CITY, CATCH THE TIME!

Rediscovering socialist neighbourhoods in a new capitalist society

Case in Vilnius Lithuania

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New city structure is a way to revitalize neighbourhoods

City
Sprawling post socialist Vilnius

Advantages of microdistricts will contribute to new city structure
Problems of large scale housing estates
Decline of post war housing

- Post war housing - once a dream of every family, now - decline

- In 1970s modern city criticized for the lack of human scale, monotony and mono functionality
- High crime rates and social problems.
- In 1970s most western cities have started renewal programs

1973 Demolition of blocks Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis, Missouri

Bijlmermeer, Amsterdam

Large scale housing estates in post-socialist cities

- In the USSR massive construction continued up until 1990s
- Neighborhoods in the east-central Europe are much less deteriorated, then their western counterparts
Role of housing estates in post-socialist cities

- Society in post socialist cities is much more homogeneous
- Housing estates still play important role in housing market
- There is big housing shortage
- Housing market is not diverse, majority still lives in estates

Housing shortage

<table>
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<tr>
<th>LT</th>
<th>EU</th>
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<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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Homogeneous society

Majority lives in the estates

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<th>LT</th>
<th>EU</th>
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<td>61%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Threat of physical decline and stigmatization

- Society will change, it will need more choices
- Housing market has to be diverse
- Apartments in estates are not attractive any more

“As soon as the housing shortage is eliminated, apartments in the estates go to the bottom of the market, segregation and urban problems can be triggered” (Dekker, 2005)
Advantages and qualities of microdistricts

“If the positive aspects of post war housing could be preserved Europe would gain a lot to reach her very ambitious sustainability goals” (Tosics, 2005).

Socialist estates have strong advantages and potentials:
- Density,
- Public transport,
- Accessibility,
- Social services,
- Environmental friendly heating,
- A lot of green public space,
- Room for developments and improvements.

Other neighbourhoods don’t have that

Vilnius in 1970s
Vilnius - sprawling post socialist city
Vilnius in the region

**Lithuania**
3,5 million of population
67% lives in urban areas
16% in capital - Vilnius

**Vilnius**
- Major economic centre of Lithuania
- Main governmental, business, educational institutions
- 25% of Lithuania’s GDP

Population in Vilnius - 553 000
Daily population in Vilnius - 673 000
Population in metropolitan area - 800 000
Socialist housing estates in Vilnius

- Build in between 1945-1995
- 366,100 inhabitants
- 2/3 of population lives
Development phases of Vilnius
Until 19th cent. - Compact European city

Diverse neighbourhoods
1944-1990 a Socialist City

Construction of housing estates
1944-1990 a Socialist City

Low cost + High speed = Prefab concrete panel house

Vilnius in 1970s
2009 Post-Socialist City

New habits of people
Need of comfort: Private House + Car

Flight to suburbs
2009 Post-Socialist City

Sprawling, car dependent city

POPULATION DENSITY IN THE ELDERSHIPS:
- 14,000 - 15,000 < and more 1/km²
- 12,000 - 14,000 1/km²
- 10,000 - 12,000 1/km²
- 8,000 - 10,000 1/km²
- 6,000 - 8,000 1/km²
- 4,000 - 6,000 1/km²
- up to < 4,000 1/km²
2009 Post-Socialist City

Uneven concentration of functions

- Most of functions are concentrated in the centre

- Microdistricts lack job opportunities and are monofunctional
2009 Post-Socialist City

Car based city

Use of public transport declined 4 times

Use of car has tripped
2009 Post-Socialist City

Sprawling, car dependent city
What will be the future Vilnius?

The beginning

Compact European city

Diverse neighbourhoods

Past

Modernist City

Nucleus layout
Microdistricts
Separation of functions

Present

Monocentric sprawling city

Eating green
Loosing boundaries
All functions in the centre
Decaying monofunctional housing areas

Future

?
Vision for the city: Compact city network of centralities

The beginning: Compact European city
- Diverse neighbourhoods

Past: Modernist City
- Nucleus layout
- Microdistricts
- Separation of functions

Present: Monocentric sprawling city
- Eating green
- Loosing boundaries
- All functions in the centre
- Decaying monofunctional housing areas

Future: Compact City Network of centralities
- Make use of existing nucleus
- Centralities on main roads
- Mix of functions
- Diversity people
New centrality in the housing estates area

146 thousands inhabitants
30% of total city

Area - 930 ha
Socialist estates are big enough to sustain themselves

**Estates in Vilnius**
- 922 ha
- 146,000 population

**Delft**
- 1250 ha
- 96,170 population
Revitalization strategy

How to change periphery in to a centrality?
Modernist city is different from the compact city

**Modernist city**
- All the same character area
- Monofunctional

**Compact city**
- Diverse neighbourhoods
- Network of paths, routes, connections
- Concentration of functions
- Mix land use
- Diversity in people, spaces, lifestyles
Strategy concept rules
Current structure

Tree like structure

Fragmented neighbourhoods

Open green space
New structure

From “tree” structure into a network
Ch. Alexander “City is not a tree”

Continuous, diverse urban area
J. Jacobs: diversity, variety

Improve accessibility by:
- Removing boundaries
- Providing active link between nodes
- Paths, routes, bike routes, filling gaps with new developments

Compact dense settlement with efficient use of infrastructure and public transport networks
New structure

Hierarchy in public transportation

Region / City node
District node
Local node
Residential environment
New structure

Densities and land use according to transport oriented development (TOD) principles

Functions and land use
More mix of functions on major nodes

Housing density and typology
Density and typology changes according to public transport proximity

Mix land use

Variety in densities
New structure

Diversity in public space

- Keep quality of open space
- Urban spaces: streets and squares
- Semiprivate spaces
- Private spaces
- Green boundary, public park
Defining centralities in modernist estates

Transport oriented development principles
Quality - landscape surrounding the neighbourhoods
Structural elements of the strategy

**3 Axes + centre**
- TOD principles
- Best assessable district centre
- Develop 3 axes, change profile
- Connect neighbourhoods with the centre

**Public spaces and park**
- Connect neighbourhoods with a park
- Provide quality public space

**Land use, density, identity**
- Land use and density depends on proximity to centre and public space
Regeneration strategy:
From the periphery into the centrality

1. Transport strategy
2. Land use strategy
3. Open space strategy
Transport - Current structure

Tree like streets

Public transportation - Busses
Transport strategy

“Network” structure

Hierarchy of public transportation
Transport strategy - References

Transformation of Ukmerges street From highway into avenue

Transformation of highway into a main district street in Ballymum housing estates, Dublin
Transport strategy - References

Transformation of Ukmerges street From highway into avenue

Mix use, dense developments along main streets in Bijlmermeer housing estate in Amsterdam
New Siaurine street will link the neighbourhoods
Laisves avenue - a linear park

Gran Via in Barcelona - two levels street connecting neighbourhoods with linear park along
Land use - Current structure

Fragmented neighbourhoods
Monofunctional sleeping districts
Land use strategy

Continuous diverse urban area, according to TOD principles

Centre - mix use high density area

Low rise housing in the edges

New functions in the estates

Renovation of existing housing
Land use strategy - References

Dense, urban mix use centre
Mix use, dense developments along main streets in Bijlmermeer housing estate in Amsterdam
**Land use strategy - References**

**Renovation of socialist housing**

- Improvements in physical condition
- Changing apartments into studios, duplex, rental, student housing
- Change of ground floor function
- Private terraces in the first floors
- Roof terraces

Renovation of post war apartment blocks in Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Stefan Forster Architekten
www.stefan-forster-architekten.de
Land use strategy - References

New low rise housing

Adding low rise housing was part of Bijlmermeer housing estate in Amsterdam regeneration. In the images F-buurt
Open space strategy

Urban streets and routes
Parks and green avenues
Private spaces, courtyards
Open space strategy - References

Urban streets and squares
Iconic, visible, clear routes
Open space strategy - References

Private spaces, closed courtyards
Open space strategy - References

Green Belt and Neighbourhood parks
Open space strategy - References

Playgrounds, sport fields
Strategic projects

TRANSFORMATION OF THE CENTRE:
1 - Ukmerges street;
2 - Bus terminal-transferium in Ukmerges street, mix use area with shopping street and squares;
3 - new Siaurine street;
4 - Laisves avenue

REVITALIZATION OF HOUSING ESTATES:
5 - public space system, routes;
6 - Housing renovation

PARKS:
7 - Green belt park;
8 - Microdistrict parks with activity program;
9 - Neighbourhood avenues.
Route linking neighbourhoods with the centre

Goal to create mix use, vital urban artery

Connection to the centre is a tool to revitalize neighbourhoods by changing their public space system and adding functions on the nodes.
The route project
Route links socialist housing areas and mix use area

Pašilaiciai Microdistrict

Fabijoniškes Microdistrict
Evaluation of the public space on the route

Identifying problems of function, public space, neighbourhood layout

- Not maintained public space
- Not safe streets
- Car garages
- Car landscape
- No street life
- Slope
Evaluation of the public space

Car landscape in the planned centre, pedestrian unfriendly environment
Evaluation of the public space

Empty, not maintained public space

How to deal with situation when residents don’t feel responsible about their surroundings and municipality do not have means to take care of it?
Toolbox

Mapped problems of public space + Design rule

Tools applied for the route project
Applicable in other microdistricts
Microdistricts have to be connected with the centre

Function and environment do not fit for the centre

Street - a barrier

Car oriented
Pedestrian unfriendly environment
Creating urban centre

- Shopping street
- Station  Tram stop
- Pedestrian friendly
- Urban square
- Urban streets, closed blocks
- Keeping street profile
- Business area
  - Conference centre
  - Exhibition area
- Casino Hôtel
  - Cinema, Bingo Bowling club
- Entertainment area
Who is forming the centre?

Collaboration and partnerships are necessary

1. DOWNGRADING UKMERGES STREET, TRAM LINE, CROSSINGS, STREET SPACE
   - PARTNERSHIP:
     - MUNICIPALITY
     - EU FUNDS
     - TRAM COMPANY

2. STATION - TRANSFERIUM, PARKING
   - PARTNERSHIP:
     - MUNICIPALITY
     - BUS COMPANY
     - TRAM COMPANY
     - STATION COMPANY
     - CAR PARKING COMPANY

3. CENTRE PUBLIC SPACE, SHOPPING PEDESTRIAN STREETS, SQUARES.
   - PARTNERSHIP:
     - MUNICIPALITY
     - DEVELOPER
     (Land around the building, in the plot)

4. NEW MASTERPLAN, CONVERSION, TRANSFORMATION INTO NEW MIX USE AREA
   - PARTNERSHIP:
     - MUNICIPALITY
     - DEVELOPERS
     - CURRENT COMPANIES
Creating urban street

Urbanizing along the route
Street profile

Interventions on the nodes

Missing street links
Pedestrian friendly street
Program on the route

- Park, sport facilities
- Market Square
- Community rooms
  - Day care centre
- Micro commerce
- Micro business
- Micro culture
- Library
- Park, sport facilities
Closed and calm courtyards

Reorganizing entrances the houses

Closing courtyards
New housing typology

Low-rise housing
Stakeholders of projects in the microdistrict

Collaboration and partnerships are necessary

1. AVENUE PUBLIC SPACE
   MUNICIPALITY

2. REPLACING KINDERGARTENS, NEW HOUSING.
   PARTNERSHIP: MUNICIPALITY, DEVELOPER, EU FUNDS

3. THE ROUTE, STREET LINK, SQUARE
   MUNICIPALITY

4. EXISTING HOUSING RENOVATION
   MUNICIPALITY
   PARTNERSHIP: HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS, WORLD BANK, INTERNATIONAL FUNDS

5. CLOSING THE COURTYARD, NEW HOUSE, PUBLIC SPACE
   PARTNERSHIP: MUNICIPALITY, HOUSING ASSOCIATION, DEVELOPER, NON PROFIT CONSTRUCTION ORGANIZATION

6. REPLACING CAR GARAGE, NEW HOUSE (CLOSING BLOCK, STREET)
   PARTNERSHIP: MUNICIPALITY, GARAGE OWNERS ASSOCIATION, DEVELOPER

New ground floor plan, entrances to houses depend on the route
Courtyard design and housing entrances depend
Avenue gives quality for new houses. Easier to sell
Public space around kindergartens and community rooms
Possibilities for commercial ground floor activity

Opportunities for ground floor shops in socialist houses
Possibilities for commercial ground floor activity
Evaluation
Evaluation: Project area before

NEIGHBOURHOODS
- Monofunctional neighbourhoods
- Not maintained public space
- Too much open space, no diversity
- One type of housing
- Threat of decline

TRIANGLE CENTRE
- Car oriented developments
- Pedestrian unfriendly environment
- Streets - barriers
Evaluation: Lively integrated neighbourhoods and vital centre
Outcomes of the strategy and the route project

- Modernist city is changed
- Qualities are kept
- Concept rules - general principles

- Continuous not fragmented
- “Network” not a “tree”
- Diversity in housing, in density
- Diverse public spaces
- Mix uses
- Spaces for pedestrians, not for cars
- Barriers for car oriented developments

Fragmented periphery  ➔  Became integrated and diverse centrality
Effect to the city

- Concentrated developments
- Low rise in the city, not suburbia
- Opportunities for real estates in microdistricts. They become more desired to live and invest

- Emphasis on public transport
- Emphasis on mix of uses

APPLICABLE APPROACH

Strategy can contribute to new town development and regeneration as well:

- Neighbourhood scale, renewal (public spaces, new structure)
- City scale (approach of centralities)
Back sides of shopping malls
Mix use district centre, shopping streets
Ukmerges street - a highway
Ukmerges street - main district avenue
Undefined public space in microdistricts
Avenue / route / square / new houses in microdistricts
Thank You