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ESTONIAN URBANISTS' REVIEW

15

URBAN IDEA
DECEMBER 2013

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ON POLITICAL AND SPATIAL CULTURE À LA CIVIL SOCIETY

This issue of U has been hijacked by the Urban Idea team to talk about space, democracy and responsibility from a citizen's standpoint. We will take a look at the teeming civil society but will say in advance that we do not view this increased activity as a thing-in-itself: it is not a terror of happiness or a revolution of consensus. For us, the pastry stand at a street festival is the first step towards taking more responsibility, the first soft antithesis to the private property and hedge cult of the new republic.

The Estonian Human Development Report notes that in the last two years, there has been a marked increase of civil activism in our society, demand for the honesty and trustworthiness of politicians' actions has grown.¹ Understandable. The continuing crisis of values and democracy, which is expressed in constantly surfacing funding scandals, the alienation of rulers and the absolutist syndrome of politicians, which is, in turn, affirmed daily in the lack of self-criticism of the authorities and brushing everything that has come to light under the carpet again – this is what should be a wake-up call to the people in whom, according to our constitution, the supreme power of the state is vested, and prompt them to ask: hey, guys, what is going on?

As is noted in the Human Development Report, the greatest weaknesses of Estonian democracy are principally the functioning of governance, participation and political culture.² We will republish the article 'The Development of Political Culture in Estonia' by Marju Lauristin, Peeter Vihalemm and Ivar Tallo that first appeared in the cultural weekly Sirp in 1997 and which explains the concept of political culture and helps us position the Estonian state in its stages (additionally, we can take it as an ABC of political culture and therefore, we recommend it to everyone, even if only as a reminder). It is truly ironic that for sixteen years, a similar cultural change or natural development into a mature democratic political system was anticipated by leading Estonian sociologists, who now have to admit excessive optimism when it comes to swiftly defeating the ghosts of socialism.

How to reach a mature deliberative democracy and what has the civil society done to hasten the process is the subject of the section, which summarises the nearly year-long exercise in developing a culture of co-operation between neighbourhood associations and political authorities of the city. The head of the Urban Idea Teele Pehk talks about her experience in coordinating the initiative; Madle Lippus will expand on the content of Good Collaboration Pact, about to be signed with the city authorities, and explain its importance in regulating the communication between the city and the NGOs; and Toomas Vitsut, Alari Rammo and Yoko Alender will place the Good Practice in the context of today's city governance.

Typical Estonian attitudes about space are related in a dialogue between Kristi Grišakov and Kadri Koppel, who talk about spatial responsibility and the need to review our current spatial values. A good example of demolished



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U15 GUEST EDITORS:
Andra Aaloe, Teele Pehk

U EDITORS IN CHIEF:
*Keiti Kljavin,
Kaija-Luisa Kurik*

TRANSLATION AND PROOFREADING:
*Kaisa Kaer, Annika Haas,
Paul Emmet, Kaija-Luisa Kurik, Keiti Kljavin,
Andra Aaloe*

WEB: *Andreas Wagner,
Maria Derloš*

DESIGN: *Andra Aaloe,
Lewis McGuffie*

CONTRIBUTIONS:
*Marju Lauristin, Peeter Vihalemm, Ivar Tallo,
Teele Pehk, Madle Lippus, Kristi Grišakov, Kadri Koppel, Gert Zavatski, Annika Haas, Maria Derloš, Jaanika Ait, Anu Kägu, Francisco Martínez, Mark Minkjan, Gunnar Grimsson*

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COVER: *Andra Aaloe*

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*Contributions are welcome
toimetus@linnalabor.ee*

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EESTI KULTÜURKAPITAL

EDITORIAL

attitudes is Gert Zavatski's brief draft about apartment associations and NGOs, which ironically equates two kinds of NGOs: a housing co-op and a political party, and calls for cleaning up the reputation of apartment associations and using their full potential.

U15 cannot ignore the loudest movement in Tallinn's civil society: the neighbourhood associations, mapped by Jaanika Ait and Anu Kägu in this case. The gap in the map where nothing seems to be going on is filled by Annika Haas and Maria Derlöš with the stories and photos of Lasnamäe residents who opened up their hearts.

This issue of U is concluded by a sweet obligation to chronicle the events in the urbanists' field. An outsider's view of the Tallinn Architecture Biennale is provided by PhD student from Tallinn University Francisco Martínez. Mark Minkjan, one of the engineers of the workshop organised by Failed Architecture³ during the Architecture Biennale, speaks about holistic approach to built environment on the basis of the Rapla KEK building. U15 is pepped up by Gunnar Grímsson's (who is almost-of-a-dad of Icelandic e-democracy) slogan-essay.

The editorial team of Urban Idea and U wishes you a pleasant read and great co-operation.

1. *Introduction. Marju Lauristin. The Estonian Human Development Report, 2012/2013, Estonian Co-operation Assembly, Tallinn, 2013.* p 61.

2. *Civil society and social capital. Juhan Kivirähk, Marju Lauristin. The Estonian Human Development Report, 2012/2013, Estonian Co-operation Assembly, Tallinn, 2013.* p 74.

3. www.failedarchitecture.com

THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL CULTURE IN ESTONIA¹

MARJU LAURISTIN, PEETER VIHALEM, IVAR TALLO

The totalitarian Soviet system destroyed democratic political culture and paralysed the society's ability to evolve independently. This was a much greater success than the attempt to destroy national culture. According to Western analysts, the democratic development has not proceeded as quickly and successfully in post-Soviet countries as desired exactly because the legacy of totalitarianism is still profoundly influencing their political culture and paralyses their ability to create a new system.² The unexpected results of democratic reforms have caused many disappointments in both direct participants as well as Western observers. The further the reforms in political institutions advance, the clearer it becomes that real democracy depends on the development of political culture.

What is political culture?

Politics as a field can be divided into political structure, which comprises subjects that execute politics and institutions of political power, and political culture, which encompasses the intellectual and behavioural aspects of politics.

The components of political culture are:

- values, norms, beliefs, knowledge and the rules, procedures, traditions and rituals that rely on them. They are valid not only for the events that occur outside oneself but also for the political self-identification of a decision maker, an important part of which is national identity³;
- the language of politics, concepts and symbols that are connected to political activity, political discourse;
- political behaviour, practical choices of words, people and activities.

Political culture in a democratic society

When we evaluate the political culture of a population, we take as one of the main criteria the level of democratisation of the country. Democratic political culture is characterised by the following features:⁴

- diversity of political subjects and ideas, political pluralism;
- tolerance towards other people, communities, ideas and developments, including a willingness to allow conflicting interests and opinions to be aired without opposition;
- readiness and ability of the majority of people to participate in political life;
- ability to understand what is going on in politics, comprehend the

*The article was published
in the weekly cultural
newspaper Sirp on
17 and 24 October 1997.*

1. 'The Development of Political Culture in Estonia' is a translated and abridged version of a chapter from M. Lauristin & P. Vihailemm with K. E. Rosengren & L. Weibull (eds), 1997. *Return to the Western World: Cultural and Political Perspectives on the Estonian Post-Communist Transformation*. Tartu: Tartu University Press.

2. Holmes, I. 1997. *Post-Communism: An Introduction*. Cambridge & Oxford: Polity Press, p 16.

3. Verba, S. 1965. *Comparative Political Culture*. In pye, L.W. and Verba, S (ed.) *Political Cultural and Political Development*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p 529; Kaplan, G. (1995), *Political Culture in Estonia: The Impact of Two Traditions and Political Development*. In Tismeanu, V. (ed). *Political Culture Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*. New York: M. E. Sharpe, p 230-231.

4. Cf. Gibson, I. 1995. *The Resilience of Mass Support for Democratic Institutions and Process in the Nascent Russian and Ukrainian Democracies*. In Tismearu, V. (ed). *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*. New York: M. E. Sharpe.

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- content of political – choices and decisions;
- belief in the legitimacy of political institutions;
- firm rules and customs in the relations between political actors, e.g. a belief in the possibility and desirability of political cooperation mixed with a belief in the legitimacy of conflict⁵;
- political and interpersonal trust.

A general precondition for the development of a democratic political culture is an institutional structure that permits a widening of democracy: the society is dominated by power and role relations, rules of making decisions, the way of governing must encourage engagement, tolerance and honest competition, and also allow for the voice of those in a minority or weaker position to be heard.

One can distinguish four main lines of change in the development from Soviet totalitarianism towards liberal democracy: extensive civil liberties in law and practice, representative government, the rule of law, and Weberian bureaucracy subject to control by elected officials.⁶ The more developed and the more stable a given society is, the more one needs democratic political culture to make economic and political institutions function normally. It is also necessary to have a certain level of economic well-being, although as the best known researcher of postindustrial values Roman Inglehart has noted, ‘economic development does not automatically bring about democracy, and is itself influenced by cultural variables’⁷.

Attributes of Soviet political culture

The attributes of the Soviet system that have been brought out include totalitarianism, imperialism, Byzantinism⁸.

Totalitarianism includes the following attributes: the total and monopolistic power of the Communist Party, including the aim to achieve a monopoly on truth, communication and organisation; the nomenklatura as a new ruling class; total control, the suppression of civil society; standardisation and hierarchy of public life; repression of those who stray from the official line of thinking and behaviour.

Imperialism means the attempt to maintain and increase influence in the world and colonialists bids to subdue non-Russian republics and socialist satellite states.

Ideologisation means the dependence of political behaviour and political institutions on the official Marxist-Leninist interpretation of the world and history and the use of science and art as an ideological and propaganda tool.

Byzantinism indicates the important role of the hierarchy of semi-feudal personal relations and dependencies: unlike in rule of law, people depend on the regulations set by people instead of laws. The laws are not working, including the constitution. This is greatly influenced by the centuries-long orthodox tradition of the Czarist state. The state is closed to the West. Soviet political culture can be characterised by the following attributes:⁹

- mythical and ritual behaviour which is not based on rational argumentation and logical discourse;

5. Dahl, R. A. 1989. *Democracy and Its Crisis*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p 262.
6. Bunce V. 1992. *Rising Above the Past: The Struggle for Liberal Democracy in Eastern Europe*. In Ramet, S. P. (ed.), *Adaption and Transformation in Communist and Post-Communist Systems*. Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, p 244.
7. Inglehart, R. 1988. *The Renaissance of Political Culture*. *American Political Science Review*, 82 (4), 1209-1230, p 1220.
8. Cf. Almond, S. A. 1990. *A Discipline Divided: Schools and Sects in Political Science*. Newbury Park, London & New Delhi: Sage; Gray, J. 1990. *Totalitarianism, Reform, and Civil Society*. In Paul, E.F. (ed) *Totalitarianism at the Crossroads*. New Brunswick NJ & London: Transaction Books; Bunce V. 1992. *Rising Above the Past: The Struggle for Liberal Democracy in Eastern Europe*. In Ramet, S. P. (ed.), *Adaption and Transformation in Communist and Post-Communist Systems*. Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press; Karklins, R. 1994. *Explaining Regime Change in Soviet Union*. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 46 (1), p 29-45; Holmes, I. 1997. *Post-Communism: An Introduction*. Cambridge & Oxford: Polity Press.
9. Cf. Fleron, F. J. Jr. 1996. *Post-Soviet Political Culture in Russia: An Assessment of Recent Empirical Investigations*. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 48 (2), p 225-260.

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- use of ideals, positive normativism;
- messianism, a vision of saving all oppressed people of the world, a vision of the historically progressive nature of the Soviet system;¹⁰
- closed nature and no tolerance for other ideas and values;
- the separation of official and unofficial opinions, evaluations and behaviour, and Orwellian double-think and double-behaviour, characterising especially the non-Russian parts of the USSR. Dual personality, however, was widespread even in Russian cities and especially among educated people¹¹;
- supreme providence, paternalism, being directed from above.

In Estonia, the Soviet doctrine never reached the position of ideological hegemony: Mikko Lagerspetz, who has studied the effect of Communist ideology on Estonian society, claims that 'there was no hegemonic ideology in the Gramscian sense'¹². Double-think and double-behaviour was widespread because of the occupation, and because of the strong ties to pre-World War II society and to the Western world at large.

There was very little hope for an end to the Soviet system; thus, instead of fighting it, people tried to use it for personal gain and to preserve national culture. The more the stagnation of 1970-1980 developed, the more Estonian political culture was characterised on one hand by a pragmatic and cynical use of official structures and ideology, and on the other hand by a desire to get rid of it.

Three stages of the development of political culture in post-communist societies

In the development of political culture during 1988-1997 in Estonia, and possibly in other post-Communist states, three stages can be distinguished: mythological, ideological and critical-rational.

The mythological stage prevailed during the period of 1988 to 1990, and it was characterised by mass movements and the gathering of people around certain shared goals. Emotional devotion, rather than rational deliberation, made it possible for one million people to counter one of the Great Powers of the world. The characteristic forms of political activity during this period were mass gatherings and rallies, boycotts, sit-ins, and the collection of signatures. Under the guidance of charismatic leaders, rituals of common behaviour emerged, which allowed emotional involvement by the masses. Great crowds of people were united by a common emotional high voltage. Symbols, myths, and rituals triumphed, words had a magical function during large rallies. Speeches, songs and slogans during mass protests were a collective conjuring, a symbolic fight and victory of a small nation over the totalitarian machinery. The same kinds of rituals (holding hands, waving flags, a common rocking to songs or shouts, etc.) could be seen in many then-Communist states in 1988-1989, but also later - for example, during the mass protests of 1996-1997 in Serbia. Political discourse was also ritualistic in its character, arguments were replaced by repetitive exclamations of values and slogans ('Good and Proud to be Estonian!', 'Freedom', 'One day we will be victorious anyway!', 'The Treaty of Tartu is valid'). The mythological stage reached its

10. Karklins, R. 1994. *Explaining Regime Change in Soviet Union. Europe-Asia Studies*, 46 (1), p 29-45: 40.

11. See Fleron, F. J. Jr. 1996. *Post-Soviet Political Culture in Russia: An Assessment of Recent Empirical Investigations. Europe-Asia Studies*, 48 (2), p 225-26, 237-38.

12. Lagerspetz, M. 1996. *Constructing Post-Communism: A Study in the Estonian Social Problems Discourse. Annales Universitatis Turkuensis, B-214, Humaniora Turku: Turun Yliopisto*, p 131.

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zenith in 1988-1989, with the election of the Estonian Congress in 1990 and the creation of new parties, the rationality of political activity increased, an ideological dialogue within the national freedom movement began, the time of unified mass movement was over.

The founder of myth theory Roland Barthes has claimed that myth as a cultural mechanism is often activated in the case of a collective borderline situation when the past is destroyed under the pressure of the unbearable present and rhetorical magic is needed to create a new connection between eras.¹³

The Baltic peoples had been under the Soviet Empire for over 40 years, and until 1985 there was no sign that this pressure would ever disappear or even decrease. As Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 had shown, no help from the West was to be expected. The West was constantly worried about freedom and human rights in some faraway countries but not the Baltic States that had been left at the mercy of the Byzantine Soviet Empire. The break-up of the Soviet Empire was regarded as a miracle. Both the leaders and the people understood that if the moment was not seized, there would be very little hope for the Estonian people and culture.

The magic of words and rituals was important not only because it encouraged people to work together, but also because the Soviet Empire was built on a mythological foundation. It was based on the mythology of a bright future, and it was customary in official texts to use words having no visible connection to outside reality. In the first stage of the transition, where the new relationships and institutions have not yet taken shape and where there was no variety in political interests, it is likely that democratic values express themselves in the forms used in totalitarian society. Thus, 'new content' was poured into 'old moulds.'

The content of the mythological stage had been the restoration of the state. However, after that had happened, the majority of those who had desired for an independent state did not feel any responsibility for it. There was not enough political experience available, but the lack of time and will were also important factors. Last but not least, the transitional shock emanating from the rapid economic and social changes created serious problems in everyday life.

The Ideological Stage began in 1990 with the creation of new parties and largely continues to this day. In this stage, the values are defined verbally, and the mythological suggestive symbols are replaced by key words characterising political ideologies (e.g. left-wing, right-wing, laissez-faire, social market economy, open society, and a strong middle class). Ideological discourse emerges where different values and political programs are formulated and defended through theoretical concepts, at the same time political activity becomes more professional. Argumentation for a position is more closely connected to the Western ideological narratives than to the political practice of the country.

An ideological, value-rational discourse is dominant in the public debate. Judging ideologies as either 'right' or 'wrong' is based on certain recognised textual models ('there is no alternative to right-wing'), political discourse is strongly polarised on the 'us' and 'them' axis. In elections, support is sought for texts and persons, not for consistent political activity. Low tolerance and the ideological nature of political discourse cause a spiral of silence: people afraid of social isolation do not support non-popular beliefs¹⁴.

13. Barthes, R. 1972. *Mythologies*. New York: Hill & Wang.

14. See Noelle-Neumann, E. 1993. *The Spiral of Silence: Public opinion - Our Social Skin*. 2nd edition. Chicago & London: University of Chicago press.

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First, it concerns right versus left-wing politics, a problem which up to this day is covered with a mythical veil. Only a few want to be 'lefties' in their words.

At the same time, many would like to see left-wing political practices and solutions for many social problems, not knowing or not wanting to call it 'left-wing' or calling it the 'true right-wing'.

The people are left out from decision-making, mistrust and the delegitimising of power increases. New political institutions, democratic behaviour and forms of communication took the form of 'learning' from the West. In this process of Westernisation, people learned ready-made texts by heart and copied readymade institutions. The political and economic elite learned much faster than the general population, who did not yet feel the representation of their interests and did not understand neither the need, nor the content of Western slogans and procedures. Consequently, the participation activity and interest into politics plummeted. Towards the end of 1992 and in the beginning of 1993, the interest in politics among Estonians was about 50%, compared to the 90% interest during the mythological stage. Now it has risen again to 60-65%. Election turnout, which was 71-87% before gaining independence, has dropped to 51-67%.^{15,16}

The critical-rational stage will be the stage where true democratic political culture will finally emerge. Firm ties between political discourse and political practice are established. A multitude of opinions emerge. The discourse becomes problem-solving and reflexive in character; different sides are connected by what Habermas calls 'discourse ethics', a communicative ethic based on the mutual recognition of the values, transparency and recognition of the parties. Instead of ideologic labelling of opponents, the phrasing of the interests of different sides and debate become important, with the aim of explaining positions and in the case of goals of common interest, the comparison of the means of obtaining them. Both the electorate and politicians know these relations, so that by supporting one political program or another, one may change political practice. This presupposes economic and political stability, and accordingly, a greater freedom in determining directions of development. The increase of general political experience is important, but especially the emergence of new political actors (parties, citizens' movements, and expert-groups), able to feel, express and defend the interests of the main social groups upon which public policy can be formulated. An agreement thus reached through critical rational public discourse on the common ground of different group interests ensures the stability and understandability of politics.

These three stages of the development of political culture are characterised by the relationship of political variety and participation, political variety meaning the availability of choices between different political developments; participation, an active interest in politics. During the mythological stage, participation in political life is at its maximum, and the variety of possibilities is minimal. In the ideological stage, participation goes down, and variety up. In the critical-rational stage, the variety should reach its maximum. We could thus call it a pluralist society, in which the increase of participation occurs through new 'communication nets,' not as a mass activity.

Our vision of the main characteristics of democratic political culture in the different stages of its development is summarised in table below. As seen in the table, the transition from the mythological stage to the ideological for some indicators is very rapid, and the two stages are contradictory because of the logic of the development of the political culture itself.

15. *Elections in Estonia*

During the transition

Period: A Comparative Study

(1989-1993). Tallinn:

Teaduste Akadeemia

Kirjastus, p 397.

16. *The turnout in the*

local elections in 2013 was

57% (eds.).

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INDICATORS OF DEVELOPMENT	MYTHOLOGICAL STAGE	IDEOLOGICAL STAGE	CRITICAL-RATIONAL STAGE
Political variety, pluralism	<i>low</i>	<i>high</i>	<i>very high</i>
Participation	<i>very high</i>	<i>low</i>	<i>high</i>
Tolerance	<i>low</i>	<i>medium</i>	<i>high</i>
Trust and legitimacy	<i>very high</i>	<i>low</i>	<i>high</i>
Clarity of political processes	<i>very high</i>	<i>low</i>	<i>high</i>
Level of individual responsibility	<i>low</i>	<i>low</i>	<i>high</i>
Rules and customs of political behaviour	<i>absent</i>	<i>formally there, but low acceptance</i>	<i>clearly developed and observable</i>

STAGES OF
DEVELOPMENT OF
THE DEMOCRATIC
POLITICAL CULTURE

This extraordinary situation cannot last for long. It is followed by fragmentation and specialisation, the diffusion of social energy that is accompanied by great emotional disappointments. The ideological phase is characterised by disillusionment, weak or strong anomie, and the inner turmoil which some scholars have called an 'ideological and moral vacuum'¹⁷.

The development of the critical-rational stage takes years, if not decades. Liberal democracy took shape in Western Europe and North America during a very long process, from the 1820s to the turn of the century. The pace and success of democratisation in post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe depends on whether it is the first wave of democratisation, the first creation of democratic institutions and the first development of democratic political culture (in Russia and other former Soviet Republics, excluding the Baltic states) or recovering from the consequences of the intervening totalitarian setbacks (the post-Communist countries of Central Europe and the Baltic States).

There are two possibilities for further development of Estonian political culture, one more optimistic than the other, depending on the speed with which rational-critical discourse will take over from the ideological stage. True political maturation comes only from the experiences of participants, it demonstrates the connection between political texts and reality. The pessimistic view maintains that the creation of necessary experience will still take a long time, that political knowledge is not growing, and that overall disappointment is increasing and consequently, the ideological stage will continue for years to come.

The practical critique of political texts is part of political maturation. It is a long process, and it does not run smoothly, for it has to digest its own negative experiences. Fortunately, there is still a strong desire to learn in the Estonian population.

17. Holmes, I. 1997.
Post-Communism: An Introduction. Cambridge & Oxford: Polity Press, p 18-19.

MARJU LAURISTIN'S COMMENT
TO THE ARTICLE TODAY:
'We were too optimistic - in contemporary Estonia a mix of mythologies and ideological rhetorics continues to dominate. Penetrating that by critical thought is often challenging even for clever people.'

We advise you to analyse the contemporary political landscape in the light of the article with mild irony and open mind and think what could be the reason for this fixation.

URBAN IDEA



URBAN IDEA IS AN INITIATIVE
TO IMPROVE COLLABORATION
BETWEEN TALLINN'S NEIGH-
BOURHOOD ASSOCIATIONS
AND THE CITY GOVERNMENT

THE INITIATIVE IS FINANCED
BY THE EUROPEAN
FINANCIAL MECHANISM
2009–2014 WITHIN THE
PROGRAMME 'NGO FUND'

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Urban Idea

Urban Idea is the initiative of Tallinn neighbourhood associations, through which the basis of the future cooperation between neighbourhood associations and governing power will be defined. One of its goals is to draw up a good cooperation practice, which will create stronger trust and through that a fertile surface for finding solutions to improve the city's environment and milieu. During 2013, Urban Idea has conducted several seminars about life in the city, organized research tours and meetings between community members, parties and members of the City Government offices.

HONEST CONFESSIONS FROM THE COORDINATOR OF URBAN IDEA

TEELE PEHK, head of Urban Lab, co-ordinator of Urban Idea

For a year now, I have tried to improve the communication between twenty neighbourhood associations and find out how these groups could find a common language with the city government. It has been time-consuming work, with planning activities and choosing tactics, there has been an insane amount of goading and persuading and a fair amount of negotiating with the city. In addition, an endless amount of brainstorming with my teammates¹ on how to make the message of civic associations heard in the fray of local elections.

I will not go into details about how difficult it is to run such a project. That would be rather uninspiring. I am quite aware of the fact that in any field, it takes time before the culture of co-operation takes root. Instead, I will focus on what we have achieved. What is this special and novel 'model' that we have created in the course of discussions, meetings and events of Urban Idea?

In short, it means increasing social capital. With the initiative of Urban Idea, we have tried to raise awareness of neighbourhood associations as experts on running local life, even though at the same time we have had to deal with the issues of inner democracy and self-awareness of the civic society. We have tried to convince the city government of the benefits born from co-operation and accordingly, in passing, to alleviate the politicians' fear of losing power. Wishing to boost civic courage, we have given more power to the city district governments in our thoughts. We made it our goal to increase the focus on

1. The primary team of Urban Idea includes a civil society expert MADLE LIPPUS, social scientist and documentary filmmaker PEETER VIHMA, urbanist ANDRA AALOE, members of the Estonian Urban Lab KAISA KAER and IVAN LAVRENTJEV, marketing expert MARTIN KAROLIN and volunteers MARTIN LAIDLÄ, ANU KÄGU, MARIA DERLÖŠ.

In addition, the Urban Idea has been helped on the right track by the members of the advisory committee: Minister for Regional Affairs SIIM KIISLER, MP ANDRES ANVELT, analyst at Praxis HILLE HINSBERG, professor of sociology KATRIN PAADAM, entrepreneur TERJE KROSS, village activist and filmmaker ARTUR TALVIK and designer and entrepreneur VILLE JEHE.

URBAN IDEA

local issues in election debates and found ourselves lobbying to the political parties. We have tried to come up with a definition of a neighbourhood association, but have also rephrased civil rights (An association for every resident!).

Despite the fact that the ideals of participatory democracy often crash against heavy metal doors in Tallinn, the district associations have become a force to be reckoned with. This social capital, born out of discussions between active citizens, city administrators, experts of civil society and officials, helps us to distinguish the symptoms of the ailing city rule. And that is not all – it also inspires people to create communities elsewhere and encourages them to join the neighbourhood association movement.

Within Urban Idea, there have been more and less tortuous discussions, educational seminars and assemblies of associations, and one tangible result for that has been a three-page document. This document should become the basis for a new culture of governing the city. The **Good Collaboration Pact** is nothing revolutionary. It is more like a cry for help in a situation where the trust between civic associations keen to contribute to the development of the city and the decision-makers representing the city is as thin as first ice.

If the city council approves the Good Pact (this will be clear within the next few months), our city could still become a prime example of open government and community-friendly thinking. Not that one document would solve the problems; rather, agreeing on the principles of co-operation would help us to move beyond the point we always seem to get stuck at. There is potential, as the cities of neighbouring countries envy the high level of organisation of Tallinn's neighbourhood associations. That is the potential that should not be left unused in city development.

I do dream about a home city like that. And I will keep working to make my dreams come true.



A workshop with neighbourhood associations in April 2013. Photo: Andra Aaloe

ONE QUESTION

We asked representatives of the civil society and the city government one question:

'Why is the Good Collaboration Pact important?'

Below are the answers sent to the editors of U.

One of the advantages of today's information society is that it is relatively easy for everyone to get themselves up to speed with what's going on in the organisation of society. In terms of living arrangements on the local level, it goes without saying that development takes place on the initiative of residents on the one hand, and with the support of the specialists in the city government on the other hand. On many issues, the locals are the best experts – it would be irresponsible not to use this potential in the interests of the city. Keeping in mind that, to a large extent, the civil society works on enthusiasm, it is important to create a framework that would guarantee the constant openness of the system – citizens can join in according to the issue they are interested in at the moment, and step aside once the problem is solved, without breaking up or transforming the structure. The Good Collaboration Pact is exactly that required framework.

Yoko Alender

Vice-chairman of the Pro Patria and Res Publica faction at the Tallinn city council

Good Practices are often thought to be too weak a weapon against transgressors but it is exactly good behaviour that should be agreed upon when legal orders and bans seem too great a reform or over-reacting in a situation where you could try trusting each other. Wrongdoers can usually be divided into two categories: those who do it out of neglect and those who do it out of ignorance. There are plenty of both in Tallinn and if the agreement helps the most inexperienced ones, it has already been useful. The brutes that disregard behavioural norms need to be constantly and publicly reminded of the Good Practice, and in time their behaviour will change, or alternatively, instead of moral condemnation it's time to establish penalties because it is no longer possible to hide behind ignorance.

Alari Rammo

Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organisations

As we all know, the municipal elections were held recently, and in the course of the elections, many fine residents renewed or received a mandate from their fellow residents to represent them in the city council. It is the mandate obtained in the election that the city council operates upon and continues to do so in the future.

Fortunately, we don't have to be ashamed of the co-operation between the Tallinn city authorities and the varied representatives of the civil society, because it is more encompassing than on the state level, for instance - it began long before the president's so-called Ice Cellar or People's Assembly initiative process and it is not guided from above. Even the commissions of the city council and administrative councils have included representatives of election coalitions or NGOs in their work. Looking at it from the viewpoint of the city administration, one can only welcome the continuation of this co-operation.

The regulation of the working logic, competence and activities of the city council (with laws, the statute of Tallinn and other such documents) place this co-operation in a formal framework that is partly shaped by the multitude of NGOs and the representativeness of each specific one.

Wishing you good luck, **Toomas Vitsut**

The head of Tallinn's City Council

URBAN IDEA



Meeting with Artova activists in Arabianranta in Helsinki. Photo: Teele Pehk

linnaidee
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ON THE MEANING OF THE GOOD COLLABORATION PACT

MADLE LIPPUS, civil society expert, consultant of Urban Idea

Good pact¹ for organising the co-operation between Tallinn city government and local NGOs more clearly is drawn up on the assumption that there is power in co-operation, and dialogue always leads to a more considered solution. The Good Pact document includes only the bare necessities to keep it from becoming unnecessarily long. Since the process of composing the good practice document has been long and arduous, as Teele writes in this issue of U, there are quite a few bare necessities.

Although no one questions the need for engagement anymore, whenever we're meeting with the representatives of the city government, we still have to explain the basics of engagement.² When speaking about co-operation, everyone must understand it in the same way and realise it is not just an empty phrase. Engagement in governance means a fundamental reorganisation of activities, and accordingly, making actions clearer, more transparent and more focused on the city resident (as opposed to the current focus on bureaucracy). This change has to take place in the entire city government.

Also, the representatives of the city have a very modest idea about the fields in which NGOs operate and their role in a democratic society – they are not

1. The text of the Good Collaboration Pact is based on the Good Engagement Code of Practice (www.valitsus.ee/en/government/engagement-practices/good-engagement-code-of-practice) and it was written with the help of neighbourhood associations and other NGOs active in Tallinn. The entire text is three and a half pages long and the latest draft is available on the homepage of Urban Idea (www.linnaidee.ee).

2. See 1.1 of the Good Collaboration Practice.

URBAN IDEA

merely knitting clubs and amateur choirs, instead, neighbourhood associations, for example, have a very thorough understanding of the problems and needs of their regions. As experts on local life, the neighbourhood associations want to have a say in improving their living environment and that is why the text names NGOs as strategic partners.

In Tallinn, no general principles of engagement have been set so far. The present laws do provide for the essential points where you really can't do without disclosure and engagement, but the specific way this is carried out is up to the authority and official in charge – as a rule, engagement is neither fish nor fowl. Usually, a draft legislation or development plan appears somewhere, and if you're lucky, someone is asked to comment on it, and then it disappears into a haze again (for example, the development plan for public transport³) or resurfaces unexpectedly as a finalised decision.

Therefore, the Good Collaboration Pact includes a description of the engagement process as specific obligations of the stakeholders: which issues definitely require engagement, which stakeholders should be included, and at which stages the engagement should take place. Since engagement requires openness and clarity in the actions of all parties, we have included in the obligations of the NGOs basic requirements on the openness of the associations themselves, and have described how to form a position that is presented as a joint standpoint. This way, it is perhaps possible to avoid the question that keeps popping up: who does the association (whether a neighbourhood association, an association of disabled people or any other organisation) REALLY represent?

As real life rarely follows textbook examples, the rights of parties include the option to modify the agreed engagement practice according to specific needs. This way, the city does not always have to engage with only the associations that have been active themselves, instead, it can notify the public more extensively or engage it in other ways. The Good Collaboration Pact increases the number of ways NGOs can take part in city life – for example, they can appoint their representatives in the administrative councils and in the city council committees, which is a great opportunity to form a shared and balanced opinion at a very early stage.

As was stated above, our experiences tell us that even if formally there is engagement, it is usually followed by a muddled vagueness. If they're lucky, the engaged parties get a reply to their suggestions, stating that unfortunately their proposals could not be considered. This leaves a bitter taste in the mouths of NGOs – the mistrust of those who carry out the process grows and the wish to stake one's free time and will the next time diminishes. To avoid the common disappointment of the engaged parties in the process, articles 7 and 8 in the Good Collaboration Pact deal with informing parties about the results of engagement and assessing co-operation, which should actually be elementary.

The Good Collaboration Pact, which we plan to implement in Tallinn and which has been reconciled with the different departments of the city government⁴, is really nothing revolutionary. However, it does contain an absolutely essential shared understanding with the aim to better govern the city in the future.

3. *The draft legislation for the public transport development plan was open to the public in the summer of 2011 and after a multitude of comments and suggestions from NGOs, a special committee was formed, which decided to put the plan on hold. A few months later, the city government came up with the idea of free public transport, which was not even mentioned in the development plan and the development plan is still on hold.*

4. *At the moment, the team of Urban Idea and the neighbourhood associations are waiting for approval of the city government, so that the text could be put to a vote in the city council.*

**OUR
SOCIAL APATHY IS
OUR WORST ENEMY.**

GUNNAR GRÍMSSON

**WE HAVE ALLOWED
OURSELVES TO BE
LED THROUGH A
DESIGNED RACE TRACK
TOWARDS A BROAD
AND ILL DEFINED GOAL
THAT IS IN THE
INTERESTS OF THE FEW.**

GUNNAR GRÍMSSON

PICK YOUR BATTLE GROUND
AND FIGHT FOR WHAT
YOU CARE ABOUT THE MOST.
MANY FRAGMENTED VOICES
CAN ACHIEVE LITTLE BUT
WHEN UNITED ON SPECIFIC
IDEAS AND PERSISTENT.

WE CAN CHANGE THINGS.
REAL CHANGES WILL TAKE
TIME, THEY WILL NOT AND
SHOULD NOT HAPPEN
OVERNIGHT.

GUNNAR GRÍMSSON

WE
LIVE IN A REPRESENTATIVE
DEMOCRACY SO IN ORDER
TO CHANGE THINGS WE MUST
COOPERATE WITH OUR
REPRESENTATIVES.

GUNNAR GRÍMSSON

WE

NEED MORE ACTION MORE
PARTICIPATION AND AT THE
SAME TIME WE NEED MORE
INFLUENCE ON OUR SOCIETY.

GUNNAR GRÍMSSON

PARTICIPATION
MUST BE EASY,
REWADING
AND FUN.

GUNNAR GRÍMSSON

WE ARE ALL
ONLINE,
MORE OR LESS

GUNNAR GRÍMSSON

USE THE TOOLS OF ELECTRONIC
DEMOCRACY TO ORGANIZE YOURSELVES.
THERE ARE DOZENS OF THOSE AVAILABLE.
BOTH THE CODE AND THE DATA
MUST BE OPEN.

ALWAYS.

GUNNAR GRÍMSSON

**ELECTRONIC
DEMOCRACY**
IS STILL A CHILD,
BUT IT'S ALREADY A
USABLE TOOL TO REVERSE
DEMOCRATIC DECLINE.

GUNNAR GRÍMSSON

STATEMENTS FOR U15
BY

GUNNAR GRÍMSSON

ACTIVIST SINCE 1979. ON THE INTERNET SINCE 1992. SPECIALIZES
IN WEB AND USER INTERFACE DESIGNING, CONSULTATION, PROJECT
MANAGEMENT AND HAS BEEN TEACHING IN UNIVERSITIES SINCE 1994.
DEVELOPER FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SOFTWARE SINCE 2008.
COFOUNDER AND CEO OF CITIZENS FOUNDATION (WWW.CITIZENS.IS)
WHICH IS A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEVOTED TO FURTHERING
ELECTRONIC DEMOCRACY AND INTERACTION BETWEEN CITIZENS AND
RULERS. WANTS TO HELP PEOPLE TALK TO EACH OTHER INSTEAD OF
TALKING AT EACH OTHER. HAS SOME HOPE IN SUCCEEDING IN IT
BEFORE DEATH.

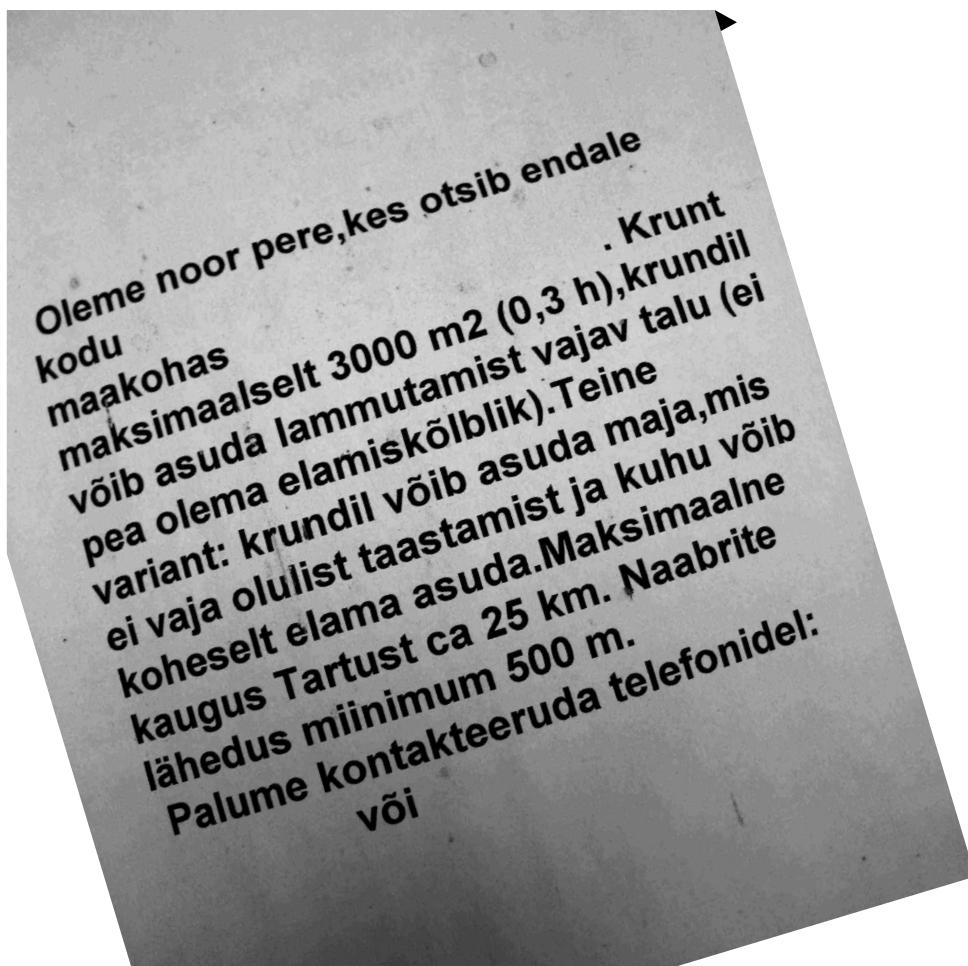


Photo: Kristi Grišakov

A DIALOGUE ABOUT SPACE: SOME ATTITUDES AND NOTIONS

The project Good Governance of the Estonian Co-operation Assembly invited the Urban Lab to join it in reflecting on what kind of a state we want and can afford; so that we have a state where people want to live and the supporting machinery is slimmer and clearer.

Our task is to deal with space and community. The following conversation is the beginning of a discussion in order to disentangle space-related concerns, fixed notions and attitudes on how we handle space. Both our state and our living space primarily represent values that are important to us and through them, they also represent who we are and who we want to become. We will try to look beyond temporary solutions that have the effect of cosmetic filler injections and begin at a cellular level, where the stem values and misunderstandings shaping our living environment lie. It is only through formulating and understanding them that a clearer and more substantial primary task can be formulated, enabling us to envision a new (spatial) future in a more open way.

The dialogue takes place between Kristi Grišakov and Kadri Koppel.

PRIVATE PROPERTY

Kristi: In addition to our school education, many of our modes of behaviour go back to what we experience in our childhood and whether we later define these experiences as positive or negative. Someone who grew up in a private house with a large garden will often want to raise his or her children in a similar environment. However, for others, the additional responsibilities that accompanied a private house were too much and in the future, they prefer the more comfortable apartment in the city centre. Often we do not explain or analyse how these personal standards are formed. Why are we really obsessed with living in a private house with a garden when we're starting a family or why is it necessary to own a summer house in addition to a flat? Considering our lifestyle and future trends, perhaps a different solution would be better?

At the same time, for the people at the top of Maslow's hierarchy (people whose basic needs such as food and safety are taken care of), their home has long been more than just a practical and needs-based shelter. Our home indicates our social affiliation and standing, its size, appearance and location provide the careful observer with an initial impression of our values and lifestyle. This way, in different periods, different trendy city districts (at the moment, for instance, it's the wooden house areas like Kassisaba or Kalamaja) and different architectural styles (e.g. building neofunctionalist villas for the nouveau successful Estonians) are fashionable among people looking for a home. Through the choice of our place of residence we position ourselves as a member of a geographical as well as ideological community.

After joining a community (e.g. an apartment building and/or neighbourhood), the positioning of yourself as an individual begins again. Admittedly on a much smaller scale. Now, the differences in lifestyles and tastes, which stand out well in a smaller environment, begin to collide. There will be regulations on the general appearance of the community and attempts to solve discords. All this is perfectly normal in our democratic society. Comparing to Western countries, the only difference is that they have had several decades more to practice and therefore, the balance between obligations and responsibility has gotten more on track over there.

Since in the Estonian context, the concept of your home extending beyond your walls and fence is relatively novel, and takes getting used to, there are two main areas of responsibility that should be explored more. Firstly, enabling forms of cohabitation that would value individual differences and preferences instead of treating them as vices in need of neutering. Secondly, how we are capable of being responsible for a living space that extends beyond the

territory of our home or housing co-op.

The shortcomings in allowing various ways of cohabitation and spatial responsibility are historically linked to the Soviet organisation of space; that oscillated between extreme rigidity and indifference. Life in a communal apartment was forced on people and for many it was a battleground of constant self-assertion and uncertainty. The corridors, however, were a no man's land of shady characters and cat ladies and there was no point in even attempting to take responsibility for it.

What is happening now is a direct backlash to that situation, which is why the regained private property has been molded into an idol and the communal space of apartment buildings is controlled with military strictness. We still turn to bans and laws instead of agreements that could meet people's wishes according to a floor, a hallway, a co-op or region.

For example in German apartment associations, at first glance, everything you can and can't think of seems to be regulated, even carpet-beating is timed. Yet daily life is mostly regulated by agreements among the residents. Rules of all kinds are written for socially impaired idiots. Everything is allowed for those who can reach an agreement with their neighbours. Here in Estonia, the rule 'my room, my rules' still seems to apply, which means that every private owner is only concerned with his or her home, ignoring how it fits into a wider context, and how it could increase its value as a living environment.

Kadri: I agree that one's living environment extends beyond one's home walls. Space surrounds us everywhere and influences how we feel, our lifestyle and our consumption habits. The inner climate of a home (I am not talking about air quality) is largely made up of the plan of the flat or house. Whether the emphasis is on a shared or private space, for instance. If the bedrooms are smaller rooms for mainly sleeping, the family will spend more time in the common living room. Therefore, large bedrooms encourage being on one's own. The same logic applies to urban space. How we move around the city, how we go to work and how we shop - on one hand, it depends on the location of the home and distances, but on the other hand, it also depends on the organisation of streets and transport. Whether or not you can use public transport or a cycle path to go from your home to your desired destination, influences how you choose to move around and that, in turn, influences where you do your daily shopping. We only get the whole picture of our living environment once we add to our home all these indoor and outdoor spaces that we use on a daily basis.

Kristi: When it comes to making decisions about living arrangements and environment, it seems that Estonians

DIALOGUE

are practically-minded and it is also visible in shaping the whole spatial picture. Multifunctionality is praised in employees and smart devices, but for some reason, it does not extend to organising space. Streets are for moving, parks and woods are for exercise, squares are for concerts and parades. Intermediate and multifunctional options are obviously seen as suspect. The only place where you can just be is your home and even then you must make sure you have done all your chores and the neighbours are not watching.

I am a little tired of these obsolete arguments that 'Estonians consider private property to be sacred'. To justify the inviolability of private property, several agonising moments in our history are brought up (Christianisation, serfdom under manors, collectivisation, etc.) when private property was violently taken from us, and even worse, we were forced to share it with strangers. And it is indeed traumatising, because people, not unlike other fauna, are highly sensitive about their territory. We mark our land, we get upset when it's trespassed without our knowledge. At the same time, owning one's territory is always accompanied by the responsibility of maintaining it. That responsibility or the obligations of the manager of each territory are much vaguer than the rights that come with owning a territory. We should spend less time on building fences and court actions and more time on enlightening discussions; on why it's good to use your own space in a way that takes others into account and what are the benefits it would bring to the society in general.

AWARENESS AND INCLUSION

Kristi: As we could all read from many election posters this autumn, issues of city planning and living environment are equated with the words 'kindergarten', 'renovation of schools', 'road repairs', 'tunnel' and 'interchange'. The question of where the pedestrians are supposed to move is smoothly ignored.

Kadri: Exactly, but these pedestrians are the very schoolchildren, whose schools are renovated with gusto and the very mothers with their infants and prams who have been given the 18 month maternity pay to get the Estonian birth rate up. Pedestrians also include pensioners, whose well-being has been a major issue in all elections and who get a greeting from the mayor and a subsidy for their birthday dinner. However, making the daily movement in the city more comfortable for this group – not to mention disabled people – hasn't unfortunately reached our political discussions.

Raising the general awareness about how our personal well-being, living environment, urban space is connected to economic, social and cultural processes should be one of the most important issues that would give substance

to political debates. Understanding space as an extended living environment is complicated by the fact that space is not a specific object that can be understood in a specific way, instead it develops over time, it is more like a process. One thing is certain – urban space is not simply the playground of real estate developers, city rulers, architects and planners. Urban space is part of the quality of life for every resident and through their usage of space, lifestyle and consumer behaviour, everyone takes part in creating their living environment.

This lack of awareness is also influenced by the fact that there is no comprehensive approach to issues of space and the development of space in our educational system. Various aspects of space are discussed in many subjects: geography, history, social education, foreign language classes, computer classes, where different dimensions of space such as nature, man-made systems, cultural space, virtual space, etc. are discussed, but it does not mean that people are well informed because the knowledge about space is split between subjects and discourses.

Kristi: The school buildings themselves are a good example of current spatial policies. In most cases, the renovation of schools entails functional EU-standard repairs, pastel-coloured walls, a stadium inside a chain-link fence and a small lawn around the school building. How does the interior design and the exterior of the school convey the particular identity and local history of that school? I doubt that pastels alone will do the trick. Are students able to decide what kind of furniture, break rooms and toys they would like and where? If you allow the children to participate in the school's makeover, they would also develop a certain sense of ownership for the school building and its surroundings. By allowing the students to take part in shaping their living environment, they are made to feel like they also have a responsibility and the opportunity to change things in their homeplace. The more we feel that we and our efforts make a difference, the more willing we are to stay in that place.

QUALITY SPACE

Kristi: Now what, the practically-minded Estonian asks; it is nice that space is so important but what plans are there for improving the situation? We would be lying if we told you that we have the answer and know what such a nice and quality space should look like. Before us, many urban planners, architects and other specialists have searched for the formula of the ideal space and city, but none of them have found that one and definitive solution. So what is that basis on which to make space-related decisions that would sufficiently support spatial processes without bringing on changes that we would not be happy about in 30 years time?

DIALOGUE

Kadri: I think that in order to answer that last question, we need to revise many of our current values and modi operandi. Several important issues (e.g. energy, transport, digital technologies) deserve to be explored in depth and with a wider discussion. However, first, to even make any adequate decisions at all, we need to let go of current attitudes and make a fresh start and reconsider the role of public and semi-public space in our society (including the issue of relations between public and private space) and the responsibilities that come with it.

Kristi: Indeed, there hasn't been a wider substantial discussion on public and semi-public space and sharing the responsibility that comes with it. Is public space the sole concern of its custodian (i.e. the state or the local government) and private space the sole concern of its owner? Then whose concern are the semi-public places like courtyards, passages, streets, squares where the spheres of responsibility of various owners intersect? Semi-public space and its creation with the temporary reprogramming of private or public space is one of the current trends that have taken fairly different forms in architectural and/or programme solutions.

One of the drivers of this trend are definitely neighbourhood festivals that try to shift the boundaries of public space in all kinds of ways, and to temporarily include privately owned space in public space. This way, at least temporarily, semi-public space is created (street concerts, courtyard cafés, apartment shops, etc.), where it is still controlled by the private owner but it welcomes and lets in everyone. After the festival, the existing situation is seemingly restored, but over time, people get more used to actively using courtyards, squares and streets as something more than mere transport corridors. The Restaurant Day and other home restaurant initiatives are also involved with undoing the stitches of the private sphere, letting strangers not only into one's courtyard but even one's home. In some city districts (e.g. Kallio in Helsinki) home dinners are a common feature of the everyday living arrangement, keeping the feeling of spring and summer festivals alive throughout the year. In terms of format, it is the neighbourhood version of the show Dinner for Five, where you create the food, the subjects and the entertainment. Registration is open to all according to availability, there is also a small fee to cover the host's expenses for the meal and drinks. So it has happened that dinners were sold out like hot cakes but it's not about the food, it's the home milieu and the chance to make new friends in your neighbourhood.

Kadri: Using space, both public as well as private, more diversely could be the way to create a relationship between yourself and the surrounding environment. This, in turn, will create interest in what is going on in that surrounding space and perhaps increase a sense of responsibility and empathy.

Kristi: Responsibility and empathy cannot be created with tough rules and threats of a beating only. All these pre-conceived notions related to space that we have discussed are largely linked to growing into a full-fledged citizen. The problems that arise from lack of responsibility in citizens (such as tax fraud) form an undercurrent that influences the functioning of the entire state. In our daily living space, they simply manifest themselves more distinctly, for instance in the shape of ugly and legally-aboveboard-architecture, fencing and vandalism. Space is and must remain the common area of responsibility and the binding tissue for the citizen and the state. For both the state as well as the citizen it means rethinking the black and white distribution of responsibility. Thinking in black-and-white terms means two polar opposites that operate independently from each other – the private owner with his or her private property and the state or the local government with the territory under its control. So far, both sides have acted on their own and tried to keep their noses out of each other's business. However, in the future, it is necessary to see more colours than just black (the state's responsibility) and white (my responsibility) and both sides need to move towards multicoloured, more flexible and innovative (spatial) solutions.

Exactly this kind of thinking will be used when putting together the spatial solutions in Good Governance. Our working processes and more specific solutions for the future can be seen in future writings that deal with spatial trends and future scenarios.

KADRI KOPPEL is a consultant-project manager at the Estonian Urban Lab, with an MA in urban governance from Tallinn University. Kadri is also a lecturer at the Estonian Business School, where she teaches a course on sustainable development. At the moment, Kadri is on an internship in Canada, where she studies the practices of sustainable development in the city of Vancouver.

KRISTI GRIŠAKOV is a PhD student at the Department of Real Estate, Planning and Geoinformatics at the University of Aalto. Her PhD thesis deals with strategic planning in the shared information space between twin cities. She obtained a BA from the Estonian Academy of Arts in Art History and has MA in European Urban Culture. She has lived for periods in the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, the United Kingdom and Finland. She currently works as the head of the Landscape Architecture Division at the Tallinn Technical University and is the founder of the think tank Väike Vasak Käsi that specialises in spatial scenario planning.



Photo: Kristi Grišakov

CO-OP-NGO STUFF

GERT ZAVATSKI, *Capitalist*

I live in the Uus Maailm area, at Kristiina Street 27-31. Judging by my house number, I can guess that there are at least twenty housing co-operatives and nonprofit organisations on my street. As of now, the housing co-operative takes care of garbage collection, cleaning, pays loans and sleepily racks its brains over what to replace next in the plumbing-wiring-roof beams area.

A housing co-operative is just a form of nonprofit organisation. The New World Association (Uue Maailma Selts, UMS) is an NGO, the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival is an NGO, I'm sure that even sports enthusiasts have a well-known NGO of their own. If one is to generalise, it can be said that sports enthusiasts love sports, UMS loves the city/neighbours, and PÖFF loves film. What does a housing co-operative love? In the Republic of Estonia, a housing co-operative is a compulsory people's association based on the principle of apartment ownership in the same building. In the course of your life, you can proudly display UMS or PÖFF (abbreviation in Estonian; Dark Nights Film Festival) on your CV, but not the housing co-operative. Why not?

Why think about a housing co-operative as a necessary evil for patching up leaking pipes or fighting over courtyard space with the neighbours? Let's decide instead that the housing co-operative Kristiina 27 exists for representing the interests of residents, improving living conditions and preserving and increasing the value of the building. Let's decide that our Kristiina 27 is an association for living in one building in the best possible way.

CO-OP-NGO ENTIRE HOUSE

Let's keep thinking. Kristiina 27 buys vacant apartments and rents them out or sells them on. This way, we could choose our own neighbours or control the joint expenses of the housing co-operative. One day it may transpire that an apartment in the co-op Kristiina 27 does not need another tenant, instead, a joint home office-cum-library or a laundry room-cum-sauna thingy is required. Or it happens, like it often does in life, that we, the residents of the co-op Kristiina 27, grow old and need a masseur or a therapist to visit us, and make sure that we can exercise and that cleaning and laundry is taken care of. And before that, we have children, several for one

hallway, and some babooshka could look after them some evening when we're all out. And teach them Russian. All this can be arranged by some PLC Grandchild or Grandmother and in that free space that we can use according to our needs.

CO-OP-NGOS ACROSS THE COURTYARD

Next, the co-op Kristiina 27 will talk to the housing co-operative of the house next door, of the house across the courtyard, of the house with the really ugly green chain-link fence, to figure out what else should be happening in the common courtyard. The NGO Uus Maailm is already growing herbs and vegetables and flowers there, the Mutika house has a little enclosure with a table and a bench, where you can have a nice cup of coffee in the summer. So all of the housing co-operatives of the same courtyard come together to match, apply, dig, write, hustle so that the park would have even more functions that would matter to the people living in surrounding houses and make life cooler. I for one want monkey bars for doing pull-ups.

And once we've agreed that we'll make sure that everyone willing to join the thinking process is happy in our park, no one will have to put their own skin on the line to fight some dark forces (in court)¹, to stop five-to-eight-storey, legally-it's-all-aboveboard architecture² from springing up under our bedroom windows. However, if the gang of housing co-operatives decided to give up their flower-beds, cafés, monkeybars and all things nice in the future, because they realise that despite the falling value of real estate the construction could actually alleviate Tallinn's great shortage of housing, we could build these eight storeys in our park with the participation of these 7-9 housing co-operatives and make it as special and first-rate as possible.

CO-OP-NGO ACROSS THE STREET

Every NGO Across the Courtyard probably also has a Co-op-NGO Across the Street. Kristiina Street is a chunk of asphalt with crumbling kerbs, some measly lawns and the Volga Shop famous among car-lovers. Let's put our heads together with the co-op-NGOs from across the street and think about the lawn, kerbs and the future and fame of the Volga Shop.

This way, it is possible to control parking, speed limits, rights of way, to make our own rules. Every car lane of the street doesn't have to be so wide that the lampposts have to spring up in the middle of the pavement. We can match those guys on Soo Street. We could even move beyond popular road construction and talk to the neighbours from across the street about what they plan to do with their courtyard, what do they want to grow and develop there. Does every house really have to be surrounded by the green chain-link fence, the cheapest option? We have the annual festival, the monthly Muttika's Kitchen Radio Show, but we have no everyday calm traffic area. Now, if 20 co-ops got together, our voice would be louder - let's say that a written appeal by 20 co-op-NGOs could easily have the force that is necessary for solving the issue of a calm traffic area on a city level.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CO-OP-NGO

All this co-op thingy could be brought under one neighbourhood association. That would be the NGO of the neighbourhood. Once the co-op people have agreed with other co-ops from across the street and from across the courtyard, they go to the neighbourhood NGO.

Co-ops could easily be as helpful as amplifiers in shaping people's living environment, if only they could shake off their rotten image.

PS Toompea consists solely of NGOs too.

1. *The judgement of the Tallinn administrative court from 18 March 2008 in the case 3-06-1136, Urmas Grišakov vs the Ministry of the Environment and the Estonian Land Board.*

2. *A building with the cheapest project and builder that eventually brings down the value of our real estate.*

OLEG, NIKOLAI, LEILI, ALEXANDRE, LEA, VITA PICTURA, KAREL, GORÖ LANA, ELVE AND VLAD

Photos ANNIKA HAAS, text MARIA DERLÓŠ



'This is the most beautiful place – just to look at the sunset from the top of the tree! Oh, this is the most beautiful place on the planet!'

Nikolai Avilov is a 72 year old inhabitant of Lasnamäe who was born in Siberia. He lives on a slate bank by Narva road on top of a mighty maple tree. For already 16 years Nikolai has lived in a hut built on top of the tree throughout the year, he cooks outside and keeps two sheepdogs under the tree. He protects himself against the cold with thick socks and a furry dog wool jumper.



'One very healthy advantage of Lasnamäe is its fresh air, as it's always windy here, even on the hottest summer days.'

Leili Müür moved to Lasnamäe in 1980 when her husband was given a flat and she started to work as the head architect for the district. Today Leili's tasks, as the architect of the district government of Lasnamäe, are developing the district's positions with regards to initiated detailed plans and building projects. She often also has to advise the residents and housing associations. She is most delighted by the continuingly improving maintenance and increasingly greener environment of Lasnamäe. Unfortunately the best results are slow in coming to life, as the slate surface is not good for plants to grow.



'It's like an illness, it's like keeping pigeons is in my blood, I couldn't imagine my life without that.'

On the edge of a wasteland in Tondiraba, right next to the construction site of the new ice rink, are two tiny buildings that at the first glance look like abandoned kiosks. Actually, these are pigeon houses built by Oleg from Lasnamäe. Already for 32 years Oleg has been collecting pigeons – starting from carrier pigeons to decorative pigeons. Oleg says, that once Lasnamäe was full of pigeon houses, but eventually keeping them became a hassle for many and by today this hobby has lost its popularity. In addition to the fact that Oleg has always loved Lasnamäe as a place to live, it's the best location for keeping pigeons. Oleg inherited the passion for pigeons from his dad, who also used to keep them.

Find out more about the pigeons and Oleg from Kadriann Kibus's documentary 'TUVID', 2012.



'My love for animals started when a friend of mine gave me a parrot as a gift hoping that taking care of it would motivate me to be more active and keep healthy. One parrot was followed by a second and a third and later came the chickens, roosters and other animals and birds.'

Between two giant landmarks, the police station and the gymnastics hall of Lasnamäe, next to the block houses, hides a small gable roof house with a picket fence. It's an office building, where Alexandre Alexeiev has, next to his business, been keeping chickens, rabbits, quails, pigeons, turkeys and a group of parrots for already five years.



'I have tried through shared activities to encourage the inhabitants of our building to value and take care of their neighbourhood.'

Lea Kiik moved to Lasnamäe from Mustamäe some 28 years ago. Lea has never regretted buying the flat, even though half of her friends tried to convince her not to move to Lasnamäe. From 1998, Lea has been an active member of two housing associations and since 2001 she has been responsible for 396 flats. She has taken part in communal workdays and other events organised by the city and encouraged other inhabitants to do the same. The housing association has done a lot to make the area around the houses greener and better maintained – they planted bushes, assimilated the yard between two houses and created a dashing playground, renewed the asphalt and the parking area.



'I write ELAST¹ and do that for various reasons. First of all of course for myself, so that 'my inner restlessness would not just disappear into thin air²'.'

'Lasnamäe is my childhood fairy tale land. I've grown up in the end of Lasnamäe. Lasnamäe is my home. Graffiti is connected to Lasnamäe as it is to any other suburb. The deeper between the buildings and behind the corners you dive into, the thicker are the layers of paint around you. There is a strong sense of community here and a lot of love. There is a kind of yard mentality here: everything is shared with each other, both materially as well as mentally. The times when we used to fight over nationality have passed. The hip-hop scene in Lasnamäe is a close community, regardless of nationality we all stand for the same thing. We make music together, draw murals together, organise parties together, celebrate birthdays together and grieve for friends that have passed away. It's not just friendship. It's like our own little Zulu nation, L-style..;)'

1. *ELAST* is author's pseudonym, tag; 2. From DVPH's song '*Punased käed*'.



'We are closely connected to Lasnamäe, as many of us have lived in Lasnamäe or grown up here together.'

'The space is not the only thing that unites us – starting from childhood we have shared a passion for cinematography. Finally, some of us decided to create our own company, so that we'd be able to do what we are really interested in and also make money with it. We decided to move our office to Lasnamäe, just to be closer to home and friends.' Vita Pictura is a well known video, after effects and production company. The core of the company is formed by the executive director Roman Pototski, camera men Maxim Kazimirevski and Aleksei Kulikov, designer and animator Oleg Rjumin and producer and PR director Vlad Kopõlkov.



'The main progress will happen when citizens take the responsibility for their everyday environment into their own hands.'

Vladislav Kopolkov is a freelance journalist and a blogger from Lasnamäe. He is a young person with a wide range of interests who always tries to widen his horizons and not to stick with one idea. The main interest of Vlad is to write about the processes of socio-political integration taking place in Estonia and Russia, he believes that the developments taking place in Lasnamäe, where the Russian speaking population is bigger, will improve the living conditions of the minorities and create a basis for them to integrate into society.

You can read Vlad's blog from here: www.vkop.eu/est



'I don't know why people think that a chairwoman has nothing to do and she is a person you can be rude to. But I'm lucky, our house is full of nice people.'

Elve was surprised when she was elected to be the chairwoman of the housing association in 2006, but as there were so many supporters, adjusting to the new position went smoothly. Guided by Elve, the housing association continues to work on making the surroundings more beautiful. Elve is proud of what she has achieved so far – the large yard is bordered with a fence, in the centre of it is a colourful playground, which is surrounded by a beautiful hedge. Most of the inhabitants know how to value the hard work the housing association has done, but parking continues to be a problem.

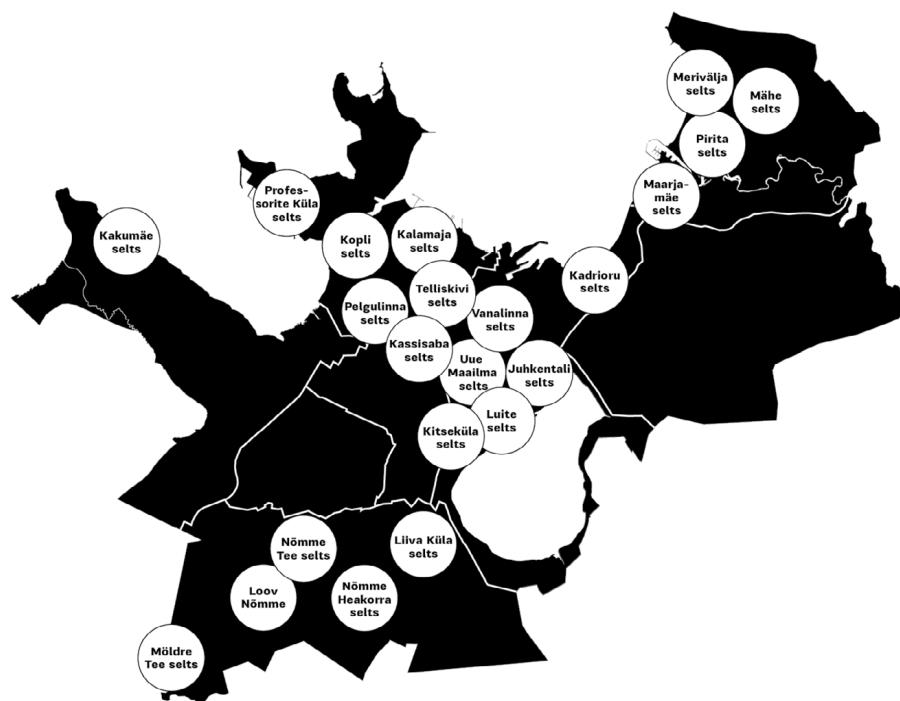


'It's nice here in Lasnamäe. We have all gotten to know each other and started to collaborate in Lasnamäe. Our first recording session took place in a high-rise in this district. Until now, most of us live in Lasna, it can't get boring here.'

Gorō Lana is the best known and most successful jazz-hop group from Lasnamäe. 'Rhymes, drums, horns and bass – this is what we are.' characterises Pavel, Gorō Lana is a union: mc's and singers Lev (in black on the photo), Andrei, Igor and Pavel (in red on the photo), in addition to that beat master/dj Roman and sax player Ivan. In 2011 Gorō Lana organised Lasnamäe Block Party – an open to all street party near Lindakivi cultural centre.

GORŌ LANA, a band active since 2002, just released their new album 'Mesi', it is available in music stores around Tallinn. Read more from here: www.facebook.com/gorqlana?fref=ts

LET US INTRODUCE



THE ABC OF TALLINN'S NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

JAANIKA AIT, MA student, sociology, Tallinn University

THE NATURE OF (CAPITAL'S) NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

In Estonia, civil society refers to the self-initiated cooperation of people for the purpose of pursuing their interests, discussing public issues, and participating in decision-making processes, as well as the associations, networks and institutions which enable such cooperation.¹ One of the forms of civil activism and self-initiated cooperation are the neighbourhood associations that are usually NGOs operating in one geographical location.

As of November 2013, there are 22 neighbourhood associations in Tallinn. Associations have been formed in the City Centre, Northern Tallinn, Pirita, Nõmme and Haabersti districts. Their membership varies from a few dozen to several hundred people. The number of people interested in the associations' activities often considerably exceeds the number of official members.

In terms of nature of activity, the neighbourhood associations can be very different, depending on the environment of the city district and the interests of members. I will list examples of how neighbourhood associations have had a say in the development of Tallinn in the past 10 years:

Public space: the reconstruction of Soo Street in the Kalamaja neighbourhood, the initiative of Vana-Kalamaja Street, the Uus Maailm vision,

1. Hea Kodanik 2013:
www.ngo.ee/kodaniku%C3%BChiskond?language=en

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the petition of the Pelgulinna Association for protecting the Stroomi forest, the court case started by the Pirita Association to revoke the detailed plan of the Pirita Yachting Centre to preserve Pirita's seaside as a recreational area;

Mobility and organisation of transport: the work of the Luite Association for preserving the Veerenni railway crossing, the work of the Möldre Road Association for improving bus connections, the successful work of the Liiva Village Association for directing heavy traffic away from Kalmistu Road;

Social services: the charity events for underprivileged families organised by the Kopli Association, active inclusion of senior citizens by the Pelgulinna Association;

Safety and maintenance: the communal work at the Professors' Village, communal work at the Juhkentali area, the activity of the Old Town Association for curtailing the noise levels of entertainment establishments;

Holding cultural events: the Maarjamäe Fair, the Street of Green Gates in Nõmme, the Day of Fun in the Professors' Village;

Valuing and redefining district identity: the History of Buildings project in Kadriorg, the activities of the Nõmme Maintenance Association;

Participation in the general development of the district, such as discussing the availability of kindergarten and school places or visions for the city's future and finding possible solutions: the vision conferences of the associations of Pirita, the series of forums run by the Telliskivi Association.

MISGIVINGS AND DOUBTS

Typically, the city rulers and developers often question the representativeness of neighbourhood associations. How many members does a neighbourhood association need to justify its participation in the development of the environment of a particular area? When a neighbourhood association is expressing an opinion, does it reflect the feelings of all residents of the area or merely those of a certain faction? How is the territory divided if there's an association of house owners and several housing co-ops also operating in the area? By what right does a neighbourhood association speak out about events in another neighbourhood or city district? Why do neighbourhood associations want to create a parallel structure next to the city district government's?

The workshops held this year on the initiative of Urban Idea (Linnaidee)² have tried to answer these questions and in defining the neighbourhood association, several conclusions have been made:

1) a neighbourhood association is not a representative assembly of the residents of the area, it is a (ideally one of many) citizens' association that focuses on improving the local living environment;

2) a neighbourhood association does not have to represent all residents of the area because that would contradict one of the founding principles of the associations (and democracy) – fostering diversity. There are several neighbourhood associations and other organisations in one area and when there are disagreements, making a decision to address diverse interests lies with the city government;

2. See www.linnaidee.ee/en/content/activities (workshop summaries available in Estonian at www.linnaidee.ee/content/koostoomude).

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3) although the term 'neighbourhood association' has become a fixture in public vocabulary, most of the neighbourhood associations do not operate within the historical borders of districts set by the city, but instead determine their territory of activity themselves (a good example is the Telliskivi Association that cares for the well-being of the Pelgulinn and Kalamaja neighbourhoods). At the same time, local life is influenced by decisions that are made outside that particular area or affect the entire city, such as public transport, schools and kindergartens, and organisation of transport, which is why the neighbourhood associations bring a local perspective to these discussions and make suggestions for improving city-wide systems;

4) as the neighbourhood associations bring together people with very different interests, the decision-making tries to follow the principles of deliberative democracy, which means looking for a consensus or if that fails, to cater to different opinions in the best possible way;

5) a neighbourhood association does not wish to create a parallel governing structure, instead, it is willing to be a mediator between the neighbourhood and the city authorities, passing on information on the neighbourhood's needs and problems, that is to say, it strives for being an expert on local conditions.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

There's still a great deal to be done in terms of democracy within the neighbourhood associations, and the pace of the process follows the development of the society and the self-awareness of its citizens. The larger the footing of a neighbourhood association in the local area and further, the more frequent and substantial the communication with the authorities, the more contacts there are with the representatives of other active neighbourhoods, the greater is the need for writing plans of action for NGOs, competent public relations, supervising volunteers and obtaining finances. The greater the resonance and field of influence of the neighbourhood association, the greater the responsibility of the board of the association to ensure transparency and improve co-operation. As is the case with the lifespan of any NGO, the established neighbourhood associations will also eventually need operating subsidies. So far, no neighbourhood association of Tallinn has secured a fixed subsidy from the city or any civic society fund, although such need has been discussed in several neighbourhood associations.

In addition to protecting public interest, the neighbourhood associations could also include other parties in the improvement of the living environment (the following are suggestions from the neighbourhood association workshops): the neighbourhood association could be a partner for developers in creating visions for the future appearance of the neighbourhood to prevent possible future disagreements; the neighbourhood association could exchange information with apartment associations and communities and pass on contacts of local entrepreneurs; the neighbourhood association could offer local businesses an additional outlet for advertising (the local paper, website, etc.), additional earning opportunities at community events and help with shaping positions related to the business area.

Some of these points on development certainly apply also to the neighbourhood associations in other Estonian cities and towns: Tartu, Pärnu, Paide, and Rakvere.

NEXT PAGE IS A MAP AND TIMELINE OF TALLINN'S NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATIONS.

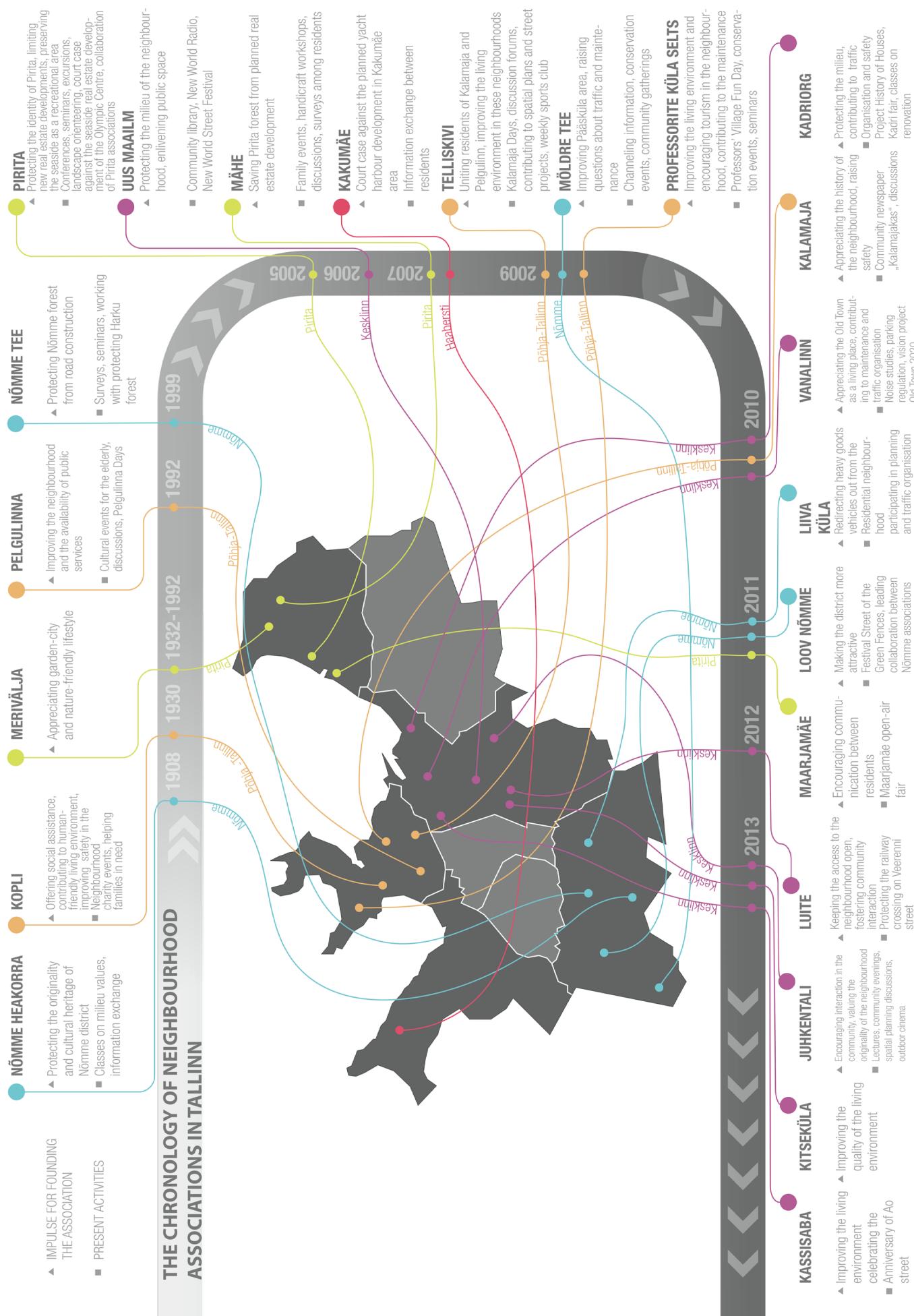
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* THE CONTACT DETAILS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATIONS OF TALLINN ARE LISTED ON THE WEBSITE OF URBAN IDEA: www.linnaidee.ee/en/



FIELD NOTES



Väike-Õismäe Urban Walk at TAB. Photo: Keiti Kļavīn

RECYCLING VIRU KESKUS

FRANCISCO MARTÍNEZ, *Department of Anthropology, Tallinn University*

In September 2013 the second Tallinn Architecture Biennale (TAB¹) was organised, this time under the catchy headline 'Recycling Socialism'. The program was composed of multiple events, such as a symposium (half of the presentations with an arguable interest) and an architectural vision competition reflecting upon the Väike-Õismäe neighbourhood. Additionally several exhibitions (e.g. in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Linnahall), workshops (e.g. Failed Architecture in Rapla), excursions (organised by the Estonian Urban Lab), and informal gatherings (e.g. TAB lounge, Gala...) took place.

Having a background in journalism, political economy and anthropology, it won't be me who judges the technical architectural aspects of the program. I guess I was not invited to do that either. Quite probably the editors of this review want to get an outsider's opinion; someone who deploys a different approach and raises alternative questions. In that sense, I'm a doppel outsider, a stranger in the field of urban planning and architecture and a foreigner in Estonia.

A colleague of mine told me that the qualitative loop that has occurred from the first to the second edition of Tallinn Architecture Biennale is impressive. It is worth a mention that most of this great work was done by a group of architects from an office called b210. A second colleague told me that the curators managed to create a tiger structure almost from nothing, from scratch. However, the problem he saw is that behind the fancy and well designed assemblage there was just a cat, well domesticated, without claws and not so critical in its meow.

1. www.tab.ee

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Probably both are right. In my view TAB 2013 has influenced the public discourse on urban matters within the Estonian capital. Nonetheless, this was not the point of disagreement between my two colleagues, but rather if the depth and critical content of the discussions were sufficient (thus seeing the program as a lost chance to query the ground). For instance, in the opening of the symposium the head of the Estonian Centre of Architecture closed his speech by saying 'in spite of seeing posters of political parties out on the streets, we are not here to talk about politics'. This man, who seemed to have emerged from Alice in Wonderland or from a David Lynch film (always in white and forgetting the names of the curators), provoked indeed a good lesson in politics. Particularly when the next speaker, Andres Kurg, replied with his characteristic calm that 'actually it's all about politics'.

The supposed apolitisation of social matters is in itself a very political action. Still in any attempt to examine urban concerns we inevitably face pressures from power relations and tensions between economic rights and the collective benefit. In this sense, the way TAB's main topic 'Recycling Socialism' was presented remained quite symptomatic of the way local debates are translated into neo-liberal terms. For instance, the analysis of Väike-Õismäe was presented as an attempt at finding value in something that has been wasted; in short, a disposable in need to be recycled and 'developed' thus unworthy of restoration or protection. Why was there no chance to problematise notions of value, such as, well for whom is the benefit? The proposal to examine this prototype of a Communist neighbourhood ignored what happened in post-socialism (privatisation, de-regulation, political disengagement, neo-liberal shock-therapies...) as well as the positive and negative aspirations of the Socialist ideas. Fortunately, both issues were brought into the debate, particularly by Pier Vittorio Aureli's reflections upon the collective dimension of living and Andres Kurg's proposition to take socialism seriously, beyond stereotypes (referencing to Alexei Yurchak).

Nonetheless, it seemed to me that there was a latent attempt to avoid any political insights throughout the program. We might even problematise the neutrality of the chosen terms for the title, 'Recycling' and 'Socialism', which imply already a judgement of value and political connotations. The chosen areas to be improved have a meaningful charge too. I wonder why, instead of studying what to do with Väike-Õismäe, we don't examine the recycling processes of the Sakala Keskus (aka Solaris), Postimaja (aka H&M), the Estonian Art Academy or even the Viru keskus...

Probably, now has come the time to talk about the necessity to un-develop post-socialism in Estonia and reflect upon the things that went wrong in the last twenty years. Botched opportunities such as the domestication of civil society, the touristification of the old town in Tallinn, the increasing social inequality, the miscommunication between different communities, the shrinking population of the country or the chemical trains from Paldiski still crossing the centre of the capital.

To end with a positive note, I'd remark on the variety of people gathered and the level of engagement, a good outcome to be credited to the curators. The crowd had different professional backgrounds and counted individuals from several generations. Nonetheless, it looks a bit suspicious when there are many more foreigners participating than residents of the studied areas. That probably says a lot about the way officials legitimise their political decisions; and about how the post-socialist 'transition' has been done.

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Photo: Kaisa Kaer

FAILED ARCHITECTURE: INVESTIGATING TROUBLED ARCHITECTURE

MARK MINKJAN, *urban geographer | researcher | writer,
Editor in Chief at failedarchitecture.com*

Witnessing a time of crises, speculations, urban vacancy, and the inflation of the architectural profession while simultaneously seeing the increasing popularity of design websites that produce a continuous stream of non-critical, glossy renderings and idle marketing talk, Failed Architecture¹ believes there is a need for a more holistic approach. Architecture is an expression of the social, economic and political conditions of its time. Therefore, FA is more concerned with the context and underlying dynamics of a building than with its visual appearance.

Failed Architecture does not judge buildings, or tag them as a 'success' or 'failure'. Rather, by using the provocative title 'Failed Architecture', we aim to stimulate the questioning of what shapes our built environment. We investigate cases and developments that make us raise our eyebrows. Next to an ongoing online research, and live lectures and debates, FA conducts research workshops on site. On these workshops, our holistic, 360-observation comes to the fore. We find it important to examine architecture not (only) from an architectural discourse, because we see architecture as a cultural product and therefore the politics, economics and social influences are at least as important in the realisation and course of life of our living environments. The aim of the workshops is to understand the context and path-dependency of a particular building, neighbourhood or urban phenomena (i.e. vacancy, riots, speculation), which can be perceived to have a problematic relationship with their urban surroundings. Together with a group of participants, FA performs a multiple-day research that breaks down the history of a specific case. By analysing the built environment, the social context, the economics, the reputation and the politics – a physical timeline is created. The timeline shows the

1. www.failedarchitecture.com

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Timeline. Photo: Ingel Vaikla

history of the case from various angles and continues into the near future, in order to sketch possible development scenarios. It also shows the relationship between the different actors and dynamics (for example how the social makeup influences the reputation, and how politics influence economic contexts that can in turn affect the life of a building). This does not only provide a valuable perspective on the specific research subject, but also trains the participants to examine spatial issues using a comprehensive approach.

The research is to a large extent carried out by the participants, with FA's guidance and input from a general pre-research perspective. Moreover, several experts are invited to give lectures during the workshop about a variety of topics that relate to the subject, from the building's architectural history and societal trends to cultural issues and economic developments. Next to this, participants conduct desk and archival research, interviews and field analysis.

The resulting timeline is a starting point for the debate about the challenges and constraints, but most of all the potential of the alleged problem – for the particular case study, but also similar developments on a wider scale. To date, FA has led workshops on various topics in several cities, including modernist housing estates in Berlin, Nottingham and Copenhagen, 19th-century dilapidated neighbourhoods in Porto and Belgrade, obsolete and unloved office blocks in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague, and relics from socialist times in Sofia and Budapest.

RAPLA KEK: HIBERNATING THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

One of our latest research workshops² was carried out during the Tallinn Architecture Biennale 2013. Together with local partners b210 and Linnalabor, we picked a case that is typical for Estonia in terms of its architectural heritage, political-societal history and the current (re)valuation of Soviet architecture. Over twenty participants from a variety of backgrounds (architecture, urban studies, photography, sound, economics, etc.) worked non-stop for five days on the analysis of the KEK-building in Rapla, originally built as the administrative building for a collective building organisation for collective farms (Kolkhozes). Rapla KEK gained immediate fame as an iconic piece of modernist Soviet architecture and is well-known amongst Estonians and abroad, and recently has gained extra attention in the current wave of rediscovery and revaluation of the architecture from Soviet times. The 1980s were its heydays, business was thriving and the KEK-building functioned as a bustling

2. www.linnalabor.ee/tegevus/75

FIELD NOTES



Photo: Ingel Vaikla



Photo: Kaisa Kaer

community hub. However, the building has been struggling with new realities in terms of finding users, physical decay, adapting its rigid structure to changing fashions, competing with other commercial, community and sports facilities, and creating a viable business model.

The fact that the participants and FA were able to spend four nights in the KEK-building, contributed to the analysis and experience of the building.

After a general introduction by FA about the methodology and by Kaur Sarv from Linnalabor about the building, we toured around the area to get an understanding of the spatial setup of these kind of environments that were constructed throughout Estonia, mainly in the 1960s and 1970s. We also met with the local municipality and county government to talk about the plans for the district and the role of the KEK-building, which turned out to be indistinct, not to say burdensome because of its upcoming status as a national monument; while the city and county cannot directly influence the future of the now privately owned building. Other stakeholders and experts that contributed to the research were the curator/researcher from the Museum of Estonian Architecture, the director of the Estonian Centre of Architecture, the head of the Rural Affairs Department of the Estonian Ministry of Agriculture, the former mayor of Rapla, former KEK-employees and local cultural and business representatives.

The workshop participants dove into the history of the building and its social, political and economic context. The FA-methodology proved to be a useful tool to place it all in perspective; extract valuable information and relations between contexts, trends and important moments. This resulted in a timeline that represented the reconstructed stories, broader developments and events that have influenced the fate of the building.

Despite all of its current problems, the building still has a strong identity because of its distinct design and its place in the collective memory, room for alternative use and the possibility to tap into new socioeconomic developments and EU funding streams.

* SHORTLY AFTER THE WORKSHOP, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE BUILDING WAS SOLD TO NEW OWNERS, WHO ALLEGEDLY ARE AIMING TO REALISE (GUEST) APARTMENTS AND MAINTAIN THE SPORTS HALL FOR BASKETBALL ACTIVITIES.