identified on the design proposal drawings.

ANT Actor-Network Theory

Research strategy ANT (Actor-network theory) by Anne Tietjen (2007) is aimed to understand the multiplicity of stakeholders and their roles. It is a method for describing how complex relationships are built and how they are maintained. A design process in ANT terms is a translation of complicated process from site survey and mapping to project development and realization. This approach helps flexibly move between different actors resulting in striving result of collective performance.

Isobenefit Urbanism

Isobenefit Urbanism (by Luca D’Acci 2013) is a Modern-Postmodern urban planning philosophy mixing guidance and modernity (Modernism) with spontaneity and emergence (Postmodernism) which:
1. Desires a beautiful city not only for the rich, but for everyone.
2. Wants a city where each dweller can do the habitual daily activities by walking and biking.
3. Imposes nature in the city. The theory goes that composition, morphology and design, must spontaneously vary, otherwise we will have a robotic, boring city, without any genius loci throughout its areas, and, in another scale, throughout cities.

Mat Urbanism

Mat Urbanism refers to a flexible framework for relating to a site through an uninterrupted continuation of the urban fabric into its own spatial network. The network of pathways, courtyards and platforms allow the neighboring urban or natural fabric to flow seamlessly through the project. Mat-buildings thus establish a system of relationships, present and potential, between the built and the natural. The spaces of transition and connection offer ‘poetry of movement’ and a ‘sense of connectivity’. The very essence of mats is urban: architecture made of relationships rather than form. (Forés, 2012).
SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH IN A SCHEME

Financial crises have to be dealt with

Architects, designers and planners ought to seek not for a fancy, effective efficient and selling image, which is great and inspiring, maybe sometimes innovative, but for coherence to the actual needs of the context and needs of the specific location (Vanstiphout, 2013). Cities need to develop successful and long-term platforms for spatial projects to be vitalized successfully. All parties involved have to work together for the higher goal of developing realistic urban projects based on real needs and not on aims to generate capital. ‘What political project has to be, is to make use value dominate rather than the exchange value, that is education, healthcare, housing, we construct a society, which is delivering use value to people, not a society, which is worrying excessively how much money can be made and how much exchange money can be made.’ (David Harvey, 2012).

We have to use the potential and opportunities created by the collapse of the financial world to develop our mindsets, new unexplored urban theories and look for ways to create progressive architecture and spaces through reuse of existing physical structures. For methodological part, growth-oriented practices and urban models have to be applied and explored further. If architecture and urbanism is to survive, it will have to place financing and money at the center of its attention, and it will have to be just as creative in its financial architecture, as in the design of spaces and materials (Vanstiphout, 2013).

For the very end I will cite quite didactic and practical quote again by Krzysztof Nawratel, who inspired me the most while researching the topic: ‘There is an obvious and intellectually stimulating understanding of the tension between the capacity of self-organized groups and the institutions of neo-liberal global corporations. There are many tools applied to deal with this tension – from Actor Network Theory, to the Marxist general intellect concept as promoted by Italian autonomists, as a new definition of the ‘common good’. Based on the optimistic scenario of a post-crisis future mentioned above, students tend to analyse the ‘enemy’s’ effectiveness – and weaknesses – in order to find progressive solutions to contemporary crises. Finally, students should learn how to identify the cracks and gaps in our legal and socio-economic structures and then how to hack these existing systems that they might be prepared for a post-neo-liberal future. The idea of “togetherness” is the key to creating new, progressive architecture.’

It is not only about privileging financial sector, yes there is a role for municipal services, not to serve the people, but they should create a good business climate.
In the momentum of outlined conclusions for regeneration of unique soviet modernism in the area of Newtown, architectural competition for reviving Cinema of Lithuania appeared. This year (2014) “LRN projects” and Lithuanian Union of Architects announced architectural - conceptual competition of “Lithuania” cinema theater. The program is administrative building with Modern Art Centre. In relevance to my research questions and design aims, I decided to participate in the competition. This was done as a method to research current trends in treating soviet modernism and to suggest a real project proposal for the city, which derived from the research of this thesis. However the end results of the competition were disappointing. “Another competition with similar results and lots of critique from architectural community. Winning projects are disappointment as the rest of the competition, it's conditions and the results. One can easily suspect corruption.” - architectural historian Marija Dremaite (2014). Final results only proved the outlined research that existing system of spatial planning is inefficient, capital and profit oriented with direct ties to corporate investors. My graduation project will try to provide an alternative to avoid such conflicts as mentioned.
FROM CINEMA OF LITHUANIA
TO MODERN ART CENTRE

GRADUATION THESIS PLAN

GUIDED SELF ORGANIZATION IN NEWTOWN
Participation and results

In the momentum of outlined conclusions for regeneration of unique soviet modernism in the area of Newtown, architectural competition for reviving Cinema of Lithuania appeared. This year (2014) "LRN projects" and Lithuanian Union of Architects announced architectural - conceptual competition of "Lithuania" cinema theater. The program is administrative building with Modern Art Centre. In relevance to my research questions and design aims, I decided to participate in the competition. This was done as a method to research current trends in treating soviet modernism and to suggest a real project proposal for the city, which derived from the research of this thesis. However the end results of the competition were disappointing. Another competition with similar results and lots of critique from architectural community. Winning projects are disappointing as the rest of the competition, it’s conditions and the results. One can easily suspect corruption." - architectural historian Marija Dremaite (2014). Final results only proved the outlined research that existing system of spatial planning is inefficient, capital and profit oriented with direct ties to corporate investors. My graduation project will try to provide an alternative to avoid such conflicts as mentioned.

History

A former Cinema of 'Lithuania' is a building of soviet modernism style and era. The building itself has caused many conflicts over different parties within civic society of Lithuania. Conflicts unsolved have caused the cinema of 'Lithuania' to be abandoned and rotting until now.

Preservation or adaptation?

Soviet modernism buildings are not treated equally as it also depends on it's function, cultural importance and architectural value. Some people associate them with Soviet Occupation, totalitarian regime or propaganda, others associate them with philosophical movement in art, modern industrial society and functionalism.

Preservation of Soviet Modernism has to be associated with public needs to save certain city functions. And that doesn't mean that buildings of Soviet Modernism have to be preserved like items. To preserve only the physical form is a very formal approach, important history to society can be saved also with contextual details and contextual design.

Public space in front of former Cinema of 'Lithuania' always had cultural and representational identity. All the protests and initiatives organized by public society were directly oriented to the loss of public space and to criticism of business-oriented developers.
MODERN ART CENTER
COMPETITION PROPOSAL

Figure 32. Competition panels, Source: own images
The contest ended up being a disaster. Second place winning projects are disappointment as the rest of the competition, it’s conditions and the results. Very sad.
The strength of cities and urban design derive not from individual heroic efforts, but from the collective sharing of ideas, from in-between relations. New modes for organizing the collaboration networks are to be formed: Consortiums, associations of financiers, companies, people groups, etc., formed for a particular purpose. In the case of this thesis the purpose is to create a sustainable and guided self-organizing community. Graduation project creates such a platform and tests how it could work in the district of Newtown. ‘Consortium: Newtown’ would take the role of mediator in-between the stakeholders. The proposed design recognizes the existing potential of protagonists and their roles for being civic entrepreneurs in Newtown to form alliance, co-production, co-investment networks. Another very important collaboration, which provides an affordable housing and sustainable way of living is Housing co-operatives, an organizations which are owned and run jointly by its members, who share their profits, benefits, service facilities, gardens and outdoor spaces. Such systematic collaborations can be highly productive, resource sustainable and financially risk-free. The model is rich in decreased capital cost and generates social capital in the process. It strengthens existing potential by creating more firm and long-term bonds between communities.
EXISTING MODEL
WHY?
- Social and well-being costs are high
- Benefits 1% of society
- Centralized power, dominant monopolies

HOW?
- Capital growth, money gains
- Municipality as a tool for the model
- Few global owners
- Creates social class differences and gap

NEO-LIBERAL WELFARE STATE CAPITALISM

PROPOSED MODEL
WHY?
- Economic short termism
- Only few providers
- Diversity of providers

HOW?
- Long-term economic returns
- Everyone is involved, lots of activity
- Social and well-being, social equality
- Saving planet resources

THE MORAL NEO-LIBERALISM DISTRIBUTISM

- Network of stakeholders
- Financial co-investments
- Networked civic entrepreneurship
- Based on community feeling
- Collective ownership
- Co-operations with investors, producers, operators

Figure 38. Political shift diagram. Source: own image
EXISTING FINANCIAL STREAMS (FDI+PRIVATE)

Disadvantages:
- little coordination
- possibilities for corruption
- monopolistic decision power
- short-term effects and little economic growth
- risk of financial crises
- create a stable civic economy

CASE STUDIES: CONSORTIUMS, NGO’S AND CO-OPERATIVES

Vilnius municipality
No real estate investments in Newtown, mainly infrastructural maintenance

Interests:
Public society
(however there are no funds)

Foreign direct investments
Private profit oriented direct investments to commercial projects

Interests:
Private profit

Real estate developers
Private profit oriented direct investments to new offices, commercial housing projects

Interests:
Private profit

Individual companies
Private direct investments into businesses and commerce

Interests:
Cultural activities, private profit

Consortium
Collaborators include AIA Dallas, Greater Dallas Planning Council, Dallas Architecture Forum and the Dallas Center for Architecture

Aims:
Challenge will build awareness of urban design solutions capable of shaping Dallas forward, develop a more refined and specific strategy for connecting our downtown and river, and assist in securing future public and private investment.

Public organization
Led by the community activists in Balsiai, one of the Vilnius suburban districts

Aims:
Transport network improvements, street paving and lighting, gas stations, construction of bicycle and pedestrian paths, maintaining and building public facilities

Consortium
Led by the Adventure Capital Fund (ACF) and including Futurebuilders England and the Community Alliance

Aims:
Communitybuilders aims to make sustainable investments in community enterprises to build their long term financial viability
CREATING NEWTOWN CONSORTIUM

What is Newtown Consortium?

“For the purpose to create a sustainable and guided self-organizing community. Graduation project creates such a platform and tests how it could work in the district of Newtown. ‘Consortium: Newtown’ would take the role of mediator in-between the stakeholders. The proposed design recognizes the existing potential of protagonists and their roles for being civic entrepreneurs in Newtown to form alliance, co-production, co-investment networks.

To create a consortium framework ANT (Actor-network theory) is being used. It helps to recognize the existing actors and articulate existing agencies for the final result of collective performance.”
PROPOSED PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Public Private Partnership + Diversified funding streams

Advantages:

- increased transparency in planning methods
- distribution of decision power to wider society
- long-term effects and economic growth
- reduced risk of financial crises
- creates more stable economy
- socio-economic, community feeling
EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS (ANT)

- Organization with an aim to revive district of Newtown
- Hotels and hostels
- Culture-oriented organizations and companies
- Vilnius and Vilnius Gediminas Technical Universities
- Municipal institutions
- Socially oriented companies and organizations
- Housing developer companies
- Private enterprises, manufacturers, etc.
- Huge retailer companies
What political project has to be, is to make use value dominate rather than the exchange value.

David Harvey
Sociologist

Figure 41. Amenity mapping concerning walking and cycling distances. Source: own image.
OPERATING LEVELS

CITY SCALE: MUNICIPALITY
- Visions for the city as a whole
- Defend public interest
- Co-operate with civic society
- Act as facilitator for communities

DISTRICT SCALE: NEWTOWN CONSOR-TIUM + NEWTOWN ELDERSHIP
- Mapping the data
- Working on site-specific strategies
- Stimulate community interaction
- Promote civic entrepreneurship

BLOCK SCALE: CO-OPERATIVES AND COMMUNITIES
- Control over urban environment
- Performing DIY
- Co-operate with each other

Figure 42. Operating level proposal. Source: own image.
DESIGN

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGIES WITHIN EXISTING CONTEXT OF NEWTOWN

For the proposed developments to take place with the existing demand incremental building model is being used. It’s an architectural design method, when the design of architecture is able to take new form with the need of the users, a process of gradual improvement. It is used for creation of ‘Plinth housing’, ‘Affordable student housing’ and other design proposals.

One of the core proposals is the concept of a Plinth housing. Local homeowners, who encounter financial difficulties, can decide to join the plinth housing, which is a concept of omitting the parcel boundaries. The new context, obtained by omitting the parcel boundaries, enables different typologies as well as financially viable scheme of living. Existing housing units are lifted on top of the plinth so the home-owners could use the plinth for variety of reasons: rent it for entrepreneurs, run a local business shop or use it for car parking. This is also a way to deal with the low-density and car parking issues. However, more than an architectural design, the concept of a plinth housing primarily represents a socio-economic reorganization. A model of self-organization ought to rise from a group of people who believe they are stronger together than alone. Housing plinth cannot be imposed on people; since it is set up, maintained and expanded by its residents.
CHOSEN SITE: NEWTOWN

Newtown - a City area, which deals with the most of the historical and spatial changes within Vilnius old town

Newtown was planned very hastily with boring urban fabric: Street network is standard, the whole area is monotonous. There is no clear vision for the future of district.

Figure 43. Newtown historical development. Source: own image.
RESURRECTING ABANDONED SOVIET MODERNISM FOR REUSE

- All of them belonged to the state
- Abandoned mainly due to privatization processes, when municipality sold them

Figure 45. Newtown abandoned Soviet heritage. Source: own image.
CONVERTING ABANDONED SOVIET HERITAGE TO NETWORK OF CENTRALITIES

ISOBENEFIT URBANISM

Sports Center
Urban Pedagogy Center
Trade Market
Art community, studio offices
Modern Art Center
Craft Center

CENTRALITY PROGRAMME

100% culture
33% work
33% community
33% art

Figure 46. Newtown abandoned soviet heritage. Source: own image.
Figure 47. Proposed programme for centralities. Source: own image.
ZOOMING IN TO MOST PROBLEMATIC DISTRICT

Figure 48. Zooming in the design area. Source: own image.
EXISTING TYPOLOGY
Industrial factories, soviet housing blocks, homestead villas, highrise apartments

EXISTING AMENITIES
Commerce, universities, few public institutions, Design enterprises

RECOGNIZING FUNCTIONS
34% commerce+offices
12% education
6% abandoned
52% residential

PUBLIC SPACE STUDY
Derelict, poorly used and chaotic public spaces. No hierarchy nor order.

Figure 49. Urban analysis of the territory. Source: own image.
NEW DEVELOPMENTS AFTER FINANCIAL CRISIS OF 2007

Figure 50. New developments after 2007. Source: www.naujamiestis.lt.
EXISTING URBAN TYPOLOGIES

Homestead villas 4 story housing block 5 story soviet housing block 11 story highrise soviet apartments 9 story Highrise soviet apartments New housing units

4 story housing block, L shape Manufacturing factory Manufacturing + offices Office building

Abandoned factory Train station depot Manufacturing factory

5 story stand-alone villa 3 story housing block Highrise office block Shopping mall

Figure 51. Urban typology study. Source: www.naujamiestis.lt.
HOW

WHAT

MODIFY LAW ON TERRITORY PLANNING

Introducing new planning document to cover coherent planning in district scale

CREATING CONSORTIUM NEWTOWN

Forming interested stakeholders, private companies and organizations into a Newtown Consortium with a purpose to create a sustainable and guided self-organizing community

PROVIDING FINANCIAL AND URBAN STRATEGIES FOR HOME OWNERS

Seeding civic entrepreneurship for citizens to become their own house developers with DIY style

CREATING HOUSING CO-OPERATIONS

Organizations which are owned and run jointly by its members, who share their profits, benefits, service facilities, gardens and outdoor spaces.

CREATING NEWTOWRK OF CENTRALITIES

Using ISOBENEFIT URBANISM theory to create fuzzy urban quality and the amenities/almenities allocation to guarantee an equal urban quality

ADAPTING INCREMENTAL BUILDING MODEL

Urban and architectural development when the design is implemented step by step according to the existing needs

CREATING CREATIVE NEWTOWN HUB

To cluster existing design enterprises and promote them as Newtown’s social character

PROJECT PROPOSAL TIMELINE

Urban design proposal is divided to policy making and physical intervention phases

PHASE 1: ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS FOR CIVIC ENTERPRENEURSHIP 2014-2020

PHASE 2: URBAN LIFE AND PUBLIC SPACE QUALITY 2020-2025

PHASE 3: CULTURAL AMENITIES AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY 2025-2035

USING ABANDONED SOVIET STRUCTURES

Using existing spatial and architectural potential for the needs of the Newtown community

CONVERTING ABANDONED FACTORY TO A GREENHOUSE

Urban farming to grow and trade food locally in order to use it locally. Could also be used as a tourist destination

PLINTH HOUSING FOR CO-OPERATIVES

To use and reuse private plots while lifting own’s house on a plinth in order to use it for rental, own business, car parking or even home extension

LOCAL MARKETPLACE FOR LOCAL ECONOMY

A place where community meets and gathers to sell and exchange their goods and products

NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING STOCK

Urban and architectural development when the design is implemented step by step according to the existing needs

NEW COMMUNITY HOUSE AS PEOPLE’S PALACE

A multi-functional building for all variable needs of Newtown community, Newtown Consortium and Newtown eldership

CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE MUSEUM

Providing a specific building to showcase activities, arts and university achievements of Newtown community

Figure S2. Project phasing in a timeline. Source: own image.
Grind inside the grid
Walkability and cycling
Programme bar
Public space hierarchy
Open plazas
Visual corridors
Local dominants
Urban nodes
Typology follows function
Incremental building
Efficient urban density
Multi-functional
Long-term phasing
Top-down + Bottom up
Open-ended approach
Creating identity
Creating edges
Adapting to existing

URBAN DESIGN TOOLBOX
Urban design methods and criteria to increase quality of public spaces, accessibility, urban life quality and to promote identity

Grind inside the grid
Outter grid for car transport, inner - pedestrians

Walkability and cycling
Healthy and sustainable way of living

Programme bar
Programme bar reflects to the existing needs

Public space hierarchy
Public + Private + Semi-private

Open plazas
Space for democracy and freedom of speech

Visual corridors
Boulevards to emphasize continuity of space

Local dominants
Landmarks, external points of orientation

Urban nodes
Strategic focus points of orientation

Typology follows function
Specific design to adapt the function

Incremental building
Design is able to adapt and change it’s form

Efficient urban density
In purpose of saving resources

Multi-functional
Residential, commerce, office, cultural, public

Long-term phasing
2015, 2020, 2030

Top-down + Bottom up
Spatial plans + community voting power

Open-ended approach
Design changes with existing needs

Creating identity
Blocks have certain characteristics

Creating edges
Boundaries and breaks in the continuity

Adapting to existing
Design reflects to existing architectural values

Figure 53. Urban design methods used. Source: own image.
PHASE 1: 2014-2020
ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS
FOR CIVIC ENTERPRENEURSHIP

ART SCULPTURE TO
CLUSTER DESIGN EVENTS

ABANDONED FACTORY REUSED
AS COMMUNITY GREENHOUSE

NEWTOWN COMMUNITY
BOULEVARD MARKETPLACE

LIFTED VILLAS ON PLINTH
FOR RENTING IT AND PARKING

Figure 54. Phase axonometry 1. Source: own image.
UNUSED SOVIET MODERNISM USED FOR NEWTOWN COMMUNITY

ABANDONED FACTORY CONVERTED INTO A NEWTOWN GREENHOUSE

Figure 55. Reusing abandoned soviet modernism. Source: own image.

Figure 56. Abandoned factory to a greenhouse. Source: own image.
CONCEPT OF CO-OPERATIVE PLINTH HOUSING THROUGH DEVELOPMENT STEPS

Existing situation

Using plinth for housing, own commerce and parking

Lifting villas on a shared plinth

Incremental building model is available if needed

Figure 57. Plinth housing concept, Source: own image.
CO-OPERATIVE PLINTH HOUSING

GRADUATION THESIS PLAN
GUIDED SELF ORGANIZATION IN NEWTOWN
**CREATING HOUSING CO-OPERATIONS**

- shared parking
- block waste collection
- communal gardens
- service facilities
- wider houses

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<th>Energy Saving Technologies</th>
<th>Housing Renovations</th>
<th>Wider Houses (shared construction)</th>
<th>Shared Storage Facilities</th>
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**GRADUATION THESIS PLAN**

GUIDED SELF-ORGANIZATION IN NEWTOWN
PHASE 2: 2020-2025
URBAN LIFE AND
PUBLIC SPACE QUALITY

NEWTOWN PEOPLE
PALACE, CONSORTIUM HQ
VILNIUS UNIVERSITY EDUCATION
SHOWOFF AND GALLERY
LOCAL COMMUNITY MUSEUM
AND ARTS INCUBATOR
AFFORDABLE HOUSING BUILT
BY NEWTOWN COMMUNITY

Figure 59. Phase 2 axonometry, Source: own image.
REUSING ABANDONED OBJECTS
FOR INCREMENTAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Existing situation

Structure from reused concrete beams

Possibility for ‘DIY’ model

Development through phases
COMMUNITY HOUSE
‘PEOPLE’S PALACE’

GRADUATION THESIS PLAN
GUIDED SELF ORGANIZATION IN NEWTOWN
INTERIOR FUNCTIONS AS PUBLIC FORUM

GRADUATION THESIS PLAN
GUIDED SELF ORGANIZATION IN NEWTOWN
PHASE 3: 2025-2030
CULTURAL AMENITIES AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

HIGHRISE HOUSING WITH COMMON PLINTH
ART SCULPTURE TO CLUSTER DESIGN EVENTS
AFFORDABLE SOCIAL HOUSING, CO-FUNDED BY RESIDENTS
LOCAL COMMUNITY MUSEUM AND ARTS INCUBATOR

Figure 64. Phase 3 axonometry. Source: own image.
STREET SECTION AND PROFILE

AFFORDABLE SOCIAL HOUSING, CO-FUNDED BY RESIDENTS

NEWTOWN PEOPLE PALACE, CONSORTIUM HQ

ABANDONED FACTORY REUSED AS COMMUNITY GREENHOUSE

LIFTED VILLAS ON PLINTH FOR RENTING IT AND PARKING

STREET PROFILE AND HIERARCHY OF PUBLIC SPACES

Figure 65. Urban street section. Source: own image.
Figure 66. Opening panoramas and activating street life. Source: own image.

STREET NETWORK TOWARDS CITY PANORAMAS
Figure 67. Proposed urban density. Source: own image.

Figure 68. Proposed system of public spaces. Source: own image.
Figure 69. New development with public space system. Source: own image.
CREATING EDGES

EFFICIENT BUILT DENSITY

VISUAL CORRIDORS

WALKING AND CYCLING

PUBLIC SPACE HIERARCHY

PUBLIC PLAZA

REUSING EXISTING

CREATING CHARACTER

UEBAN TRAFFIC NODE

LOCAL LANDMARKS

MULTI-FUNCTIONAL

GRID INSIDE THE GRID

PUBLIC PLAZA

REUSING EXISTING

VISUAL CORRIDORS

INCREMENTAL BUILDING

WALKING AND CYCLING

EOICIENT BUILT DENSITY

URBAN DESIGN TOOLBOX: USED METHODS

Figure 70: Urban design methods used in axonometry. Source: own image.
SUGGESTED URBAN TYPOLOGIES

Urban design units proposed to revive the area. Units vary by concept, exterior space quality, function, GFA, FAR and etc.

![Typical Urban Block with Inner Courtyard](image1)
![Plinth Housing with Lifted Villas and New Developments](image2)
![Highrise Housing with Shared Plinth](image3)
![Mixed Urban Courtyards with Lifted Villas](image4)
![Residential Block with Ground Floor for Commerce](image5)

![Urban Block Courtyard with Incremental Building](image6)
![Student Housing X Shape](image7)
![Existing Perimeter with New Plinth and Incremental Building](image8)
![Affordable Housing with Incremental Building](image9)
![Reused Factory Building for Greenhouse](image10)

![Exterior Structure for Community Events](image11)
![House of Workshops and Community Art](image12)
![Multi-Functional People’s Palace](image13)
![Art Objects for Design Events](image14)
![Cultural Knowledge Museum](image15)

Figure 71. Urban typologies used in the project. Source: own image.
URBAN DESIGN VARIATIONS

Urban design blocks proposed to revive the area. Units vary by concept, exterior space quality, function, GFA, FAR and etc.
PEOPLE VOTE FOR PROPOSAL PROJECTS

GUIDED SELF ORGANIZATION IN NEWTOWN

HIGH-RISE HOUSING WITH COMMON PLUNTH

ART SCULPTURE TO CLUSTER DESIGN EVENTS

AFFORDABLE SOCIAL HOUSING, CO-FUNDED BY RESIDENTS

LOCAL COMMUNITY MUSEUM AND ARTS INCUBATOR

Which block do you vote for?
People of Newtown are building their future!
USING STRATEGIC MODEL AS PEER TO PEER PRACTICE

STEPS:

0. LEARN FROM CASE STUDIES
1. NETWORKS OF CENTRALITIES (ISOBENEFIT URBANISM)
2. STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY (ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY)
3. CREATING CONSORTIUM OF EXISTING STAKEHOLDERS
4. HOUSING CO-OPERATIONS
5. DESIGN POLICY STRATEGIES
6. SITE-SPECIFIC SPATIAL PROPOSALS (5 ELEMENTS)
EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

Finance and urban planners

Local governments are making millions by simply reclassifying land from rural to urban with only one reason behind - to make profit. Corruption made millionaires out of politicians and developers, however they could not have done it without hands of architects and planners, who willingly drew all the plans, changed land use function and got a share of accumulated money too. The real estate bubble grew in almost all capital oriented countries until the global economic crisis has struck and the capitalist machine got jammed. As for physical appearance of cities, all around Europe, you can find unfinished or never used building projects, empty office spaces and etc. (Caballeria, 2013).

Post-socialist city

During Soviet Union times no market based economic relations between cities existed, which made the whole settlement network very vulnerable to a system change. (Stanilov, 2007). Opportunities for people to enjoy advantages of capitalism appeared. Car based developments following the needs of a market based economy like expansion of private houses into suburbia, shopping malls, decay of public transport are the characteristics of city in a transition period. (Juskevicius, 2006).

Competition results

The end results of the competition were disappointing: “Another competition with similar results and lots of critique from architectural community. Winning projects are disappointment as the rest of the competition, it’s conditions and the results.” - architectural historian Marija Dremaite (2014). Final results only proved the outlined research that existing system of spatial planning is inefficient, capital and profit oriented with direct ties to corporate investors. Therefore project was aimed to search for new planning strategies to avoid competitions as the one mentioned.

Self-organization

In order to prevent corruption in competitions, real estate bubble crises and vast chaotic developments which often result in ghetotic neighbourhoods, the systematic change is very necessary. Self-organizing communities and neighbourhoods is the strategic approach trying to prevent the negative impacts of market-based economy.

Consortium as a strategy

For the purpose to create a sustainable and guided self-organizing community. Graduation project creates such a platform and tests how it could work in the district of Newtown. Consortium: Newtown would take the role of mediator in-between the stakeholders. The proposed design recognizes the existing potential of protagonists and their roles for being civic entrepreneurs in Newtown to form alliance, co-production, co-investment networks. Framework ANT (Actor-network theory) was used to recognize the existing actors and articulate existing agencies for the final result of collective performance.

From no identity, to people’s identity

The strategy presented in the bookled was designed according to concept rules and qualities of the chosen location Newtown - potentials of abandoned soviet heritage, advantages of shared co-housing and incremental building techniques. The new plan of Newtown in accordance with organizing body of Consortium proposes a new identity, which adapts to changing needs and encompasses the historical soviet heritage.

Shared Architecture

For the proposed developments to take place with the existing demand Incremental building model is being used. It’s an architectural design method, when the design of architecture is able to take new form with the need of the users, a process of gradual improvement. It is used for creation of ‘Plinth housing’, ‘Affordable student housing’ and other design proposals.

Plinth housing adapts to the new context, obtained by omitting the parcel boundaries, which enables different typologies as well as financially viable scheme of living while sharing water, electricity, parking, etc.

Design applicable on other districts

Organizing body consortium was formed and based on existing stakeholder structures of chosen site. However the same organizational method can be easily applicable to other districts.

The urban design was drawn using urban design toolbox, which is also provided in the booklet. The same design tools can be applied in the routes of the other microdistricts. These principles are general guidelines applicable in specific locations in Vilnius, or other postsocialist cities.

Conclusions

The city of Vilnius with specific neighborhoods has the potential to become more efficient in terms of finance, public space quality and even more resistant to bursting real estate bubbles.

Re-organization of active stakeholders in planning, long-term vision for site-specific context and sustainable material use shall create more opportunities for civic economy to grow, communities to emerge as a power structure and give whole new urban vitality to the city.


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