GUIDED SELF-ORGANIZATION IN NEWTOWN, VILNIUS

Exploring alternative spatial planning models and policies. Designing a strategic model of self-organization for context specific neighborhoods and districts.

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FOR SELF-ORGANIZATION IN NEWTOWN

URBAN DESIGN:
SHARED ARCHITECTURE

EVALUATION
INTRODUCTION:
PROBLEM DESCRIPTION
INTRODUCTION TO LITHUANIA

Lithuania:
Post-Socialist Welfare State

3 million of population
67% live in urban areas
16% in capital - Vilnius

Area - 65,200 km²
Density - 52/km² (120th)
FROM SOVIET UNION TO EUROPEAN UNION
COMPLEX TRANSFORMATION FROM AN AUTHORITARIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM TO A DEMOCRATIC WELFARE STATE

Kiril Stanilov Planner

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

SOVIET UNION
1944-1990

EUROPEAN UNION
2004-now

Sources: www.irpud.com; own image.
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.

**POLITICAL/ECONOMIC SHIFT**

TRANSFORMATION CHANGED THE ECONOMIC SITUATION RADICALLY AND FUTURE OF CITIES AS WELL.

- **Industry based economy**
  - Centralized ‘top-down’ planning
  - Compact, monocentric city structure
  - Growing population

- **Service based economy**
  - Decentralized, poorly coordinated, market-oriented planning
  - Sprawling, polycentric city structure
  - Shrinking population
The current planning principle works very inefficiently. To my mind it has to do with very weak municipal administration. They are in full command of the political superstructure.
VILNIUS CITY IS GOING TO BECOME THE EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN LEADER. WE WILL ATTRACT MORE INVESTMENT, CREATE NEW JOBS, IMPROVE THE SOCIAL SITUATION OF THE PUBLIC AND INCREASE THE REVENUE OF VILNIUS CITY BUDGET.
HUGE CULTURAL AMBITIONS-FAILED. PRIVATE SECTOR STRIVES

NEW PROJECTS: FDI IN BUSINESS SECTOR

CITY FAILURE PROJECTS
ABUNDANCE OF SOVIET HERITAGE
UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE IS LEFT THERE TO ROT

OWNED BY MUNICIPALITY

SOLD AND PRIVATIZED

ABANDONED AND ROTTING
The current planning principle works very inefficiently. To my mind it has to do with very weak municipal administration. They are in full command of the political superstructure.

Lithuania is emerging as an ideal destination for foreign investors to immigrate to, particularly due to its attractive geographical location and gateway to Europe.

Newtown was planned very hastily with boring urban fabric. Street network is standard, the whole area is divided to rectangular quarters and squares, no boulevards were provided.

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.
Inefficiency of Vilnius Municipality and political short-sightedness led itself to debts, poor urban planning organization and implementation, centralized power and in the end in almost non-participation in shaping the city. Little coordination between stakeholders, corruption and monopolistic decision power.
COMPETITION AS A RESEARCH METHOD:
MODERN ART CENTER - VILNIUS
The country’s biggest cinema, ‘Lithuania’, was the attractor of public and cultural domain in Vilnius. It was iconic and cultural symbol.

In 1991 after Lithuania’s recognition of independence, status of cinema of ‘Lithuania’ was reorganized to company ‘Cinema of Lithuania’.

In 2005 the project of apartments proposed instead of former building was protested.

‘Cinema of Lithuania’ sold to private company ‘Rojus apartments’ for 3 million LTU.

Critique by graffitti artists to the uncertain situation of cinema, 2008

‘Cinema of Lithuania’ was sold to private company ‘Vilniaus prekyba’ for 3 million LTU.

Company ‘Rojus apartaments’ promising to retain the former function of cinema in their new project, 2007

Cinema of Lithuania represented Lithuanian actors and directors.

Soviet modernism heritage of 70’s - former Cinema of Lithuania

'For Lithuania without double-meaning' activist protest-discussion about public cultural spaces, 2005

Company of ‘Litectus’ has bought the building for 9 million LTU, 2010

Art academy student projects to revive former cinemas in Vilnius, 2011

Planning document of 2005, which allowed to demolish the former building and let to built apartments instead. In 2009 rejected by court.

Interior of Cinema of ‘Lithuania’ is completely empty, 2010

Cinema of ‘Lithuania’ was always financially stable.

Protest critisizing capital-oriented business structures,2005

Critique to the private business developments, 2008

Cinema of Lithuania represented Lithuanian actors and directors.

M2 Invest, UAB '6D Invest' accuses activists protecting Cinema of Lithuania for financial losses

Protest against the project of apartments proposed instead of former building, 2008

Abandoned, vandalised and rotting, 2009

Poster of protest-discussion, 2005

Poster of protest-discussion, 2006

Musical event 'XYZ', which tried to revive the building at least for couple of days, 2010

Conflict of private and public parties in the mainstream media, 2006

M2 Invest, UAB ‘6D Invest’ accuses activists protecting Cinema of Lithuania for financial losses

Poster of protest-discussion, 2005

Art academy student projects to revive former cinemas in Vilnius, 2011

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The countries biggest cinema ‘Lithuania’ was the attractor of public and cultural domain in Vilnius. It was iconic and cultural symbol.
Urban context

Neglecting urban context (soviet modernism)

Recreating Old Town’s urban structure

Creating regular perimetric built density

Cultural context
REVIVING THE FUNCTION OF CINEMA

RESTORING THE FORMER HISTORICAL STREET
PUBLIC INNER YARD
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.
STRATEGY: ALTERNATIVE SPATIAL PLANNING, GUIDED SELF-ORGANIZATION IN NEWTOWN
**EXISTING MODEL**

**WHY?**
- Social and well-being costs are high
- Benefits 1% of Society
- Centralized power, dominant monopolies
- Capital growth, money gains
- Creates social class differences and gap
- Demolishing and building new structures
- Destroys environments and habitats

**HOW?**
- Municipality as a tool for the model
- Few global owners
- Free-market unregulated economy
- Based on individualism

**NEO-LIBERAL WELFARE STATE CAPITALISM**

**PROPOSED MODEL**

**WHY?**
- Benefits 99% of society
- Social and well-being, social equality
- Saving planet resources
- Distributed power mechanism
- Everyone is involved, lots of activity

**HOW?**
- Network of stakeholders
- Financial co-investments
- Networked civic entrepreneurship
- Based on community feeling

**THE MORAL NEO-LIBERALISM DISTRIBUTISM**

**EXISTING MODEL**

**WHY?**
- Social and well-being costs are high
- Only few providers
- Economic short termism
- Based on individualism
- Destroys environments and habitats

**HOW?**
- Municipality as a tool for the model
- Few global owners
- Free-market unregulated economy
- Based on individualism

**NEO-LIBERAL WELFARE STATE CAPITALISM**

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**THE MORAL NEO-LIBERALISM DISTRIBUTISM**
**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

**INDIVIDUAL COMPANIES**
Private direct investments into businesses and commerce

**Interests:**
- Cultural activities, Private profit

**VILNIUS MUNICIPALITY**
No real estate investments in Newtown, only infrastructure maintenance

**Interests:**
- Public society (however there are no funds)

**REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS**
Private profit oriented direct investments to new offices, commercial, housing projects

**Interests:**
- Private profit

**FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS**
Private profit oriented direct investments to commercial projects

**Interests:**
- Private profit

**SELVAAG**

**EXISTING FINANCIAL STREAMS (FDI+PRIVATE)**

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**Interests:**
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WHERE TO START FROM?
START FROM CREATING A PLATFORM TO CREATE A SHARED ECONOMY.

CONSORTIUM WOULD BE CREATED BY EXISTING INTERESTED PARTIES TO REVITALIZE A CERTAIN DISTRICT OR AN AREA.
AIMS:
Communitybuilders aims to make sustainable investments in community enterprises to build their long term financial viability.

AIMS:
Transport network improvements, street paving and lighting, gas stations, construction of bicycle and pedestrian paths. Maintaining and building public facilities.

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.

INVESTORS:
Vilnius municipality, eldership of ‘Verkiai’, „UAB Hronas“, „UAB Durupis“, „UAB Justiniškės“, „UAB Bičių korys“ and others.

A CONSORTIUM
Collaborators include AIA Dallas, Greater Dallas Planning Council, Dallas Architecture Forum and the Dallas Center for Architecture.

A CONSORTIUM
Led by the Adventure Capital Fund (ACF) and including Futurebuilders England and the Community Alliance.

A CONSORTIUM
Led by the community activists in Balsiai, one of the Vilnius suburban districts.

INVESTORS:
Vilnius municipality, eldership of ‘Verkiai’, „UAB Hronas“, „UAB Durupis“, „UAB Justiniškės“, „UAB Bičių korys“ and others.

SOURCES: http://www.communitybuildersfund.org.uk/
http://www.bendruomenes.lt/svetaine/Balsiai
http://connectedcitydesign.com/about.aspx
HOW CONSORTIUM WORKS?
IT CONNECTS DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS FOR ONGOING LONG-TERM PROCESSES IN PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AND CO-OPERATIVES.

ADVANTAGES:
- Increased transparency
- Distribution of decision power to a wider society
- Long-term effects and economic growth
- Reduced risk of financial crises
- More stable economy
- Designing a sustainable and communal way of living

Diagram:
- **URBAN PROFESSIONALS**
  - Private funding
  - Time & skills input
  - Financial and socio-economic strategies
- **PRIVATE COMPANIES**
  - Private funding
  - Trade agreements
  - Space provision
  - Micro bonds & shares
- **COMMUNITIES**
  - Crowd-funding
  - Time & skills input
  - Micro bonds & shares
  - Social impact investment
- **INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATIONS**
  - Organization funds
  - Time & skills input
  - Micro bonds & shares
- **GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**
  - Agreements and legislation
  - Socio-economic strategies
  - Facilitator

Strategic model is adapted from ‘Compendium to Civic society’ and developed to Newtown conditions.
URBAN THEORIES AND STRATEGIES USED

K. LYNCH
5 ELEMENTS
(1960)

Paths
Edges
Districts
Nodes
Landmarks

A. TIEJEN
ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY
(2007)

Gathering the actors
Articulation of agencies
Sitework negotiation
Collective performance

L. D’ACCI
ISOBENEFIT URBANISM
(2013)

Network of Centralities

J. FERRER
MAT URBANISM
(2011)

Cluster of overlapping functions

Fig. 2. Source: Image of the City, 1960
Fig. 2. Source: ANT, 2007
Fig. 2. Source: Isobenefit Cities, 2012
Fig. 2. Source: Smithson and Smithson, 2005
CURRENT STAKEHOLDERS
THERE IS A STARTING POINT!
(Actor-network theory)

Organization with an aim to revive district of Newtown

Hotels and hostels

Vilnius and Vilnius Gediminas Technical Universities

Municipal institutions

Socially oriented companies and organizations

Housing developer companies

Culture-oriented organizations and 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.
DISTRIBUTED AMENITIES, PROMOTING WALKING AND CYCLING (Isobenefit Urbanism)
OPERATING LEVELS
DIFFERENT SCALE ACTORS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

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 CONSORTIUM + 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
URBAN DESIGN:
SHARED ARCHITECTURE
CHosen site: Newtown
An area which deals with most of the historical and existing spatial changes

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.
- Location of the territory in the city core
- Full of architectural heritage
- Urban fabric shifts from old town to soviet grid
- One of the oldest city districts

Population : 27,892
Area : 4.9 km²
Density : 5,700/km²
RESURRECTING ABANDONED SOVIET MODERNISM FOR REUSE

- All of them belonged to the state
- Abandoned mainly due to privatization processes, when municipality sold them
CONVERTING ABANDONED SOVIET HERITAGE TO NETWORK OF CENTRALITIES
(Isobenefit Urbanism + Ex-Rotaprint case study)
EXISTING TYPOLOGY
INDUSTRIAL FACTORIES, SOVIET HOUSING, HOMESTEAD VILLAS, HIGHRISE APARTMENTS
EXISTING AMENITIES
COMMERCE, UNIVERSITIES, PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, DESIGN ENTERPRISES

- 48
- IGIS
- SPC
- SOCIAL HELP CENTER
- LOFTAS
- ART FABRIC
- SOXMAN
- SOCKS MANUFACTURER
- VILNIUS TU ELECTRONICS FACULTY
- PesPlanus
- PRIVATE DOCTOR CLINIC
- REKONA
- BOOKSELLER
- FLM CLUSTER
- HOTEL
- FIRE PROTECTION DEPARTMENT
- RADIO WAVES COMPANY
- NORFA
- SUPERMARKET
- MUNICIPAL ROAD COMPANY
- MILK PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTOR
- CAR PARTS VENDOR
- OLEDD HOUSING
- COMFORT HOTEL
- EMBASSY OF CHINA
- E CENTRO
- NEW HOUSING
- VILNIUS UNIVERSITY MIT FACULTY
- KINDERGARTEN
- BELARUS EMBASSY
- POLICE DEPARTMENT
- MAXIMA
- SUPERMARKET
RECOGNIZING EXISTING FUNCTIONS

40% RESIDENTIAL
34% COMMERCE+OFFICES
12% EDUCATION
10% OTHER
8% ABANDONED OR UNUSED
PUBLIC SPACE STUDY
DERELICT, POORLY USED AND CHAOTIC PUBLIC SPACES. NO HIERARCHY NOR SYSTEM.
NEW DEVELOPMENTS AFTER 2007
MOSTLY PRIVATE DIRECT INVESTMENTS TO HOUSING SECTOR
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

3 story housing block

5 story stand-alone villa

Highrise office block

Shopping mall
PROJECT TIMELINE
URBAN DESIGN PROPOSAL IS DIVIDED TO
POLICY MAKING AND PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

HOW

WHAT

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

WHAT

USING ABANDONED SOVIET STRUCTURES
CONVERTING ABANDONED FACTORY TO A GREENHOUSE
PLINTH HOUSING FOR CO-OPERATIVES
LOCAL MARKET-PLACE FOR LOCAL ECONOMY
NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING STOCK
NEW COMMUNITY HOUSE AS PEOPLE’S PALACE
CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE MUSEUM
URBAN DESIGN TOOLBOX
URBAN DESIGN METHODS AND CRITERIA
USED TO DESIGN QUALITY OF SPACES, ACCESSIBILITY AND URBAN LIFE

- 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 its 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

- 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
PHASE 1: 2014-2020
ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS
FOR CIVIC ENTERPRENEURSHIP

ART SCULPTURE TO CLUSTER DESIGN EVENTS

ABANDONED FACTORY REUSED AS COMMUNITY GREENHOUSE

LIFTED VILLAS ON PLINTH FOR RENTING IT AND PARKING

NEWTOWN COMMUNITY BOULEVARD MARKETPLACE
UNUSED SOVIET MODERNISM
CONVERTING ABANDONED TO A CENTRALITY
FOR NEWTOWN CONSORTIUM AND COMMUNITY

RENT US YOUR ABANDONED BUILDING
ABANDONED SOVIET FACTORY

RENT US YOUR ABANDONED FACTORY
ABANDONED SOVIET FACTORY
CONVERTING ABANDONED FACTORY INTO A GREENHOUSE AND ENTERTAINMENT AREA
CONCEPT OF CO-OPERATIVE PLINTH HOUSING
EXISTING SITUATION
CO-OPERATIVE PLINTH HOUSING
LIFTING VILLAS ON A SHARED PLINTH
CO-OPERATIVE PLINTH HOUSING
USING PLINTH FOR RENTAL, OWN COMMERCE,
PARKING, HOUSE EXTENTION

WE BECAME CIVIC ENTERPRENEURS!
CO-OPERATIVE PLINTH HOUSING
INCREMENTAL BUILDING MODEL IS AVAILABLE IF THERE IS A NEED FOR EXTENTION

WE WERE INVITED TO JOIN THE CO-OP!
## Creating Housing Co-operations

### Advantages:

- Shared parking
- Block waste collection
- Communal gardens
- Service facilities
- Wider houses

### Architecture

- Energy saving technologies
- Housing renovations
- Wider houses (shared construction)
- Shared storage facilities
- Inner playgrounds
- Communal workshops
- Use of empty plots

### Infrastructure

- Shared parking
- Water harvesting
- Shared service facilities
- Waste collection
- Energy production
- Communal back alley

- Shared costs of infrastructure
- Independent free space to rent
- More efficiency (working together)

### Economy

- Back alley vs communal space
- Space for social interaction
- Community organization
- Safer blocks
- Creation of jobs
- Community pride

### Society and Culture

- Creating housing co-operations
COMMUNITY BUILT IT? IMPRESSIVE.
REUSING ABANDONED OBJECTS FOR INCREMENTAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING
EXISTING SITUATION
INCREMENTAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING
STRUCTURE FROM REUSED CONCRETE BEAMS
INCREMENTAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT IS BASED ON ‘DIY’ THROUGH PHASES

IF I WANT, I CAN DO MY OWN INTERIOR
INCREMENTAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING
STRUCTURE ALLOWS INCREMENTAL GROWTH MODEL

I CAN BE OWNER OR A RENTER
HEADQUARTERS OF NEWTOWN CONSORTIUM, NEWTOWN ELDERSHIP AND A COMMUNITY HOUSE

WE FUNDED THIS PROJECT OURSELVES
INTERIOR FUNCTIONS AS PUBLIC FORUM
PHASE 3: 2025-2030
CULTURAL AMENITIES AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

- **Art Sculpture to Cluster Design Events**
- **Highrise Housing with Common Plinth**
- **Affordable Social Housing, Co-funded by Residents**
- **Local Community Museum and Arts Incubator**
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

Common space for co-op needs
PROPOSED URBAN DENSITY
THIS HOW NEWTOWN COULD LOOK LIKE IN NEAR FUTURE
SPATIAL DESIGNER SUGGESTS VARIOUS TYPOLOGIES FOR COMMUNITY

URBAN DESIGN UNITS VARY BY PRICE, SPACE QUALITY, GFA, FAR AND ETC.
EXISTING SITUATION

MIXED TYPOLOGIES

URBAN COURTYARDS + CONDENSED VILLAS

URBAN COURTYARDS + LIFTED VILLAS

DIVERSE URBAN COURTYARDS

PLINTH HOUSING + LIFTED VILLAS

URBAN COURTYARDS + LIFTED VILLAS

URBAN BLOCK DESIGN VARIATIONS
PEOPLE VOTE FOR PROPOSAL PROJECTS
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)
THANK YOU