

Interaction of Architecture and Society: City Individuality under changeable informal Effect Conditions

1. Introduction

On the threshold of the 21st century (in the 1990s), public organizations of European and other countries focused their attention on the problems, the solution of which could help improve standards of living in the cities and towns. Theoretical propositions about the citizens' right to protection from aggression, environmental pollution and aggressive urban environment as well as the rights to shelter, health care, cultural life, mobility, democratic control of authorities and participation in the development of democratic principles have been analyzed in the great number of documents from various perspectives.

The influence of West European countries on developing urban architecture on democratic principles, implying the involvement of society in this process, as well as the transforming social, political and economic conditions in Lithuania led to great changes in economic, legal and social approaches to urban development under market conditions in this country. Local authorities, not properly ensuring the implementation of self-government principles influenced by various factors, including the activity of informal groups and individuals, does not always take the initiative as a planner and developer. In this case, a private subject . society becomes a participant and initiator of developing a concept of urban architecture. A concept of *society participation in developing urban architecture* embraces not only legal activities, but also includes some informal actions, not provided by law.

The problem of involving communities in sustainable development of urban architecture has been much discussed both on national and international scale. A resolution adopted by the Lithuanian Government (On approving a list of fields of architecture to be developed in Lithuania) emphasizes the significant role of architecture as a unique art in the country, implying that every citizen should actively participate in architectural development. According to Bristol Accord (Office), the agreement adopted on the 6th -7th of December, 2005 at the informal meeting of foreign affairs ministers from 12 EU countries, the key indicators of *sustainable community* were defined with the emphasis placed on the involvement of *society in urban development of the border regions*. Many articles and monographs published by world researchers and various specialists on this problem and plans and surveys also confirm the importance of the discussed problem. *The problem of informal participation of society in developing urban architecture in Lithuania* was sporadically studied by various scientists. Considering the works of the famous world urbanists stating the importance of this phenomena in the context of IFE, the following should be mentioned:

- Provisions of the Central locations+theory of German urban specialist V.Christaller, first half of 20th century, which declared the necessity to regulate informal interaction of urban centres in each other's respect;
- English thinker E.Howard's garden city ideas analysing informal interaction of cities and suburbs and possibilities to solve social-employment and rest problems, to coordinate village and city advantages. The Garden Cities and Town Planning Federation founded in 1913 . NGO is still functioning;
- Urbanist L.Mumford's activities in establishing UK Town and Country Planning Association in the context of the article . the NGO, activities of which were crowned by the adoption of the New Towns Act;
- USA scientist K.Lynch (1918-1989) in his statements highlighted the social- informal effect aspect of the collective opinion of residents about their city, which allows origin of informal planning, to ascertain visual and emotional contents of city form, enables residents of the city to understand the importance of involvement in planning processes. Thus, individual opinions of a number of individuals may create also collective peculiar city image versions;

- Lithuanian scientist from Vilnius Gediminas technical university K. Žezelis . founder of the uniform settlement system in Lithuania realised the advantages or even urbanisation of those days;
- Vilnius Gediminas technical university scientist J. Vanagas . promoter of the idea of Vilnius . Kaunas Duopolis, founder of the NGO „Duopolis“ The objective is to increase the territory planning, informal effect (IfE) interaction between regions, EU-oriented Lithuanian international competitiveness [Vanagas 2004] etc.

However, such aspects as *the involvement of society also and science communities in developing urban architecture* and the influence of urban structural elements on self-creation of local communities have not been extensively and thoroughly investigated. The methods adequately assessing the contribution of community participation in architectural development are also lacking. Nowadays there are several groups of people like purpose and without purpose communities, political parties, territorial, creative-science communities and passive persons unit that appear and are opposite to each other. On the other hand representatives of these groups meet somewhere and are influenced by similar communication, the media or tendencies of the using. But Created by jonas.jakaitis at the environment of the symbolical world of these groups interests of the representatives are satisfied but they are different and sometimes antagonistic. Drawing the plans and implementing the projects of the development of urban and other territories, the authorities are often faced not only with formal activities provided by law, but also with *informal activities of social organizations or individuals*. Dictionaries define the meaning of formal as ~~concerning the form~~ rather than content or matter. Hence, *informal*, spontaneous actions are based on logic, intuition, expertise and take place in social, political and economic environment. The *informal involvement* activity is treated in the present work as an outcome of the interaction of the systems ~~architecture-society~~ ~~society-city~~ as well as a product of human and social activity, its forms and systems allowing the material and spiritual wealth to be created, used and passed on to other generations. Therefore, the problem of the present investigation may be associated with the following issues:

1. Providing more knowledge about a significant but insufficiently investigated process of community involvement in the development of urban architecture.

2. Factors and circumstances determining the transformation of urban architecture: availability of effective measures of social control in developing urban architecture; increasing pollution of the environment; ideological transformation; transformation of the attitude to man and his place in the world; transformation of the attitude to government, its nature and functions.

The problem of the community involvement in developing urban architecture is analysed, considering Vilnius development over recent 17 years as a case study. Emphasizing the significance of the problem, the author shows that, under the action of political, economic, social and other factors, the relationship between the development of urban architecture and other sciences becomes more evident, making this problem interdisciplinary.

2. Theoretical Concept of the Article

In diverse theories of urban development in the 20th century West Europe, participation of society in the development of urban architecture is associated with long-term planning. The diversity of theories and concepts of urban development is accounted for by rapid democratization of the post-soviet states, the transforming relationships between government and society, the advance in the development of architecture and overall improvement of social, cultural and economic conditions in the country. Today, the participation of society in developing urban architecture is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, declaring the creation of democratic state of Lithuania.

Territorial land management structure till the 13th century. The country faced a formation of big villages. Centralised state was developing from the polycentric settlement system. Farmersq territorial communities united into new political units . lands of tribal

unions. The first towns . castles-fortresses were forming. Inhabited territories were separated by unsettled zones between the tribes, and later on between the lands as well, according to which boundaries of the life zones were later forming.

Territorial land management structure after the Valakas Reform. Valakas Reform changed the distribution of rural settlements in the middle of 15th century. The urban territory structure was formed: Estates, manors, serfsvillages . subjects of informal dialogue. At that time, in line with informal relations, formalised, i.e. legally regulated relations arose. With the development of new cities, towns, in order to evade competition and at the same time informal effect among them, the distance of 3 miles (22,4 km) was established between them (by the Statues of Lithuania, and by the Valakas Reform Law of Zygimantas Augustas, 1557).

In this socioculture, countries architecture in the making context started forming one more type . academical community, that had great influence on forming city architectural culture. Foundation of the architecture cathedral in the Vilnius University had great influence on Lithuanian architecture. But before that <ō > *In the early 16th century, the number of students from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania at German and Italian universities increased significantly* [A. Bumblauskas 2004].

Natural formation of the communities, participating in the development of urban architecture, should be related to the first long-term plans developed in the 19th century. A system of *long-term urban planning*, involving the communities, formed in the years of Russian power. Privacy was paid little attention in implementing the system of urban planning and development in tsarist Russia. In the states of Western Europe, according to [L. Benevolo 1993], urban development at the beginning of 18th century was influenced by *the activities of the society and individuals*, as well as by various political, religious and economic factors. However, urban development regulations providing for the rights of private developers were first used in Russia only in 1837-1879. It should be noted that neither in the states of Western Europe, nor in Russia, participation of the society in urban development had not been clearly defined.

- Russian Great Land Reform of 1906.
- Land Reform of 1922.
- Land Reform of August 1, 1940. In 1940, after the occupation of Lithuania and formation of power bodies, on August 1, 1940 one of the first declarations of the People's Seimas (Parliament) was made, by which the land passed into the ownership of the people. The nationalisation process, collectivisation began. Consequences of the sovietisation in Lithuania manifested themselves by important accents and changes in the urban space . giant complexes of enterprises emerged in the cities, while in the villages . farms, agricultural machinery maintenance facilities. Land reclamation campaign destroyed peculiar rural urban structure. Village turned into a polygon of industrial agricultural production with enormous processing complexes. Coercive kolkhoz political community was created.
- *Land Reform after the restoration of Lithuanian independence*. Agricultural Reform after 1990- following the restoration of independence - created petty-plot land ownership.

The 21st century is the age of knowledge and information, where the latter is a dominant factor. The analysis has shown that society is usually guided by the data making the lowest level of the information hierarchy about a particular problem. Basing themselves on the preliminary considerations of the problem and often not understanding it well or pursuing their own ends, people form the opinion of the community about the impacts and threads of development, thereby causing damage to the image of territorial communities and the material losses of the society.

Participation of the society in developing urban architecture is influenced by various factors, including the IT development, globalization, increasing competition and the dynamics of activities aimed at developing urban architecture. Globalization influenced by the development of information technologies aims to create cosmopolitan global society, culture, market, architecture and the city, which, according to L. Mumford (1938), <ō > *often surpasses by its physical form a civilization creating it and is passed on from one generation to another*.

If we talked about the forming of the city architecture it is necessary to evaluate not only past and nowadays cities developing but and the future perspective. According to Marshal Maklahan (1999) Canada's reviewer of culture and communication science theorist, thought that *“Cities do not exist they are only ghosts for the tourists”* we can understand as *“...> city as it was understood by urban theorists from Platoon and Aristotle to Lewis Mumford (1895 – 1980), USA urban sociologist and historian, USA scientist K. Lynch (1918 – 1989), USA and Canada urban theorist Jane Jecob and other thinkers, it changes and steady models could hardly exist together with the cybernetic space”* So everyday communication, which is affected by the ITT, is changing steady life rhythm. But nevertheless that paradigm of the traditional living place is changing; environment delicacies, originality and culture are those unique characteristics that would never be transferred through the wire with the direct communication, truth seeking through the rows and places originality power . informal factor, which has influence on the city architecture and the formation of territorial communities.

3. Major principles underlying participation of society in the development of urban architecture

One of the essential characteristics of modern democracy is human right to disseminate one's ideas, defend the community's interests, trying to improve the environment and influence decision-making by the local authorities. In highly developed democracies, such terms describing public participation in urban development as *Citizen or Public Participation, Public Involvement, Public Consultation, Public Meetings, etc.* have been extensively used.

According to scientists forming the attitude of the inhabitants to the development of their native town, the interaction of the *dynamical (people, communities) and statical (people production, the results creation)* factors is of particular importance because their informal impact helps to reflect visual, emotional or functional meaning of the city form. Moreover, it allows the residents to see the values of the town and appreciate the participation of communities in its architectural development, which can help to transform its image and create individual architectural features characteristic of a particular age. Well thought of participation of citizens in urban development based on democratic principles is the only legal way for them to express their opinion. However, it can be effective only if community takes the responsibility for the consequences of people's actions. According to D. Held, *‘a community should be guided by a concept of the collectively created common good’*. If, according to R. Buivydas (1998), citizens have no opportunities to participate actively and to become aware of their role in the above process, most of them will always remain detached observers of democratic development, unable to participate in collective decision-making or discussion about the ways of creating common wealth. According to the data obtained in the present research, seeking for the creation of common good in architecture depends on urban lifestyle characterized by professional and social stratification, membership of public organizations, territorial isolation and anonymity, as well as by weakening of the traditional neighbourly and family ties and impersonal social control.

4. The conditions of natural formation of territorial communities

Rural areas make 97.4 % of the whole territory of Lithuania, while rural population makes 34 %. With the decreasing number of farmsteads, favourable conditions will be created for urbanization of city suburbs and the development of a decentralized urban structure. Decentralization processes can be observed in Austria, Slovakia, Germany, Latvia, Sweden, etc. When Lithuania regained independence, these processes *became active in all Lithuania and particularly in the suburbs of Vilnius.*

Practical activities associated with public participation in urban development, according to J. Bu as (2001), the impact of an architectural work on the landscape and the population is assessed all over the world using the specific criteria or based on the object's

visual zones (note, that there are no such criteria in Lithuania). It has been determined that the impact of an object can be observed if it is 2 km away from an observer. Full-scale tests performed by the author confirmed these results and demonstrated that an object located on the territory (IfRT), considered to be their own by the community members, becomes important for them if it is in the radius of 1.2 km from the center of the area (Fig 1). In analyzing the data, the author stated that the main principles of architectural development of the city were not always taken into account. Groups of residents often pursue their own interests, seeking for short-term benefits. They also cannot differentiate between various levels of planning as well as aims and objectives defined by the laws on territory planning. The research has shown that such remarks make about 85 % of the strategic plans of urban development. Therefore, the community often has a wrong opinion that a master plan is merely a sum of the detailed plans which can be easily changed if required. For example Vilnius city Official plan detail implementation). In this case, *the process acquires the characteristic features of informal planning.*

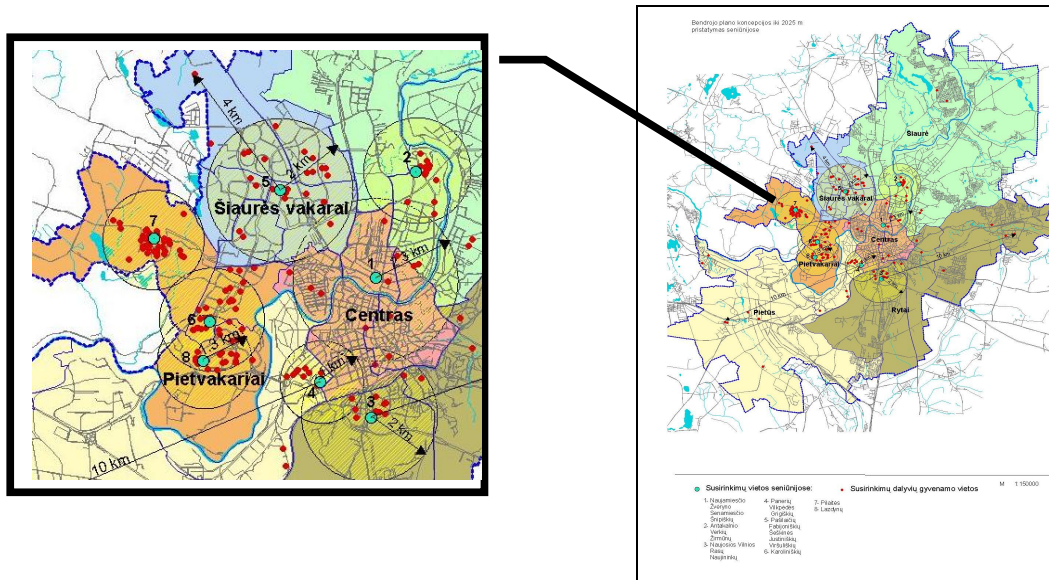


Fig 1. The analysis of the community interests based on the data by the author

According to the results obtained in the present investigation, a lack of democratic cooperation between the authority and society leads to continuous conflicts preventing to coordinate the activities aimed at achieving a common goal (particularly, in the states with the developing democratic systems, including Lithuania). Implementing the principles of sustainable development under the conditions of community participation and cooperation with local authorities, residents of the cities and towns of Lithuania can be successfully integrated into a modern, well-designed and compact urban space. Comfortable and healthy environment is a result of joint efforts, a proper choice and good projects.

5. Optimizing the interrelationship criteria between the formation of the structure of the city and local communities in developing urban architecture

In investigating the problem, the author established [J. Jakaitis 2006] the laws and interrelationships governing the society participation in developing urban architecture and the factors determining social activity. This allowed the author to develop methods of determining social activity index. Assuming that social activity index may range from 0 to 1, the dynamics of this process may be expressed in terms of the relationships (Fig 2) between it and the size

of the area, the level of strategic development of goals and planning, multifunctionality and access to information and the use of information technologies. Hence,

$$0 < V \leq 1,$$

$$V = f(T_1, T_2, P, I_1, I_2) = P, I_1, I_2 / T_1, T_2$$

where V is index of social activity; T_1 is the area being planned; T_2 is index of strategic development of goals; P is index of multicentredness of the city; I_1 is index of access to information (intensity of social actions, number of informal actions); I_2 is the use of IT

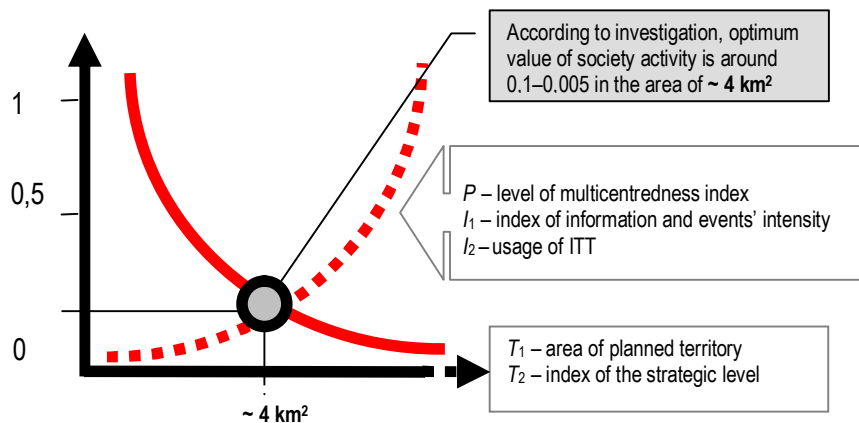


Fig 2. The curve of interrelationship between strategical development of planning goals, size of area, multicentredness and social activity

It follows that the larger the area and the more strategic goals are pursued in urban architectural development, the less understanding they find in the community. The less clearly defined the long-term development goals, the more passive is the community (e.g. in developing master plans). The author determined an optimal index of society participation as ranging from 0.1 . 0.005. It can be assumed that if social activity index is within the above range, local community is a civil organization, not passive with respect to the problem of the environment formation.

6. Conclusions

1. Until the end of the 20th century, participation of society in the development of urban architecture in Lithuania was spontaneous, sporadic, informal and lacking democratic principles. Urban architectural development is based on certain clearly defined principles, whatever is a social and economic structure of the period. They are determined by the type of land ownership, the changing land tenure laws and regulations (which was particularly important for Lithuania as an agricultural country) and trends of political development and globalization. Local communities could hardly influence these processes in the past and have little influence on them now. Six periods of land reforms can be distinguished in Lithuania in the process of historical transformation of social-economic systems. These reforms determined the effect of informal activity on urban architecture associated with differentiation of society, regional peculiarities of urban development, cultural and economic growth as well as civil rights and participation in developing and control of urban architecture.

2. The factors influencing urban development were relatively stable, therefore, every stage of development was based on the traditions prevailing in the architecture of the previous period. The changing generations, making the communities, linked these stages of

development into an integral whole. Participation of the communities in developing urban architectural concepts became a factor of continually growing importance. Gradually, under the influence of industrialization in the conditions of capitalism development in 19th century and globalization in 20th century, towns were growing rapidly, making the control of their communities a challenging problem. The key factors defined in the thesis, which strongly influence the development of urban architecture, determine not only positive changes in life quality, but also differentiation of urban communities, weakening control of architectural development and planning of Lithuanian towns and cities. Differentiation of views and attitudes within urban communities and society as a whole, environmental pollution, monotony of urban architecture, etc. make the threat of losing the peculiar features of national architecture in the future.

3. In his research, the author defined the following basic laws and relationships determining social activity in the development of urban architecture: a direct relationship between social activity in urban architectural development and multicentredness of the city; a direct relationship between social activity and the availability of the required information; a direct relationship between social activity and the use of advanced methods and means of information dissemination; an inverse relationship between social activity and the level of territory planning (strategic development of goals); an inverse relationship between social activity and the size of the territory being planned. This allowed the author to create the methods of determining social activity index.

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