DISSERTATIONES GEOGRAPHICAE UNIVERSITATIS TARTUENSIS

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PILLE METSPALU

The changing role of the planner.

Implications of creative pragmatism in Estonian spatial planning

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

This dissertation is built on three publications which will be referred to in the thesis by their respective Roman numbers.

Publications included in the dissertation:

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

I The author bore primary responsibility for assembling the planning-related theoretical framework, participated in conducting interviews and writing the manuscript.

II The author was accountable for formulating the research strategy and was primarily responsible for conducting the interviews, data analysis and writing the manuscript.

III The author conducted the majority of the empirical research and participated in writing the manuscript.

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INTRODUCTION

Spatial planning in the western world is going through one of its periodic crises of confidence. Fragmentation of planning theory and unprecedented trends like shrinkage, climate change and increasing migration flows call for innovative spatial approaches. Planning thought and practice nowadays encompass a wider spectrum of topics and methodologies than ever before. Times of absolute consensus about what we mean by spatial planning and how should it be conducted have long gone. However, there is a common understanding that planning is inevitably connected to the social order, culture, history and traditions of a specific country, and no universal planning toolkit exists.

In defining planning, I rely on P. Healey and L. Albrechts, and I understand planning as a governance practice that addresses complex colocations of activities and their relations and the impacts that these colocations generate across space–time. Through planning a vision, actions and means are produced to shape what a place is and may become. Planning involves the formation and practice of complex public realm judgments about what to do and how to do it. I also draw on J. Forester (1989, 1993, 1999), whose conception of planning practice urges practitioners to recognize the inherently political nature of their work and describes how to grasp this as an asset rather than an impediment. I acknowledge the multitude of terms used for planning in the modern world. In my thesis I use spatial planning as an overarching term, supported by both EU and Estonian legislation.

Planning paradigms are in constant flux and, as a rule, are closely related to transformations in society. Societal change and the transition from socialism to capitalism has inspired scholars of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) planning scene for decades. Hirt and Stanilov's (2009) synoptic study about urban planning in transitional countries covers topics from planning history to monitoring and education. Adams' (2006, 2008, 2010, 2014) research is focused on Baltic perspectives in European spatial planning networks and knowledge. Many authors (Tsenkova 2006, 2008, 2017; Leetmaa et al 2015, 2018; Hess et al 2014, 2018; Golubchikov 2004, 2017; Gentile et al 2012) explore housing and strategic urban planning as well as their relationship to economic geography in post-socialist Europe.

Theoretical concepts pertaining to post-socialist cities, a realm of research very close to planning, are of constant interest to scholars in the Central and Eastern Europe region and Scandinavia (see for instance Ferenčuhova 2012, 2016; Sýkora and Bouzarovski 2012; Ouředníček 2016; Sjöberg 2014). A matter of conceptual and theoretical one-way import of mainly Western-developed ideas into CEE has been noted by Sjöberg (2014), while Ouředníček (2016) describes "developmentalism" as the belief in the realignment of former socialist cities to their Western counterparts and in the gradual "correction" of their socialist character. Tuvikene (2016) notices the double exclusion of post-

socialist cities in comparative urbanism: they are neither centre nor periphery, neither mainstream nor part of the critique.

Theoretical deliberations focusing on post-socialist spatial planning are somewhat scarce. Studies on post-socialist cities tend to favour empirical work at the expense of theoretical contributions (Ferenčuhova 2016), although theoretical connotations are sometimes proposed. Hiob's research is centred on Estonian historic suburbs (Hiob 2016, Hiob and Nutt 2016) with implications for the rise of participatory planning. Roose and Kull (2012) describe shortcomings in statutory planning duties and note the need for planning practitioners' new skill set. Ruoppila (1998, 2006, 2007) observes the establishment of a market-oriented urban planning system by analysing the urban landscape of Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. Raagmaa (2014, 2015) unveils the impacts of European policies on Estonian spatial planning.

Planning as a practical activity is in continuous need of rethinking. For planning to work, broader understanding is needed about which approaches and methods prove to be effective in certain situations. The father of planning theory, J. Friedmann, has demonstrated throughout his career the multiple dimensions of theorizing – predictive and prescriptive, theories in planning (land use, transport, urban design), about planning and finally, as a loose term as in *thinking about planning.* The latter is the driving force behind this thesis.

In this thesis, I aim to position Estonian spatial planning in a contemporary theoretical framework through the examination of the planner's role. I focus on spatial phenomena specific to Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and Estonia – large housing estates (Publication II) and socialist-era summer house settlements referred to as "summurbia" (Publication I). Seen as anomalies by the Western world, these settlement types are a melting pot of various planning approaches. As vivid examples of the legacy of socialist spatial planning, these areas probably most clearly reflect our socio-cultural background and are thus a suitable subject for discussing both theoretical concepts in planning and planning practice. As Friedmann (2003, 9) has stated, planning theory is essential to the vitality and continued relevance of planning as a profession. Training and skillsets needed for Estonian planning practitioners in the light of prevailing theoretical concepts form a second part of this thesis (Publication III).

1. THE AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aim of this thesis is to examine the role of planners in society and to propose a theoretical concept for spatial planning in Estonia. I study tasks assigned to planners and powers seized by them over time. I observe the opportunities they sought and the skills they need in their professional activities. I suggest pragmatism as the theoretical framework underlying Estonian planning, and I explore the wider context of expectations for planners.

The first part of my research concentrates on socialist summerhouse settlements – 'summurbia' – and large socialist housing estates. The evolution of these distinct living environments exposes role of the planner on multiple levels. I examine the theoretical concepts of rational comprehensive and pragmatic planning underlying the development of these settlement types. Since the concept of rational comprehensive planning as a flagship of the socialist era is more familiar and thoroughly researched, greater attention is paid to pragmatism, a theoretical approach with which I have been fascinated during my everyday work as a planner and while reading planning literature.

The retrospective analysis that forms the first part of my thesis helps to explain the nuances of the Estonian historical planning framework. Also, the study seeks a deeper understanding of the challenges that planners are facing today by examining the heritage of Soviet planning that is still influencing our contemporary planning scene. The legacy of parallel existence of two somewhat controversial planning paradigms, rational and pragmatic, shapes the mindsets and skillsets of planners and provides a frame for the development of training and planning education.

The investigation of the advancement of planners' education and skills in the light of societal and paradigmatic change forms a second part of my thesis. Altogether, my research offers an insight into the evolution of Estonian planning as a field and as a profession from the socialist era through the transition period to today.

The thesis addresses following **research questions:**

1. How has the role of the planner in Estonia changed over time?
   1. What is the role of the planner in planning 'summurbia'?
   2. What is the role of the planner in planning large housing estates?
   3. What is the role of the planner today?
2. What are the manifestations of pragmatism in Estonian planning?
3. What are the relationships between pragmatism and Estonian planners' education?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. The role of the planner in the light of transforming planning theories

As John Friedmann, often called the pioneer of planning theory, has stated (2003), there is no consensus as to what constitutes "planning theory," not even within the academy and less so among practitioners who tend to learn by doing. There are all kinds of theories – about, in and of planning. Similarly, a large variety of categories exist – predictive and prescriptive theories, theories about the subject of planning as well as theories about planning process.

Theoretical deliberations about planning procedures and planners' roles are generally of most interest to planning practitioners. At the same time, the need for and relevance of theory is constantly contested (see for instance Sanyal 2002, Bengs 2005, Alexander 2016). Calls to consider theories as tools rather than expressions of truth and slogans like "let's put our planning theories to work" are common in planning forums[1]. It is obvious that a straightforward, one-to-one application of a certain theory is never the sole goal for plan making. However, constantly renewing theories gives a fresh orientation to the role of the planner.

Planning as a profession and understandings about skills needed to do planning work have changed considerably over time. The era of maestro-planning at the end of 19th century saw planning as a natural extension of architecture, a planner being a visionary architect (or sometimes civil engineer) drawing up blueprint plans for new towns. In Western countries, this notion of planning as an art of creating new settlements and of the planner as an artist involved in physical design prevailed until well after the Second World War. This view came to be questioned and, to some extent, abandoned during the 1960s because many of the outcomes (or apparent outcomes) of post-war planning practice were criticized in the late 1950s and 1960s (Taylor 1998, 4). A common accusation was that planners were insufficiently informed about the nature of the reality with which they were tampering. The "technical-professional" model of town planning assumed that the values and principles of good town planning were self-evident and generally agreed upon. Because of that, there was little need for the public or their political representatives to participate in debating town planning matters (Taylor 1998, 54).

By the 1960s, planning had "imported" two new approaches: systems theory and rational decision-making theory. These new approaches evolved in other disciplines and had wide influence in planning thought in 1970s, with Brian McLoughlin, George Chadwick and Andreas Faludi leading the way. The new concepts saw planning as a rational process involving analysis and control of

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[1] see for instance https://www.planning.org/blog/blogpost/9138589/, www.planetizen.org, https://www.rtpi.org.uk/

urban areas and regions viewed as systems. Karl Popper's pioneering work (1957, 1963) on the scientific method was often the source of inspiration, with planning goals or policies seen as analogous to scientific hypotheses which should be subjected to rigorous testing before adoption.

Taylor describes the "opening up" of the town planning profession in 1970s to graduates from disciplines other than architecture and states that it was geographers who mostly exploited this opening (1998, 65). The traditional concern with space and location was translated into viewing settlements and land uses as locations within networks of interrelated places – as spatial systems (see, e.g. Haggett, 1965, 17–23 in Taylor 1998). In *Urban and Regional Planning: A Systems Approach* (1969), McLoughlin promotes geographical work on location theory rather than design theory as the necessary theoretical foundation for planning. At the same time, the practice of planning at the local level remained largely focused on design and aesthetics, not mathematic modeling. However, after Faludi's influential book (1973) in which he draws a distinction between 'blueprint' and 'process' planning, even at the local level planning was seen as an ongoing, continuous process of rational decision-making. The new approaches suggested the need for a new kind of planner altogether, one who was trained in analyzing and understanding how cities and regions functioned spatially in economic and social terms – a planner, that is, trained in economic geography or the social sciences rather than architecture or surveying (Taylor 1998, 63).

During the same period, the 1970s, the understanding that planning is a political process picked up steam. The relevance of comprehensive theoretical rationale was perhaps for the first time strongly questioned during the heyday of modernist rational planning by Rittel and Webber in their influential "Dilemmas of General Planning Theory" (1973). Distinguishing between "tamed, scientific problems" and "inherently wicked planning problems," Rittel and Webber argue that policy problems cannot be definitively described and complex urban problems solved by scientific rational methods and professional judgment. They discovered that the seeming consensus, which might once have allowed distributional problems (like roads, sewage, etc) to be dealt with, is being eroded by growing awareness of the nation's pluralism and of the differentiation of values that accompanies the differentiation of publics. As the sheer volume of information and knowledge increases, as technological developments further expand the range of options, and as awareness of the liberty to deviate and differentiate spreads, more variations are possible. Having powerfully questioned the traditional approach to the reconciliation of social values – to entrust de facto decision-making to the wise and knowledgeable professional experts and politicians – Rittel and Webber emphasize that the expert is also the player in a political game, seeking to promote his private vision of goodness over others: "Planning is a component of politics. There is no escaping that truism" (1973, 169). The realization that plans and planning decisions rest upon value judgements about what kind of environment we are planning for and are thus inherently political had a significant impact on planning thought and practice.

Although the political nature of planning was widely recognized by the end of the 1970s, goal-setting and other planning steps were still seen as expert, technical matters rather than a matter of debate about values and politics. However, the acceptance of planning as a political process gave way to new understandings about the planning profession. With Sherry Arnstein's conceptual analysis of the "ladder of citizen participation" already published in 1969, planning seemed to demand new skills. Planners achieved new roles as moderators and negotiators who have to balance the needs and wishes of different groups in a society.

Realizing that planners typically mediate between various interests, planning theorists acknowledged the existence and encouraged the development of "collaborative," "communicative," or "community" planning, which emphasizes communication, participation, and consensus-building throughout the planning process (Forester, 1989; Healey, 2003; Innes 1995). This approach combines incrementalist and comprehensive planning, as it simultaneously deals with the everyday issues of the participants and puts together long-term strategies and goals. The most important contribution of collaborative planning theorists was therefore the claim that planning would only be successful if its stakeholders were able to participate in the process in a meaningful way.

The end of the 20th century witnessed an unprecedented number of branches in the planning paradigm. There were different schools of thought whose contradictory prescriptions for good planning (Alexander 2001) had practical implications. Most eminent were probably the fierce debates between advocates of Habermasian communicative practice (Forester 1989, Sager 1994, Innes 1995, Healey 1996) and its Foucauldian critics, who accused proponents of the communicative approach of power-blindness (Flyvbjerg 1998, Yiftachel 1995; Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger, 1998).

However, there was and still is an agreement that communication in planning is not only a one-way process of planners presenting their proposals clearly and attractively. Communicative practice is seen as an interpersonal activity involving dialogue, debate and negotiation.

In postmodern times, there is a multitude of interpretations about planners' roles as well as planning theory in general. Friedmann (1998), acknowledging and saluting the absence of the single planning theory, listed four difficulties in thinking about planning: the problem of defining planning as an object to be theorized; the impossibility of talking about planning disconnected from actual institutional and political contexts; the several modes of doing planning theory – normative, positive, critical and paradigm-shifting – and the dilemma of choosing among them; and the difficulty of incorporating power relations into planning discourse. Friedmann summarizes this by stating that theoretical austerity is clearly not the way to go. This visionary statement is fully followed in the 21st century as planning theory has become increasingly fragmented and expectations of planners' skills have grown exponentially. The planners' expertise should encompass artistic, technical, and analytical as well as communicative skills. This expectation can only be met with an understanding that

planning involves teamwork performed by a group of specialists rather than one "superhuman" visionary planner.

However, to cope in a complex world presenting high expectations, the planning profession does require something like a theoretical paradigm. As Harper and Stein (2006) elaborate, planners do not need a paradigm in the sense of a rigidly fixed set of protocols that govern our profession. Instead, there is a need for some shared framework of presuppositions, concepts, values, norms and standards within which planners can do their work and conduct their debates. These shared elements are dynamic, fluid, evolving and in flux, but they are still shared (Harper and Stein 2006, XV).

2.2. Pragmatism

Significant changes in society bring along new concepts in planning theory and practice, and planning traditions cast aside can re-emerge. Pragmatism is one of these streams in planning thought that has been reclaimed, especially during times of change.

In a nutshell, pragmatists believe that the meaning of ideas is only found in their effects and consequences in experience. Pragmatist ideas have been distinctly influential in the United States. Healey (2009) emphasizes that there such ideas have infused, often unacknowledged, the intellectual climate in which planning ideas have developed. In the European context, Healey indicates only a few authors like Mäntysalo (2000, 2002), Sager (1994) and Harrison (2002) as influenced by or working directly with pragmatism. However, in writings about Eastern European planning, pragmatist thought is quite often detectable. Adams et al (2013) describe the evolving landscape for planning practice in the Baltic states as strongly influenced by a culture of pragmatism, emphasizing efforts to absorb EU funding. The authors follow a quite narrow path in interpreting pragmatism, stating that the culture of pragmatism is also demonstrated by the fact that the Latvian and Estonian associations for spatial planners have yet to formally discuss European territorial cohesion and did not respond to the European Commission Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion.

Pragmatism as a philosophical school has a long history. The following chapters present a brief overview of the evolution of pragmatist thought and its relationship to planning practice.

2.2.1. Early pragmatism

Pragmatism has its origins with the philosophers C. Pierce, W. James and J. Dewey in the United States at the end of the 19th century. The term "pragmatism," derived from a Greek word meaning "action," was first introduced into philosophy by C. Pierce in 1878 but met with wider audiences via W. James's writings. James (James and Thayer 1907/1975) describes pragmatism as a

method to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to anyone if this notion rather than that notion were true? James refers to Peirce in saying that if our beliefs are rules for action, to develop a thought's meaning, we need only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce: that conduct is for us its sole significance. Thayer, in his introduction to James's seminal book, *Pragmatism*, emphasizes the value of pragmatism in the determination of meanings and processes and how it enables us critically to discover "what works best in the way of leading us, what fits every part of life best and combines with the collectivity of experience's demands, nothing being omitted" (James and Thayer 1907/1975).

Healey (2009) describes how the original US pragmatists claimed a "humanist" orientation. They believed that what was true and good was continually asserted and discovered in the flow of thinking and acting in the messy world and the practical enterprise of living. In their view, no *a priori* principles should be established. They advocated a focus on the way meanings and conceptions of truth and belief are created in the social contexts of human existence; they are "socially constructed," as Healey explains we would say today. While understanding the role of habit and routine in human life, they sought to resist tendencies to unquestioning "rule-following" behaviour and to encourage creative exploration and discovery.

It is important to note that pragmatists did not oppose scientific methods *per se.* It was the method of continual critical inquiry and exploration of empirical phenomena that attracted the pragmatists, in contrast to the preoccupation with abstract exegesis characteristic of much philosophy or the preoccupation with past precedent in much conventional government practice (Dewey 1982 in Healey 2009). Pierce and James emphasize the inherent social and practical situatedness of what we take to be "true" and the significance of recognizing that all our knowledge is potentially "fallible," in that new knowledge may one day show that what we once thought was true is not so. Both James and Dewey emphasize that our knowledge gets organized and focused at critical points when we are faced with choices. Making (strategic) choices is the very nature of planning. Early pragmatists celebrated what we might now call the "power of agency," of the human capacity to invent, create, and transform (Healey 2009, 281).

Allmendinger (2001) argues that there is no one pragmatism, differentiating between the pragmatism of liberation and communication shared by Rorty and Dewey and the pragmatism developed by James, with its sole emphasis on method. James (James and Thayer 1907/1975) argued that theories are not answers to enigmas but instruments in which we can rest. For planning as a practical discipline, this notion had concrete implications. Dewey (1904, 1933) was among the first to write about reflective practice with his exploration of experience, interaction and reflection. He integrated the consideration of consequences, obligations and virtue as aspects of what he called imaginative plan making. The core of this "unique method" was the habit of questioning and exploring, testing answers and discoveries in relation to empirical evidence of

one kind or another. It was the practice of questioning and testing that was the essence of the method. Dewey was deeply critical of the conversion of the method into precise protocols or standard rules of procedure. He imagined that, in the future, philosophy might be more invigorated by the social sciences and the arts, providing comparable inspiration to that given by the mathematical and physical sciences (Rorty 1982, 76; in Healey 2009). Dewey envisions each contributing to the qualities of practical action needed to address a specific situation (Hoch 2018, p 122). Healey (2009) calls James and Dewey philosophers of social hope and human potentiality.

> The pragmatic method . . . means . . . an attitude of orientation. The attitude of looking away from first things, "categories," supposed necessities; and looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts. (James 1907/1991, 27 in Healey 2009, 297).

2.2.2. Neo-pragmatism and critical pragmatism

The first signs of re-emerging pragmatist thought could be found in the work of systems analysts in 1960s, particularly C.W. Churchman, who later formed a new school of planning scholars at the University of California at Berkeley who were greatly influenced by pragmatism. Under Churchman's guidance, J. Forester (Healey 2009) became the major figure in neo-pragmatist tradition.

Rittel and Webber revealed a significant impulse for the development of neo-pragmatism in 1973 when they questioned the modern-classical planning model, which was based on rational decision-making. Rittel and Weber define planning as an argumentative process in the course of which an image of the problem and of the solution emerges gradually among the participants as a product of incessant judgment subjected to critical argument (1973, 162). The authors propose that the classical paradigm of science and engineering – the paradigm that has underlain modern professionalism – is not applicable to complex, "wicked" urban problems. The authors see increasing cultural diversity, politicization of subpublics and diverse valuative bases as major influencers of planning's way ahead.

Rittel and Webber (1973) present ten arguments when describing the wickedness of planning problems and provide expressive examples to support them. Firstly, there is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem, as information needed to understand the problem depends upon one's idea for solving it. In planning, finding the problem is often the same thing as finding the solution. There is no "stopping rule" – the process of solving the problem is identical with the process of understanding its nature. Because there are no criteria for sufficient understanding and because there are no ends to the causal chains that link interacting open systems, the would-be planner can always try to do better. Thirdly, solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false but good-or-bad, depending on assessors' personal interests, their special value-sets and their

ideological predilections. There is no immediate test of a solution because any solution, after being implemented, will generate waves of consequences over an extended – virtually an unbounded – period of time. At the same time, every implemented solution is consequential – this is the fifth argument. The number of solutions for a wicked problem is always indefinite, as it is a matter of judgment to determine which strategies or moves are permissible to solve the problem. Here, Rittel and Webber rely on “realistic judgement” hand in hand with creativity and cooperation, for

> in such fields of ill-defined problems and hence ill-definable solutions, the set of feasible plans of action relies on realistic judgment, the capability to appraise ‘exotic’ ideas and on the amount of trust and credibility between planner and clientele that will lead to the conclusion, ‘OK let's try that.’ (Rittel and Webber 1973, 164).

For the seventh argument, Rittel and Webber assert the essential uniqueness of every wicked problem. To make things more complicated, every wicked problem can be considered a symptom of another problem.

> The level at which a problem is settled depends upon the self-confidence of the analyst and cannot be decided on logical grounds. There is nothing like a natural level of a wicked problem. Of course, the higher the level of a problem's formulation, the broader and more general it becomes: and the more difficult it becomes to do something about it. On the other hand, one should not try to cure symptoms: and therefore one should try to settle the problem on as high a level as possible (Rittel and Webber 1973, 165).

Based on the need to aim at the highest level possible, Rittel and Webber criticize incrementalism, a policy of small steps in the hope of contributing systematically to overall improvement. As the eighth argument, the authors state that if the problem is attacked on too low a level (an increment), then success of resolution may result in making things worse, because it may become more difficult to deal with the higher problems. Marginal improvement does not guarantee overall improvement. (Rittel and Webber 1973, 165). Incrementalism is often attributed to the pragmatist approach, which tends to focus on practicalities that can be addressed during a planning process at hand.

As a ninth indication about the wickedness of planning problems, the authors declare that the existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways. They emphasize that the choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem’s resolution and that the most important thing to realize when thinking about planning is that attitudinal criteria guide that choice. People choose those explanations which are most plausible to them. Although it is somewhat, but not greatly, exaggerated, it can be said that people pick the explanation of a discrepancy which fits their intentions best and which conforms to the action-prospects that are available to them. The analyst’s “worldview” is the strongest determining factor in explaining a discrepancy

and, therefore, in resolving a wicked problem. For the final, tenth reason, the authors assert that "the planner has no right to be wrong." In the world of planning, the aim is not to find the truth but to improve some characteristics of the world where people live. Planners are liable for the consequences of the actions they generate; the effects can matter a great deal to people who are touched by those actions. Moreover, planners' would-be solutions are confounded by a still further set of dilemmas posed by the growing pluralism of contemporary publics, whose valuations of planning proposals are judged against an array of different and contradicting scales (Rittel and Webber 1973).

Webber (1974) developed a major turn in the planning profession by suggesting that urbanists should be enablers, not designers or controllers, using an engineering approach to solving urban planning issues. Webber proposed that urban designers should not internalise the concepts and methods of design from civil engineering and architecture. He was an advocate of grid settlements, and, as Heywood asserted, he "dismissed attempts to shape settlements to support traditional values of physical interaction" (Heywood 2011, 236). From Heywood's point of view, Webber called for planning to abandon "narrow and negative constraints" and allow the natural forces of technological change to reshape society into a more dynamic and psychologically challenging exploration of new urban structures (Webber 1974, in Heywood 2011).

For planners, neo-pragmatists proposed a new code of conduct. Major influence came from the seminal book, *Reflective Practitioner. How Professionals Think in Action* (1983), in which Schön, following Dewey's theories, advocates for using knowledge gained from action. Schön questions the model of technical rationality in which professional activity consists of instrumental problem solving by the application of scientific theory and technique. For Schön, reflection-in-action was the core of "professional artistry" – a concept contrasted with the "technical rationality" demanded by the paradigm whereby problems are solvable through the rigorous application of science. In his view, a reflective practitioner:

> …is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case. His inquiry is not limited to a deliberation about means which depends on a prior agreement about ends. /…/ He does not separate thinking from doing, ratiocinating his way to a decision which he must later convert to action. /…/ reflection-in-action can proceed, even in situations of uncertainty or uniqueness, because its not bound by the dichotomies of Technical Rationality (Schön 1983, 69).

Pragmatist thought has influenced a number of contemporary planning theorists. Forester links a pragmatic approach with critical exploration of the practices and potentials of the communicative dimensions of social action in public sphere contexts, as developed in the work of Jurgen Habermas. He refers to the result as "critical pragmatism" (Healey 2009). In *The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes* (1999), Forester follows the same path as Schön and shows how skilful deliberative practices can facilitate

practical and timely participatory planning processes. He argues that deliberative planning practice in complex urban contexts takes political vision and pragmatic skill. Pongsawat (2001, 90), in his review of *The Deliberative Practitioner*, a "book about contemporary planners telling themselves how significant their work is," reproaches Forester for being vague and ultimately confounding in his recourse to philosophies of practice. Taylor (2001) offers a more neutral view, describing that the main thing which seems to distinguish Forester's latest statement of communicative and deliberative planning theory is what could be called a "group therapy" model of planning practice. According to this, individuals and groups who have an interest in some planning matter should be encouraged (with planners acting as 'facilitators') to 'tell their own stories' as they bear on the matter at hand, for such stories are relevant evidence which should be heard in the process of arriving at planning judgements. Forester claims that "we are likely to learn far more in practice from stories than from scientific experiments" (Forester 1999, 39).

Dewey's conception of processes of democratic inquiry together with communicative approach is the source of inspiration for Blanco (1994), who sees planning as a "process of imbuing vague and general public goals or objectives with specific meanings." (164). This way, public planning makes a contribution by "developing a public language that could reanimate a meaningful public realm" (164).

Healey (2009) positions Faludi, a pioneer of critical rationalism, among neo-pragmatists as well. Faludi stresses the importance of judging possible courses of action by their anticipated consequences, not their correspondence with a priori principles (Faludi 1986 in Healey 2009). In a subsequent book (Faludi 1987), he draws explicitly on pragmatist ideas to underline that planning work is always situated and contingent on specific situations, and he begins to identify the significance of frames of reference or "assumptive worlds," which he then refers to as "doctrines" within which planners work. This leads him to advocate planning as a methodology for exploring consequences prior to making choices. He links this to Popperian ideas about hypothesis testing, leading him to characterize rationality as a method for justifying and legitimizing risky decisions (Healey 2009).

Healey's numerous writings bear a strong pragmatist tradition. Healey and other collaborative planning theorists strictly emphasize taking account of the concrete settings in which planning takes place, which relates back to the incremental-pragmatic philosophies and practices of planning. Healey's influential book (1997) on collaborative planning makes the case for inclusive participation among those likely to be touched by the consequences of a plan. She has consistently adopted a relational approach linking a pragmatically inspired conception of collaboration with a critical sensitivity to encompassing social and territorial relationships. However, Healey warns about overenthusiasm for the pragmatic tradition with its ever-hopeful view of human potentiality in social contexts (2009, 288).

The main critiques of pragmatism involve its approach to the issue of power. Postmodern and post-structuralist theorists (Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger 1998, Hillier 2011) blame pragmatist planning for ignoring how power relationships undermine the deliberations they champion. Friedmann is close to ridiculing communicative planning theory: "Consider the communicative action paradigm with its Panglossian view of the power of dialogue to bridge the gap between those who command substantial power and those who do not" (1998, 250). As a response, Forester (1989) demonstrates how planners in their everyday work can think politically and rationally at the same time and overcome dichotomies of being either professional or political, detached or distantly rational. Hoch (2018) explains the critique on failing to deal with power by the difference in vocabulary. In his view, the critics insist that power refers to forms of economic, political or social domination, exclusion, exploitation and subjection that inescapably impose themselves. Hoch relies on Mouffe (1996) in demonstrating that pragmatists on this account naively describe power in terms of economic, political or social legitimacy, inclusion, solidarity and consensus. Hoch argues that pragmatists recognize that we acquire our moral capacity and practice within the context of specific cultural and institutional settings that include every sort of power relationship. Pragmatists do not ignore power; they just recognize that its inevitable presence does not trump or preclude creative practical moral effort to resist and recast nasty and destructive plans with less repressive and more useful ones (Hoch 2018, 124).

Another line of critique asserts that pragmatism is not progressive. Social and practical situatedness determines the choices and alternatives considered during a planning process to be only small deviations from the existing situation. Thus, the examination and comparison of different alternatives are relatively simplified. Although more often associated with incrementalism, a policy of small steps in the hope of contributing systematically to overall improvement, the inability to attain new ideals is also attributed to pragmatism. The short-sightedness of pragmatic planning is also pointed out, as analyses of consequences – the focal point of pragmatism – are based on actual experiences and are therefore limited (see Rittel and Webber 1973, Næss 2001). As Healey puts it: "the pragmatists insist on focusing transformative attention in the flow of practice and the practical challenges and puzzles that are continually confronted in the particularities of practices" (2009, 287). Following this approach, the planner would see no value in comprehensiveness, preferring instead to deal with problems as they arise. By relying on such small steps and cycles of learning and adaptation, the more restrained incremental approach has been recognized as the antithesis of planning (Kemp et al., 2007). At the same time, as a planning approach it still takes into account that it has to "address the difficulties created by the complex collocations of activities and their relations and the impacts these collocations generate across space-time" (Healey, 2009, 277). Both major lines of critique – power and conventionality – are addressed in the discussion part of this thesis.

Pragmatism has not only inspired theorists and practitioners but, as Healey (2009) sees it, the planning literature has developed beyond pragmatist philosophy itself through its detailed attention to practice specificities and its persistent call to keep specific practical endeavour in the forefront of attention.

2.2.3. Pragmatism as a core theory in planning practice

Planning is generally acknowledged as a highly practical, 'action-oriented' discipline, although it is variegated in its manifestations. There are a number of arguments that favour the pragmatist approach, which focuses on practical consequences of ideas, in urban and regional planning.

Hoch (2018) deliberates over the pros and cons of pragmatist approach. He describes the popular cultural interpretation that pragmatists lack principles and integrity, believing that ends justify the means. At the same time, he praises the pragmatist commitment to collaborative inquiry that uses inclusive and intelligent problem solving to advance social learning. Moreover, Hoch (2018) proposes that the pragmatist approach offers an especially attractive theoretical framework for urban planning because it focuses explicitly on human judgment as purposeful, anticipatory and future oriented.

Harper and Stein express the same view, using neopragmatism in setting forth "a firmer normative theoretical grounding for planning that is reflective and incorporates best practices" (2006, xwii). They propose dialogical planning as a normative procedural planning theory that they believe is relevant to contemporary planners. The authors are quite self-confident in stressing the importance of one overall theory, asserting that "Planners who ignore relevant planning theory do so at their own peril, and a planning profession that attempts to practice without reflective theory in the contemporary turbulent context may be doomed to irrelevance, decline, and perhaps even extinction" (Harper and Stein 2006, xx). The authors state that they are not (indicating that planners in general should not be) interested in unachievable utopias: "To implement normative ideals, we must devise a feasible incremental path from here to there" (Harper and Stein 2006, xxi). In describing the normative process of planning, instead of "rational" they use "reasonable" to express a broader content, meaning an acceptance of fair terms of cooperation and a commitment to abide by them, provided that everyone else is also similarly committed. However, as some have argued (Hoch 1993 in Healey 2009), Harper and Stein's neo-pragmatism seems to retreat from pragmatic insistence on the importance of a focus on practices and to locate itself in an ivory tower of idealized, *a priori* principles.

Hall is more reserved in outlining how to "overtly, consciously, and systematically use the pragmatic method in planning" (2014, 25). For Hall, the main question is the elimination of goal-achievement as part of the planning process. Hall argues that the goal-achievement approach is not appropriate for pragmatic planning because deductive thinking, which involves "vicious abstractionism," is anathema to pragmatism. Stating that elimination of goal-

achievement is arguably desirable in any event, Hall emphasizes that pragmatism requires and provides an alternative, namely, determining the goodness of any proposed action or of any action taken. The planning process and the content of plans using the pragmatic method need to be reconsidered. Plans need a framework inter alia using the idea of "goals," but not for testing outcomes against "goals" as presently conceived and used in the goal-directed method. Outcomes will be analysed in a different way – for goodness. Hall follows Meyer's (1975) account of pragmatism, an approach that is summarized in his references as knowing, believing, creating, corroborating, testing, hoping, and being guided by fittings, workings, and successes, not *a priori* commitment (Meyer 1975, 73 in Hall 2014).

Alexander (2016) sees pragmatism as a kind of redemption for spatial planners. He explains that planners' frustration at the contrast between their aspirations and the realities of their experiences in practice is well known and not surprising. It is difficult to reconcile a spatial planner's prescribed role as a "moral actor" in a public agency with actual practice or to enact the "planner as social change agent" while deliberating on a development proposal. Alexander (2016) argues that these frustrations can be avoided if spatial planning has a more pragmatic role. Then practitioners will not have to aspire to transform society but can content themselves with a more mundane – but still challenging – task. Essentially, this is to deploy their technical knowledge and skills as expert professionals representing the public interest (linked to the politics of planning governance) in intervening in the land-property markets that are in their remit (Alexander, 2016, 24).

Another key notion of pragmatism, social learning, plays an important role in the emerging therapeutic planning concept in which planning is seen as a healing process for communities that have experienced collective trauma, including from past planning processes (see Sandercock, 2004; Schweitzer 2014, Erfan 2017).

A number of influential planning theorists have demonstrated the importance of pragmatist ideas in emphasizing the dimensions of planning as a practical discipline. A pragmatic approach is said to make planning proactive and responsive. Notions of planning as a social learning activity which should draw on the full range of human capacities, the sociocultural situatedness of human thought and action, exploring consequences prior to making choices, and judging possible courses of action by their anticipated consequences rather than their correspondence with a priori principles – all prove to be reasonable for 'wicked' planning problems. As Hoch (2018) explains, everyone plans, so improving plans for complex social and spatial problems requires improvement in the craft of plan-making in different cultural, institutional and geographic settings. The complexity of human interaction and interdependence requires flexible and provisional practical judgments about the arrangement of future settlement. Neo-pragmatist planning theory focuses on how to conduct such decision-making processes more intelligently and wisely using inclusive democratic inquiry (Hoch 2018, 127).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research strategy

The aim of this research is to portray the theoretical concept of Estonian spatial planning with an inquiry into the evolution of the planner's role. The research had two phases in terms of focus and methods used.

In the first part of my study, I focus on spatial phenomena specific to CEE and Estonia – socialist-era summer house settlements known as "summurbia" (Publication I) and large socialist housing estates (Publication II). Seen as anomalies by the Western world, these specific settlement types are a melting pot of various planning approaches. The complex character of these settlements contributes to the thorough manifestation of diverse planning-related aspects.

The evolution of these distinct living environments reveals the role of the planner in various ways. I examine the tasks assigned to planners and the powers seized by them, the opportunities they sought and skills they needed. I follow a period of early socialist city building in the 1960s (Publication II) to contemporary post-socialist planning practices (Publication I, Publication III). The wide timeframe of my research enables me to examine trends and changes, path-dependencies and paradigm shifts in the roles of planners. In parallel, I analyse pragmatism as a proposed theoretical concept underlying Estonian planning to explore the wider context of expectations for planners.

The second phase of my study addresses the skills and training of planners (Publication III). Competencies needed for present-day planning practice are associated with pragmatist understandings and the Estonian historical and socio-cultural background. The results of Publication I and Publication II are used as inputs in analysing the educational needs for contemporary planners. In light of the skills needed, challenges in developing a comprehensive educational program for planners are discussed.

3.2. Study area

The focal points of this study lie in Tallinn (Publication II) and Tartu county (Publication I), parts of Estonia in which planning activities have been more intense throughout time (see figure 3.2.1). In Tallinn, three large socialist residential districts of prefabricated apartment houses, Mustamäe, Väike-Õismäe (see figure 3.2.2.) and Lasnamäe are analysed. The study reveals information about the qualifications and roles of planners that can be applied to Estonia as a whole, and this information may also be relevant to neighboring planning cultures.

Figure 3.2.1. Study area. The case study areas appear in dark grey.

Figure 3.2.2. One of the case study areas, Väike-Õismäe. On the left, a curving road in Väike-Õismäe, 1970s, Tallinn, Estonia. Photo by Johannes Külmet. Source: Museum of Estonian Architecture, used with permission. On the right, the same curving road in Väike-Õismäe, 2017, Tallinn, Estonia. Photo by Pille Metspalu.

3.3. Data and methods

This research is based on extensive qualitative data. In the first phase of my study, four sets of interviews were carried out. For Publication I, summerhouse residents (interview group I), municipal planning officers (interview group II) and Soviet-era planners (interview group III) were questioned. For Publication II, semi-structured interviews with senior architects involved in planning large housing estates (interview group IV) were conducted.

Interview group I was comprised of 21 interviews with residents ("summurbanites") in the Tartu region. Participants were selected from cottages in different conditions and with signs of presumable permanent living (new fully refurbished house, a house with sufficient winter-proof refurbishment, summerhouse in its original condition). The everyday practicalities of living in a former summer home as well as the planning- and management-related issues were discussed. I participated in designing the interviews. Interviews were carried out in 2009 by Kadri Leetmaa, Mari Nuga, Anette Org, Anneli Kährik and Helen Lainjärv. Initial contact with each interviewee was made at their house, and the interview was conducted either at their home or in a café suitable for the participant at a time agreed upon with the interviewee. The discussions lasted for about one hour, and the household member who showed the most interest in the topic was questioned. The interviews were taped, transcribed and then coded manually (Nuga 2016).

In Publication I, 19 interviews with municipal planning officers working with summurban planning issues were also used. The interviews were prepared by a working group led by Kadri Leetmaa and carried out by Anette Org in 2010. Interviews were structured by focusing on the following topics: the historical formation of the summerhouse areas; the permanent residency of these areas (including the relation of residents to the municipality); the main problems that were related to the areas in question (including obstacles that were related to planning activities by the municipality); and the official and unofficial visions for former summerhouse areas (Nuga 2016, 39). Mari Nuga carried out the directed content analysis of the interviews.

To deepen knowledge about the initial planning processes and the establishment of summurbs, the third set of interviews was conducted. These were expert interviews with people who were involved in the establishment of the former summerhouses. The interview topics were put together by our working team following a guided interview form (Rossman and Rallis, 1998, in Nuga 2016, 39). This method provided participants with the opportunity to speak openly about related issues and, in that way, explore areas of conversation that might not otherwise be uncovered. During the interviews, two main topics were covered. Firstly, the planning of residential areas and establishment of housing during the Soviet era was discussed, including ideological considerations, norms, institutional responsibilities, availability, and general satisfaction. Then the Soviet-era summerhouse areas were discussed more thoroughly, including

decision-making and location, norms and responsibilities, how location-related decisions were made, and functional zoning.

The experts interviewed were as follows:

1. Peep Männiksaar (interviewed by Mari Nuga in Viljandi on 18.02.2011), an architect working mainly in Viljandi County, Estonia, during the Soviet period.
2. Hille Rodima (interviewed by Pille Metspalu in Tartu on 20.04.2011), the coordinator of the geodesy works and bureaus. At the time of the interview she was still working in Tartu County Government and had worked there since 1974. She also worked on the Tartu City Executive Committee before 1974.
3. Vaike Kotkas (interviewed by Mari Nuga in Muuga on 06.09.2011), who worked in the former Ministry of Agriculture and was and still is an active summerhouse user with one of the summerhouse cooperatives in the surroundings of Tallinn.
4. Anne Siht (interviewed by Mari Nuga in Tallinn on 08.09.2011), a specialist architect who worked on the Estonian Building Committee during 1979–91.
5. Eve Niineväli (interviewed by Mari Nuga in Tallinn on 20.09.2011), a specialist architect who worked on the Building Committee.

Each of these conversations lasted around two hours. The interviews were taped and transcribed. The conversations were analysed, keeping in mind, among other things, the subjectivity and possible memory errors of the participants (Nuga 2016, 40).

For Publication II, I turned to primary sources from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. I used archival official planning documents and, importantly, semi-structured interviews with critical informants (interview group IV). The following senior architects were interviewed:

1. Dmitri Bruns (interviewed by Pille Metspalu in Tallinn on 12.07.2012), Tallinn Chief Architect, 1960–1980.
2. Irina Raud (interviewed by Pille Metspalu in Tallinn on 12.07.2012), leading architect in Eesti Projekt, 1969–1989, and Tallinn Chief Architect, 1989–1991.
3. Olev Zhemchugov (interviewed by Pille Metspalu in Tallinn on 06.01.2013), leading architect in Eesti Projekt, 1970–1977.
4. Jüri Lass (interviewed by Pille Metspalu and Daniel B. Hess in Tallinn on 17.02.2016), leading architect in the Estonian State Building Committee, 1982–1990.
5. Raal Kivi (interviewed by Marju Sild in Tartu on 14.05.2013), leading architect in Eesti Projekt, 1969–1972, and Tartu Chief Architect 1972–1991.

These architects, now at the end of their professional careers, gave us access to their observations, which seldom appear in written form because of censorship during Soviet times. Because of the respectable age of the architects who were active during the socialist period, we found it was vital to include their knowledge in studying the nuances of socialist planning practice. The information gathered is of a sensitive nature, reflecting retrospectively the subjective notions of experts involved in everyday planning practice. The recordings of the interviews as well as transcriptions are available in the Department of Geography at the University of Tartu. As the interviewees were asked for consent to use the interview materials in thematic research, a valuable database has been collected to facilitate further research.

In addition to interviews, archival documents – planning proposals (Figure 3.3.1, 3.3.2), planning documents (including original protocols and memos and official approvals/non-approvals from state authorities), and contemporaneous newspaper and magazine articles (Figure 3.3.3) were analysed. A deductive method, or more precisely a directed content analysis starting with a theory or relevant research findings as guidance for initial codes (see for instance Hsieh and Shannon 2005), was used to work with the collected materials. Primary source interviews and a review of archival documents allowed us to assemble a meaningful picture of planning practice related to large socialist housing estates.

Figure 3.3.1. Mustamäe architectural competition entry by Group X. Original drawing, 1958. Source: Museum of Estonian Architecture.

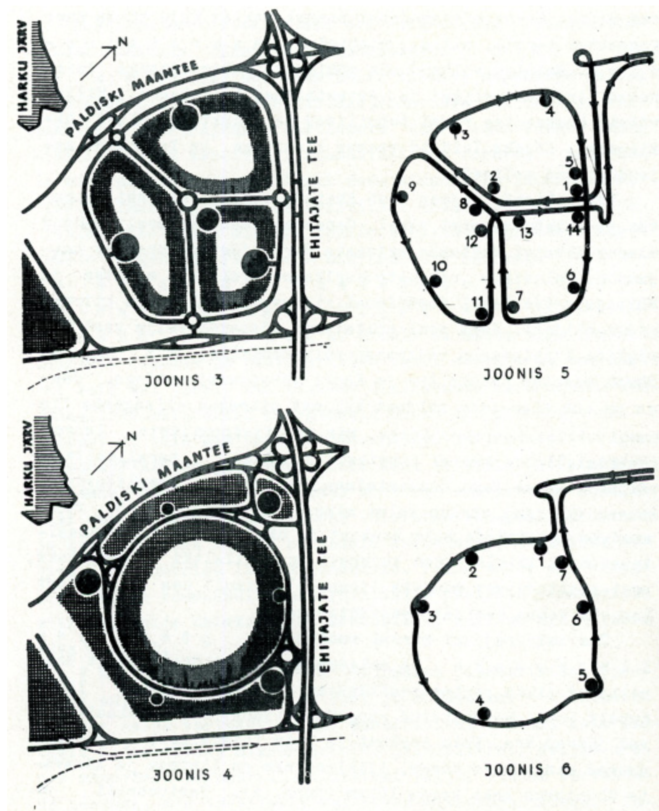

Figure 3.3.2.
Original drawings for Väike-Õismäe detailed planning project, 1968. Source: Port 1969.

These drawings drafted during the original planning process represent alternative transportation network schemes and, at the same time, the structural analysis for mikrorayon[2] layout. Option 4, lower left-hand image, which configures the district as a single makrorayon, was the selected option. This novel approach disregarded the central principles of mikrorayon formation and abolished the strict population normative.

[2] In socialist city planning, comprehensively planned residential district composed of standardized buildings.

Mustamäe elamumassiiv

Hiljuti valmis instituudis «Estonprojekt» Mustamäe elamurajooni detailplaneerimise lõplik kavand, mille autoreiks on arhitektid V. Tippel, L. Pettai, T. Kallas ja insener A. Prahm.

Projektis on autorid arvesse võtnud möödunud aastal toimunud Mustamäe elamumassiivi planeerimise ideekavandite saamiseks toimunud võistluse tulemusi.

Planeerimiskava haarab ca 360 ha suurust maa-ala, mis on piiratud Rahumäe tee, Mustamäe nõlva, Haabersti tee ja uue magistraaliga, mis ühendab Kadaka teed Matrossovi tänavaga. Väljapoole elamurajooni püstitatakse siia ümbrusse kohaliku tööstuse ettevõtted, TPI hoonete kompleks, Teaduste Akadeemia instituudid jm.

Valminud projektis on lahendatud ühiskondlike, kaubanduslike jm. hoonete paigutus, peamised liiklusteed ja transpordiliigid, maa-alused kommunikatsioonid jne.

Autorid on planeeringu teostanud kaasajal üldist tunnustust leidnud vaba hoonestamise põhimõttel.

Elamurajooni peatänavaks kujuneb kahe sõiduteega Sõpruse puiestee, mille huvitavale kujundamisele on pandud erilist rõhku. Sõpruse puiestee äärde rajatakse kultuuri ja kaubanduse keskus. Siia on grupeeritud sellised ehitused, nagu teater, kino, hotell, administratiivhoone, restoran, kohvik, söökla, kaubamaja, turuhall ja rida kauplusi.

Peatänava ümbrusse on paigutatud neli gruppi 8-korruselisi tornelumaju, mis omapäraste aktsentidena tõusevad esile madalama hoonestuse keskelt.

Elamurajooni lõpliku väljaehitamise tähtajaks on 1970. aasta, millal siin elab ca 57 500 elanikku. Teede ehitamist alustatakse veel käesoleval aastal, esimesed elamud aga kerkivad Haabersti tee piirkonda 1961. aastal.

H. Härmson

Figure 3.3.3. Announcement (in the Estonian language) of an approved plan for Mustamäe, published in Estonia's cultural newspaper, *Sirp ja Vasar*, August 28, 1959. Source: *Sirp ja Vasar*.

For Publication III, two different surveys were conducted. Firstly, to explore the necessary skills for the profession, a questionnaire survey was conducted by the University of Tartu in collaboration with the Estonian Association of Planners. I prepared the questions, managed the overall process and was the main analyst of the results. This survey efficiently mapped the educational background of professional planning practitioners and sought to identify possible shortcomings in their skills base. A database of planners, planning officers and officials in state authorities involved in approving plans was assembled as potential respondents. The questionnaire was e-mailed to 800 individuals working in planning practice, achieving a response rate of 44% (351 responses). The majority of responses (63%) were received from the public sector; the remaining respondents were from the private sector (24%) and non-profit/self-employed sector

(13%). The database and survey made a debut in Estonian planning research as a comprehensive overview of planning practitioners.

The second survey for Publication III aimed to provide a cross-section of planning courses taught in Estonian universities in 2015. I participated in designing the survey, and the study was carried out by Lauri Lihtmaa and Heiki Sepp. The year 2008 was used as a reference; according to the feedback from the universities, this was the year when the number of students enrolled in planning-related programs reached a peak. Bachelor and master's degree programs in six universities were examined, covering 192 subjects altogether. The universities participating in the survey were the University of Tartu, the Estonian University of Life Sciences, Tallinn University, Tallinn University of Technology, Tartu College of the Tallinn University of Technology, and the Estonian Academy of Arts. To determine the planning-orientation of the curriculum, the courses were categorized based on subject descriptions, compulsory literature, learning outcomes and assessment methods. Publicly available data on universities' websites were used, and the universities were offered the option to elaborate on the descriptions of courses beforehand.

For typology, the following criteria were agreed on: 1) the relation to planning; 2) the share of theory and practice; 3) type of planning: development or physical/land use planning; 4) planning level (general or detailed); and 5) sectoral type (design, social environment and culture, economy and administration, natural environment, law, technology). Additionally, the planning-relatedness of each separate course was assessed in three categories: 1) planning subject; 2) subject supporting planning; or 3) non-planning subject.

The professional code for spatial planners, developed by the Estonian Association of Spatial Planners and Estonian Qualifications Authority in 2014, was used as an additional input for this thesis. I was a member of the taskforce developing the code, and I continue to serve as an acting member of the Planners Licence Committee.

4. MAIN RESULTS

4.1. Publication I. "Summurbia" – a mix of rational-comprehensive and pragmatic planning with pragmatism becoming dominant over time. "Summurbanites" as planners.

In my first article, we examined the particular suburban milieu in formal socialist summerhouse settlements, looking for a deeper understanding of the challenges facing planners in the present stage of post-socialist transformation. We coined the term "summurbia" in order to emphasise both the seasonal and the suburban nature of the settlements. We identified the presence of two planning paradigms in summurbia: rational-comprehensive and pragmatic-incrementalist.

Initially, in the 1960's–1980's, planning summer house settlements was a representative example of rational problem solving. The summurbs were meant to alleviate tight living conditions and food shortages. The aim was to provide temporary land use for citizens to grow their own vegetables and have a recreational spot for a healthy lifestyle. Using rational-comprehensive methodology, a comprehensive planning process that is logical, consistent, systematic, and follows an idealized 'analysis-problem-solution-implementation' planning model (Lawrence, 2000 in Publication I) was carried out. For summurbs, strictly and centrally regulated plans were prepared. Site selection was carefully administered following rules from Moscow. Summurbs were not built on good agricultural land, but rather on fields that were not accessible to large agricultural machinery. The land used for settlements consisted mainly of wild brushy 600–1100 m^2 wetland plots (Niineväli, 2011; Siht, 2011 in Publication I). The workplaces and trade unions where the cooperatives were formed applied for the land from the district executive committee, *rayispolkom*. After the land was provided, the Building Committee was responsible for putting together a detailed plan covering the subdivision of the plots, main roads, water wells, drainage, and electricity supply (Niineväli, 2011 in Publication I). In this way, summurbia represents the strict planning and functional regulations that characterized the socialist years. We demonstrated that in summerhouse settlements, planning was seen as a largely technical exercise of translating detailed rules produced in Moscow into finished designs of settlements. This notion of planning as a largely technical field in the Soviet Union is supported by a wide range of well-known authors (Hirt and Stanilov, 2009; Golubchikov, 2004, 2017 in Publication I).

The rational-comprehensive approach in its pure form emphasizes predictability and seeks to eliminate such aspects as uncertainty, human fallibility and indecisiveness (Rosenhead, 1980 in Publication I). However, in summurbs, we witnessed a parallel presence of "spontaneous pragmatism," a sort of incrementalist "one bite at a time" (Näss, 2001, 513 in Publication I) planning.

Although the Building Committee had been responsible for putting together the detailed plan, summurbanites prepared, cleared, and built on their plots themselves. Plot-owners still found ways to circumvent the regulations (Siht, 2011; Niineväli, 2011 in Publication I), resulting in a spontaneous evolution from garden cooperatives (which only permitted small huts or shacks) to modest summertime settlements. Already during Soviet times, some people moved to their summer houses permanently; and creativity and self-reliance became commonplace. Although comprehensive, planning could not fully control the activities that took place in summurbia as people adjusted their summer houses in accordance with their dreams and available resources (Niineväli, 2011 in Publication I). In this way, the evolution of summurbia could be seen as an act of spontaneous and creative pragmatism itself.

We found that the concept of spontaneous pragmatism strengthened in post-socialist summurbia, as the municipal building regulations on design and (re)construction were (and still are) minimal. Sometimes municipal planners were satisfied with just any reconstruction and were either unable or unwilling to issue more specific building regulations. The residents themselves commonly rebuild former summer huts. The interviews revealed how the homes and gardens represented often never-ending creative building projects for the residents, inspired by their own dreams. As there often was a lack of planning guidelines to solve deficiencies of the general infrastructure (water supply and sewerage, roads and power lines), the residents started to look for temporary pragmatic solutions. Almost no one complained about the municipality's lack of interest in the living conditions in the neighbourhood, as independence from the authorities was often related to lower infrastructure-related expenses.

Our analysis demonstrates that one of the major barriers for comprehensive planning and solutions nowadays lies in the private ownership rights for each plot. Improving infrastructure-related problems has proven to be complicated as plot owners attempt to fix the problems within their own boundaries. As a rule, municipalities have not initiated renovation works, although they are responsible for ensuring the provision of water and sewerage in densely populated areas. As most of the settlements are not fully inhabited all year round, post-summurbia is not always formally defined as a densely populated urban area. Furthermore, ownership issues complicate planning – for instance, the legal ownership status of the roads is still often unclear. In some cases, roads belong to the municipality, but, in many others, they were privatized by a former cooperative which no longer exists, or ownership is shared between the properties. Undoubtedly, planning regulations are difficult to enact when the ownership situation is fragmented. This gives municipalities an excuse to call off their task to provide infrastructure and results in extreme cases of pragmatic planning or perhaps simply 'non-planning' (cf Kem et al, 2007 in Publication I).

In summurbia, we can observe the residents taking over the role of the planner. After the authorities approved the detailed plans, the plot-owners became ad-hoc planners themselves by implementing the plans and modifying them on the way, creatively circumventing the regulations. By the beginning of the

2000s, residents were already pragmatically re-planning areas with local municipalities silently accepting the formation of new residential areas. As there was no long-term vision for the summurbs during the post-transition years and the following neoliberal period, the conduct of local authorities can be seen as an act of "wait and see" pragmatism.

In our article, we define collaborative planning as an approach, which combines incrementalist and comprehensive planning, as it simultaneously deals with the everyday issues of the participants and puts together long-term strategies and goals. Also, collaborative planning theorists emphasize taking into account the concrete settings in which planning takes place, which relates back to incremental-pragmatic philosophies and practices of planning (Healey, 2003, 2009 in Publication I).

We argue that post-summurban residents' independent activities and the passivity of the authorities have resulted in the near absence of general perspectives and planning. Problems are solved only when they cry out loud or are presented within a politically powerful framework. The municipal officials interviewed in our study were affected by post-socialist attitudes of rejecting rational comprehensive planning altogether. It appears that this stance inhibited them from seeing alternatives that lie between the two extremes of comprehensive planning and non-planning. In order to find new ways of planning or, more specifically, introduce collaborative planning in post-summurbia, the pragmatic roots of the evolution of these areas have to be respected. The residents' learned experiences of self-sufficient problem solving are a valuable untapped resource for planning in these settlements. This uniqueness is worth preserving as it has made the locals bond to their living places in multi-dimensional ways. They are strongly motivated to develop post-summurbia as a liveable and sustainable environment and are willing to take on the role of the planner themselves.

4.2. Publication II. Large housing estates – a rational comprehensive plan with a strong presence of creative pragmatism

My second article focuses on another type of socialist living environment – large housing estates, often associated with inhumane architecture and unwelcoming public space. We analysed the planning logic and procedures of the socialist residential districts in order to examine in detail the role of local architects.

A number of contemporary studies have retrospectively critiqued socialist urban systems and particularly policies leading to the formation of mikrorayons. However, among city planners, state socialism was a fascinating phenomenon that provided unique opportunities to experiment with new models of city planning. Centrally planned systems – and government ownership of all land

and industry – permitted a grand-scale approach to urbanization and a mechanism for promoting rational use of human and industrial assets, improving life quality, and reducing costs. Planning as a discipline enjoyed an unprecedentedly high and respected status. Architects charged with planning new housing estates had great power to shape cities, demonstrating that city planning was a centrepiece of central economic planning.

Our research confirms the decisive role of local architects in shaping city forms. In scholarly literature, the actual power resting within the hands of local architects is often debated, since the state suggested the location for residential space, dictated its volume, and furnished land and financing. However, trained architects undertook all city planning duties. General plans and detailed plans for mikrorayons were, as a rule, prepared by professional teams whose members possessed various backgrounds (engineers, traffic specialists, landscape architects, etc.). A chief architect always led such teams. Based on centrally issued density norms, architects developed the site design, which consisted of an ensemble – composed of residential buildings, service structures, pathways and roads and open space – that forms the long-lasting effect of mikrorayons on urbanization.

The birth of large housing estates was in itself an act of pragmatism consisting of the economically feasible provision of residential housing on a large scale. To liquidate the housing shortage in an optimistic period of 10–12 years, the Communist Party launched an ambitious housing construction programme in the USSR in 1957. The task was to build quickly and economically. Following directives from Moscow, our case study districts of Mustamäe, Väike-Õismäe and Lasnamäe were constructed successively, reflecting a maturation of the mikrorayon concept.

The analysis of three large housing estates in Tallinn indicates creative interpretations or even disregard of USSR planning and building regulations. The Mustamäe planning concept featured direct resemblance to Finnish or Swedish modernist residential planning (e.g the towns of Tapiola and Pihlajamäki) where building blocks are harmoniously attuned with surrounding landscapes. Väike-Õismäe suggests a bold vision of imaginative architects inspired by pure modernist ideals. A single makrorayon with a compositional focus on a broad encircling street (characteristic of socialist-modernist urban form, it was impressive when viewed from above) was planned instead of three mikrorayons, pedestrian crossings were not separated from vehicles, and monotony was alleviated by grouping the buildings in various combinations. In Lasnamäe, the backbone of the detailed plan included two key east–west thoroughfares. One of the major roads was innovatively sunken (7 m deep), making possible flyover bridges and permitting higher traffic speeds below while enhancing safety by removing vehicular traffic from the pedestrian space. High-rise building blocks were arranged to form inner courtyards to express the cosiness characteristic of Scandinavian new towns. However, the intended expression was largely lost due to the enormous scale of the housing estate.

As finances were limited, an incremental, step-by-step way of implementation was decided on by local administration. Districts were divided into building phases, and a number of features were not implemented, including centrally located business and community centres, recreational facilities, greenery and landscaping. Due to the partial construction, the integrity and attractiveness of the residential districts decreased considerably. In Lasnamäe, one-third of the planned apartment houses were not constructed, making the spatial structure of the largest housing estate in Tallinn functionally incomplete.

Customization of rules according to practical and context-based needs is the very essence of pragmatist planning, which values the fittings, workings and successes (Meyer 1975, 73 in Hall 1974), not *a priori* principles. In addition to strong parallels with pragmatism, our research revealed the creative artistry of the planners, who were supported by a powerful administration with architects in leading positions. Architects enjoyed a compelling role in creating artistic blueprints for new residential districts and at the same time fulfilling the goals of the Soviet regime.

Artistic creativity was enhanced by international modernist ideas. Our research reveals a surprising amount of communication regarding planning, including international communication manifested through a strong "westward gaze." Foreign influences in city planning can be attributed to the "Khrushchev thaw" in the late 1950s to early 1960s, which made possible organized study trips for Baltic professionals to capitalist countries and limited distribution of international city planning and architectural literature. More than half of the members of the Estonian Architects' Union visited Finland during the1960s following an inaugural trip in 1957, and this coincides with the formation of ideas about Mustamäe. Architects who had the chance to visit capitalist countries openly popularized Western ideas upon their return by writing articles and columns in newspapers (Publication II, 9).

Our main finding is that architects maintained a consistently strong role in town planning practice. Because architectural education began in Estonia in the 1920s, local professional architects had gained several decades of experience prior to the socialist era. Thus, it is not surprising that Estonia was one of the few republics in the Soviet Union that preserved an independent site-planning and design capability and apparatus (Eesti Projekt, EKE Projekt, Tööstusprojekt, Kommunaalprojekt).

Professional architects were represented in almost all levels of official decision-making in town planning processes. A chief architect traditionally led the State Building Committee. In municipal governance, an architectural department and architectural advisory board were important bodies. The official empowerment of architects was also supported by a strong tradition of architectural competitions in Estonia, which started in the 1930s and continued throughout the Soviet occupation.

Our study highlights an oversimplification of socialist modernism and the role of Soviet architects. We challenge the assumption that the uniformity of socialist residential housing can be attributed to strict design requirements in a

rigid centralized system. Our results suggest more nuanced explanations for town planning outcomes and demonstrates how international modernist city planning ideals, combined with local expertise, strongly influenced town planning practice in Estonia. The process we describe in our article produced more desirable housing estates in Estonia than would result from strict adherence to system constraints, giving party leaders exemplary town planning ensembles to support residential expansion, while Estonian architects experienced a supportive atmosphere (contrary to common assumptions about the USSR) to pursue modernist ambitions that they hoped would be admired beyond the borders of the Soviet Union.

4.3. Publication III. Planners' education and role – a struggle between path-dependency and new qualities

In my third publication, the factors and drivers influencing planning education in Estonia are examined. We discuss current trends, developments and changes concerning the consolidation of Estonian planning education in relation to emerging planning practices.

In describing the context of planning in Estonia, we acknowledge the confusion caused by the transition from a socialist to a liberal, market-led planning system. Planners were pressured by private investors and stakeholders and faced with the reality of planning *in situ* with no help from central norms and standards. During times of change, the simplest pragmatist behavioural patterns were reclaimed – planners tended to revert to their previously practiced habits and approaches. Many of the first plans in the early 1990s were statistical reports rather than documents guiding development with respect to territorial resources and conditions. For planners, the new societal situation was too incomprehensible to apply more thorough pragmatist thinking by understanding the "wicked problems" of planning and fully employing social and practical situatedness. We argue that the mere imitative application of Western policies led in many ways to controversial results in CEEs because of the different economic and social environment, strong institutional dependency, and path-dependency of know-how, methods, and practices.

Following the evolution of contemporary planning in Estonia, we point out difficulties in empowering municipal comprehensive plans in the 2000s, when common practice included massive amendments in zoning via private development proposals. Due to NIMBY[3] to attitudes, a growing number of plans, including strategic developments like Rail Baltic or military exercise fields, were resisted at the local level. To improve the planning system, a new

[3] abbreviation for *Not In My Back Yard*, opposition by residents to a proposed development in their local area

Planning Act came into force in 2015. The new act received stern opposition from planners as the substantial changes in Estonia's planning framework introduced by the act were seen as controversial steps towards the centralisation of planning.

We explain how the planning system at the beginning of the 21st century was malfunctioning due to a lack of professional planners, missing planning knowledge, and a shortage of skills for processing and assessing applications. The majority of plans were implemented in the form of project-based business planning with an emphasis on short-term financial return. In the aftermath of the real estate bubble and economic crises in 2008, the speed of development and the associated volume of planning decreased substantially, leading to higher quality plans and a streamlining of the process. In order to improve strategic planning and coordination, planning responsibilities were recentralized at the county level in the 2010s, devaluing local authorities. Still, the implementation of strategic objectives remained hampered by pro-growth localism.

In the light of societal change, we document the reinvention of the planning profession in Estonia. As in other CEE countries, planning in Estonia has its intellectual roots in architecture. While the predominant role of architecture was strengthened during the early 1990s, its importance waned when, from 1995 onward, a broader territorial, sustainable development and land-use-based approach was adopted. Subsequently, from the mid-2000s onward, there was a resurgence of the architect planner as booming real estate development, commercial and housing projects demanded fast, lean, and impressive designs (Publication III, 194).

In our analysis, we see the development of a professional code for spatial planners by the Estonian Association of Spatial Planners and Estonian Qualifications Authority in 2014 as a breakthrough. The professional code and the start of issuing planners' qualification certificates represent a turn from a traditional, architecture-based planning to a wider professional concept. According to the professional code, attributes and competencies of the "ideal" planner include communication and negotiations skills, high ethical standards, and being adaptable, innovative and versed in strategic thinking. There was also agreement that planners are to be knowledgeable about research methods, planning theories, and forecasting and visualization techniques, which highlights the need to cover such topics consistently in planning curricula (Publication III, 194). The content of the skillset defined by the professional code can be directly associated with Forester's critical pragmatism. Although Forester's *The Deliberative Practitioner* was not used as a direct source, the professional code demonstrates a belief in skilful deliberative practices that can facilitate practical and timely participatory planning processes.

To explore the profession's skills needs, a survey was conducted among planning practitioners. The aim was to collect knowledge for forming the basis of planners' training and possible planning curricula. The responses for the survey were not differentiated by background and job specialties. Analytical and logical thinking (94% respondents), ability to formulate spatial relations

(87%), communication and teamwork (37%), accountability (14%) and creativity (12%) were the keywords mentioned most often (Publication III, 195). Planners stressed the need to teach practical skills for day-to-day tasks in addition to conveying to students a contemporary ethical framework. This differs from academic preferences to focus on core knowledge and structured methodological approaches and amplifies the need for the pragmatic situatedness emphasized by Faludi (1987) and Schön (1983). The results of the survey and the establishment of the professional code thus mark the end of a long tradition of planning seen as merely a specialization of architecture and a technocratic instrument (Hirt and Stanilov 2009; Maier 1994), a development recognizable not only in Estonia but in other CEE countries (Publication III, 195).

Our study demonstrates that planning education in Estonia is highly fragmented. As of 2015, altogether 18 "planning-related" programs existed in 6 different universities. The number was even higher (20) in 2008 in the immediate aftermath of the real estate boom and deriving from opportunistic decisions by universities. Content analysis of the programs established that universities tend to teach what staff expertise allows, but that may not be what is needed to prepare students for planning practice. Planning content often remains secondary, and, in many programs, core subjects such as planning theory and process are missing totally. Many other subjects are taught by lecturers from other faculties with little reference to planning. Also, a lack of practical training proved to be a problem. As a consequence, graduates are not ready to enter planning practice as they are lacking both multidisciplinary as well as specialized skills.

Planners in Estonia often play several roles in parallel – this is likely a function of the country's size. Thus, they need universal knowledge backgrounds and a balanced skill set. Reflecting the need and Estonian context, we proposed a cross-university multidisciplinary program for planning. The program addressed the perspectives of organizational patterns, comprehensiveness and practicality as well as alternative teaching methods. The program elaboration represented a test of academic and institutional collaboration among Estonian universities. Eventually, the program failed to be adopted due to institutional barriers and academic competition. However, our argument remains the same. We believe that having a broad professional coalition and engaging universities, students, and practitioners in the design of planning education curricula could lead to a unique profile and identity for the program and its graduates (Publication III, 203).

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. A rational technician, pragmatic implementer, creative adapter and mild mediator – the changing role of the Estonian planner

The role of the planner in Estonia has evolved over time, framed by the social order and the responsibilities assigned to spatial planning.

In planning the summurbs, local planners initially performed the task of rational problem solving, finding locations and composing detailed plans for summer house settlements to alleviate tight living conditions and food shortages. Each played the role of a rational technician, translating strict rules from Moscow into reasonably place-specific subdivisions through comprehensive planning proposals with road and infrastructure networks. During the first implementation phase of the plans, the planners stepped aside, and the plot-owners took over their role, circumventing the regulations and adapting the plans as much as possible to their personal needs. This was one of the indications that the role of rational planners was fading in Soviet Estonia.

The pragmatic, step-by-step re-designing of the summurbs continues today. Local residents take an active role, adjusting their summer homes for year-round residency and looking for ways to develop infrastructure. In newly independent Estonia, local municipalities lacked the will, vision and means to address the summurbs as they were spontaneously turning into residential districts. Planners in local authorities formally defined the summurbs as densely populated areas and, when possible, helped the residents to apply for funding to improve infrastructure. This situation has not changed during the last decade. Nowadays, it is hard to detect who is actually planning the summurbs. One could argue that the summurbs are already built-up and need no further attention from planners. At the same time, the gap between original planning solutions for seasonal gardening-oriented settlements and residential neighbourhoods as they are today is too wide. Through comprehensive re-planning lead by a deliberative and collaborative planner, these areas could be transformed into sustainable compact residential districts. With the passive attitude from local municipalities and with private ownership complicating the situation, the summurbs continue to follow incremental, survival-oriented planning. The residents continue to act as planners, as pragmatic implementers of their personal ideas about improving their living environment. This trend seems to suit planners in local municipalities, as there is a lack of political will and long-term vision regarding the future of the summurbs. Choosing a "wait and see" tactic follows a pragmatic school of thought that resembles Forester's critical pragmatism, with planners thinking politically and rationally at the same time.

In planning large housing estates, the general planning rationale was similar, developing from rational problem-solving to pragmatic and, at the same time,

creative plan-making. As I demonstrate in the third article, in these settlements the architect-planners played a more substantial role.

The first Estonian architect-planners were trained at the beginning of the 20th century, when planning in the Western world was seen as a large-scale architectural exercise. The common idealization of the first Estonian Republic period frames the belief in architectural maestro planning, which is still at some parts a common preconception about planners. Since then, the architectural tradition in planning has been strongly favored, and it was amplified during Soviet era by an independent site-planning design capability in the state planning and design apparatus, a rare example among the Soviet Republics. Indeed, the "planning culture" of Estonia stood out in the former Soviet Union. In Estonia, artistic creativity was highly valued, and plans were often discussed in public. Compared to the current situation, socialist architects had considerable power in official decision-making, enjoying positions of authority in all levels of government. Thus, the Western critique of pragmatist planning, in which postmodern theorists blame pragmatic planners for ignoring how actual power relations undermine the deliberations they celebrate, was not relevant in socialist Estonia.

There is no doubt that the socialist deficiency of resources affected town planning practice. Planners were forced to find creative ways of achieving the best planning outcomes using scarce resources and limited funding. Their creativity was revealed in many ways. The general attitude could be described as "always find a way" to get things done and, at the same time, to respond to specific local and social conditions as much as possible in the planning process. This approach is especially evident in summurbia, where residents act as self-sufficient planners. In large housing estates, the ingenuity of planners was enhanced through artistic creativity inspired by modernist ideals. As creative adapters, planners adjusted regulations and norms, convinced the authorities of the compliance of their solutions, and enjoyed the consequential role they were granted as city-builders. Since architect-planners were represented at many levels of decision-making, both artistic creativity and inventiveness were strongly favored, even when contradictions with the regulations occurred. The mentality of circumventing or customization of rules, the very essence of pragmatist planning, is also very much present in contemporary architectural planning. Often the winning prizes of architectural competitions are granted to entries that do not follow the pre-conditions set by initial statements/detailed planning or that interpret the conditions very creatively (see for instance the competition for Tartu City Library and Art Museum 2011, Estonian Academy of Arts 2008).

Gradually, the position of planning in Estonia has weakened and the role of the planner has blurred. The power situation has changed considerably. Architect-planners, who during the Soviet time were represented in almost all levels of official planning-related decision-making, are no longer involved in governance, and architectural advisory boards do not exist. In local muni-cipalities, planning co-ordination is often a part-time task for a building or

environmental officer. Due to a deficiency in skills, knowledge, and staff and to politically demanded flexibility to meet any development applications, planning at the local level is reactive, not proactive. The Soviet legacy of resistance to long-term strategic planning is amplified by a rapidly changing society in which setting preconditions for any kind of development can be seen as overregulation. On the state level, spatial planning is just another sectorial department, at the moment operating under the Ministry of Finance. Lately, there have been discussions about institutional advancements to support the central role of planning and spatial design in development processes.

In contemporary Estonia, planning is hardly visible in space and society. There are urban design initiatives for single streetscapes or urban plazas, but, as a rule, re-shaping our built environment is driven by single projects rather than strategic choices followed by a spatial plan. At the same time, trends like shrinking settlements, climate change, and smart technologies are waiting to be grasped by long-term spatial planning. Planners who do not have the support of power, comprehensive education and training cannot be expected to respond adequately and take full responsibility in delivering sustainable spatial change.

Participatory and especially community planning, often driven by the will to protect existing values, helps to raise awareness about planning but, at the same time, restricts planners to the role of mild mediators. With low professional self-esteem, planners are often intimidated by powerful interest groups or short-sighted political will. A neo-pragmatist role of planners as enablers, not designers or controllers, has not reached its potential in Estonia. However, the gloomy situation of Estonian planners and planning is not unique. The communicative turn in planning and the ongoing trend of neoliberalism has left planners in the dark elsewhere as well. In the Global North, as Sager states, the ideal has changed from expert planning with a public involvement supplement to participatory planning with a technical-economic expert supplement (2018, 96). Allmendinger puts it even more bluntly, asking how it is possible to have a profession if you argue that there is no such thing as expert knowledge, only different opinions brought together (2009, 2200). Facing these tendencies, the challenge for planning lies in continuous development as a profession.

5.2. Manifestations of pragmatism in Estonian planning

The rationale during socialist planning was inherently pragmatic, relying on practical consequences while dealing with “wicked” planning problems. In a command economy, planning had an outstanding position and, at the same time, a specific meaning. Economic development in the Soviet Union followed 5-year cycles. The so-called 5-year plans that initially were meant for industrial production and military industry soon existed at all levels and in all fields in society, including in most organizations. Fulfilling the goals set by the 5-year plan in a shorter period was considered true progress and resulted in rewards and prizes for the leaders and the workers. Failing to achieve the goals defined

by the 5-year plan could lead to public humiliation and possibly to reduced funding. At the same time, there was a severe deficiency of resources in a number of domains, including the building sector. In order to receive at least some resources to fulfill the goals, leaders of the collective farms and other organizations often "swelled" the numbers – for example, they asked the central administration for considerably larger amounts of building materials than were actually needed. The goals had to be carefully selected – they were preferably achievable in a shorter period but seemingly progressive and suitable for applying for at least twice as many resources as needed. This kind of "code of conduct" seriously undermined the meaning of strategic planning, with the general understanding being that long-term planning is nothing but a farce. For that reason, the popular cultural meaning of "ends justify the means" characterizing pragmatist planning is highly relevant in both the socialist historical context and as a mental legacy in post-socialist Estonia.

In post-socialist Estonian planning, down-to-earth pragmatism tends to prevail. "Getting things done" has been the main societal expectation towards planning, as far as we can speak about expectations, for the majority of the society is only vaguely aware of the concept of planning. In governmental circles, skepticism about planning has long been the main attitude; it is slowly being replaced by more constructive viewpoints in recent years. Still, spatial planning is not seen as an instrument of long-term policy implementation by the elected decision-makers. We seem to experience the same situation Western Europe witnessed in 1980s – a neoconservative disdain for planning and skepticism, both of which tend to view progress as something which, if it happens, cannot be planned (Healey, 1997a). The scope of planning in Estonia is, as a rule, narrowed down to defining land use for the coming years. Strategic spatial planning that might act as the proactive and strategic coordinator of all policy and actions that influence spatial development (Nadin 2007) and to tackle strategic change is hard to detect. Estonian planning can still be called project-planning, as opposed to strategic planning. We seem to lack the kinds of strategic plans that Faludi and van der Valk (1994) define as frameworks for action and which need to be analyzed for their performance in helping with subsequent decisions. Instead, we use project plans, blueprint land-use plans that form a narrow guide for short-term action.

In Estonian planning processes, strategic alternatives are rarely considered and debated. Characteristically for a pragmatist approach, only small deviations from the existing situation are analyzed and anticipated. During the Soviet time, the one-party, single truth optimisation system made it impossible to think about liquidating the housing shortage in any other way than designing monstrous pre-fabricated housing estates. The same goes to summurbs; with no private land ownership, compact gardening and summerhouse cooperatives were the only way to control access to greenery and an additional vegetable supply. The lack of strategic alternatives is very much in line with the critique on the lack of progressive vision of pragmatist planning (see for example Næss 2001) caused by the social and practical situatedness valued by pragmatists. As

strategic alternatives were not supported by power during the Soviet time, path dependency in attitudes as well as skills might be playing an important role. We see a similar "no alternatives" pattern today. Vivid examples in which there is no discretion can be presented from the field of mobility planning: should we tackle growing transportation needs by building railways or highways? Should we plan for public and light transport or increased accessibility by private cars? Strategic development plans often declare the need for sustainable mobility, but the projects implemented favor car transport (for example, Reidi Road in Tallinn). In Finland, already our source of inspiration during the Soviet era, new residential districts enjoy fast and effective public transportation links, and car traffic is seen as a last option (for example in Kruunuvuorenranta, where a new bridge was built only for pedestrians and the tramway). Interestingly, from the United States, a birthplace of pragmatism, planning initiatives like Complete Streets and Form-Based Codes, which are consciously working for a sustainable human-scale environment, overrule the understanding that pragmatic planning cannot be progressive.

The other main line of critique in pragmatist planning besides unprogressiveness, "power-blindness," has become relevant in contemporary Estonia. While during socialist times, planning formed an important part of the state agenda, in neoliberal Estonia political power barely recognizes the role of planning. Planning practices have become blurry, a tendency likely to deepen in the light of a shift from government to governance (see Mäntysalo and Bäcklund 2018) and postpolitics (see Metzger 2018). Planning is left alone, separated from sectoral politics and decision-making.

In addition to its historically pragmatic character, the increasing bureaucracy of planning processes diminishes the visionary nature of planning. The planning process for a single residential building in a built-up environment can last for years, and industrial developments require 3–7 years of planning, depending on their location. Because of that, "big things" tend to happen without planning involved. The bureaucracy of planning is reflected in an increasing number of pre-conditions presented by different governmental authorities and interested bodies. On one hand, this proves that planning is still playing a role in society and might be accepted as a strategic coordinator of spatial policies and actions. For that to happen, spatial planning needs some additional legislative empowerment with specific instruments forcing private landowners and sectorial governmental agencies to follow the approved plans. On the other hand, by incorporating every wish from agencies, the meaning of planning is reduced to a set of rules, regulations and demands of what not to do. Planners are acting as gentle moderators aiming for compromises and getting plans approved.

To facilitate the shift from land-use planning to spatial planning, more direct links are needed between long-term political goals and planning; political directions should be translated into planning language and vice versa. So far, National Plan Estonia 2030+ is the single example of state-level planning policy documents. This form of planning policy statements accompanied by pilot plans could be considered as a way of addressing both the political will and relevant

trends like shrinkage and climate change. At the local level, especially among local politicians, efforts should be made to raise awareness about the advantages of spatial planning. For planning to be in the picture, educated planners are needed.

5.3. Pragmatism enhanced by creativity, a key to planners' training

For planners to play the role of enablers and facilitators of change, planning has to develop as a profession. For that, a comprehensive educational program is needed to help planners obtain the skills and knowledge required for contemporary spatial planning.

In Estonia, planning is nested in the field of architecture. During Soviet times, regional planning with geographers in the lead also gained power, but city planning remained largely in the hands of architects. In post-socialist Estonia, the educational background of planners is highly fragmented. The planning scene in contemporary Estonia could be characterized by a dichotomy in which planners, planning education and planning approaches are split between architects and "the others." The turn towards a social-science orientation in planning, reported in emerging markets (UN-Habitat 2009 in Roose et al 2018), cannot yet be corroborated in the background of Estonian planners.

The current situation, in which planning is thought of as a minor subject in six Estonian universities, has not proven satisfactory. Ideally, a joint program by a collaborative university consortium would provide comprehensive planning education for a country as small as Estonia. Also, the shared program could tackle the dichotomy between architects and "the rest" involved in planning. Planning does need the artistic creativity of architects as well as analytical and reflectively communicative skills from other disciplines. Considering the high autonomy and lukewarm attitude of universities, we should at least aim towards a set of agreed upon topics and learning outcomes to advance spatial planning education. In developing curricula for spatial planning, creativity in the widest sense needs extra attention as it helps in alleviating unprogressiveness, one of the disadvantages of pragmatism.

Introducing a professional code and issuing certificates for planners is a step in the right direction, but, without regular training, it remains just an act of market regulation. The approach that planning is needed "to get things done" is reflected in the professional code for planners, in which a planner is seen more as a project (and team) manager, not as an enabler or facilitator of change. Broad-scale training programs should be re-introduced to professional planners, following the example of the half-year training program recently offered through the University of Tartu Pärnu College. Otherwise, up to now, planning-related training is mostly concerned with changes in legal acts and other highly practical issues. Although training should respect the pragmatic nature of

Estonian spatial planning and the learned experiences of self-sufficient problem solving and inventiveness, deeper understanding is needed about the relationships between built forms and citizens in towns and rural areas. New qualities and skills can be achieved when focusing in creative, broad-scale scenario-building as well as in reflective and deliberative practices, as demonstrated by Schön and Forester. However, a planners' certificate is a powerful tool for professional community building, which is essential for planning to be heard and seen in society.

Examining how to fully employ the principles and tools of creative pragmatism in developing Estonian planning practice and education is definitely worth further research.

6. CONCLUSION

The wide timeframe of my research enabled me to examine trends and changes, path-dependencies and paradigm shifts in the roles of planners. The results of the thesis confirm a significant turnaround in planners' roles and reveal the creatively pragmatist nature of Estonian spatial planning and planners.

Pragmatist theory recognizes that practical consequences matter for the beliefs we hold. This notion has guided Estonian spatial planning through its history. The pragmatic approach in planning is manifested in different ways.

During the Soviet time, initially rational plans for summurbs and large housing estates were elaborated in a pragmatic way, creatively circumventing regulations. Summurban plot-owners and later residents were and still are performing as planners, adjusting the summurbs to their needs using inherently pragmatic social and practical situatedness. Local authorities accept the spontaneous and creative pragmatist re-planning. The residents' learned experiences in the field of planning remain a valuable untapped resource for collaborative planning.

The large socialist housing estates present a case of a rational comprehensive plan with the strong presence of creative pragmatism practiced by empowered architects. The planning process was characterized by creative customization of rules according to practical and context-based needs. The research reveals a surprising amount of public communication regarding planning, including international study trips and, later, Western ideas openly popularized in magazines and newspapers. Local architects planned the large housing estates in Tallinn with a strong "westward gaze."

Pragmatism offers good principles for the planning instrument to work: thinking through the spatial consequences, trusting human judgment, and communication being both the origin and consummation of knowledge. These principles can be found in Estonian planning practice; they are strengthening over time but are still in need of improvement. The downside of pragmatism is well-displayed in Estonian planning as well. Circumventing the rules and principles and the lack of strategic alternatives analyzed during planning processes are perhaps the most important of the negative characteristics of pragmatism which are very familiar in Estonian planning practice.

In contemporary Estonia, planners are struggling to make a difference. In a rapidly changing society burdened by a heavy socialist legacy, planners are often downgraded to mere mediators trying to bring together powerful interest groups and form a compromise of building rights for the coming years. Planners are, as a rule, seen as regulators or designers, not as experts who can help to facilitate sustainable spatial change. For planners to fully employ the positive instruments of pragmatic planning and move away from the negative aspects, as well as to take up the role of visionary enablers, comprehensive professional education and continuous training is needed. Also, spatial planning needs some additional legislative empowerment with specific instruments forcing private landowners and sectorial governmental agencies to follow the approved plans.

Creativity in the broadest sense is rooted in our planning history, embodied in self-sufficiency, inventiveness, “always finding a way” and a strong belief in architectural artistry. This wide spectrum of creativity should be emphasized and elaborated in planning education and training as it helps to alleviate the disadvantages of pragmatism. Creative scenario building to encompass new visions and lessen pragmatic social and practical situatedness should be one key factor in curricula and training courses. Only then can pragmatic planning be an instrument to facilitate socially acceptable and place-specific change. By widening the scope of pragmatism in planning with creativity, I hope my thesis will contribute to the continued relevance of planning as a profession.

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KOKKUVÕTE. SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Planeerija muutuv roll. Loov pragmatism Eesti ruumilises planeerimises

Ruumiline planeerimine haarab tänapäeval laiemat teemaderingi kui eales varem, olles samal ajal metoodiliselt killustunud. Ajad, mil valitses üksmeel planeerimise tähenduse ja eesmärkide osas, on nüüdseks ammu möödunud. Konsensuslikuks võib pidada vaid arusaama, et planeerimine on tihedalt seotud riigi ühiskonnakorralduse ja piirkonna sotsiaalsete ning kultuuriliste oludega ja universaalne planeerimismetoodika puudub. Siiski vajavad just praegused globaalsed trendid nagu kahanemine, kliima soojenemine ja kasvavad rändevood innovatiivseid planeerimislikke lähenemisi.

Minu doktoritöö keskendub Eesti ruumilisele planeerimisele. Väitekiri põhineb kahe eelretsenseeritud teadusartikli ja raamatupeatüki tulemustel. Uurimuse eesmärgiks on portreteerida Eesti ruumilise planeerimise teoreetilist kontseptsiooni, uurides muutusi planeerija rollis. Ma vaatlen planeerijate ülesandeid, otsustusõigust ja võimu, samuti professionaalseid oskusi erinevatel ajajärkudel. Eesti ruumilise planeerimise teoreetilise raamistikuna pakun välja loova pragmatismi, mis aitab mõista planeerijatele esitatavate ootuste laiemat konteksti. Analüüsin planeerija rolli ja pragmatismi ilminguid Kesk- ja Ida-Euroopale ning Eestile iseloomulike ruumiliste nähtuste, suvilaalade ja paneelelamurajoonide, näitel. Sotsialistliku ruumiplaneerimise ehedate näidetena peegeldavad need alad meie sotsiaal-kultuurilist pärandit. Sealsete eripäraste elukeskkondade kujunemislugu avab planeerija rolli erinevatel tasanditel. Planeerija rolli muutuste valguses analüüsin ka Eesti planeerimishariduse olukorda. Artiklite tulemustel põhinev planeerija rolli ja pragmatismi ilmingute ülevaade on koondatud peatükki 4.

Doktoritöö sissejuhatuses planeerimist defineerides tuginen P. Healey ja L. Albrechtsi kirjutistele, mõistes planeerimist kui valitsemistava, mis keskendub tegevuste ja nende omavaheliste suhete keerukale paiknemisele ja sellest tulenevatele aeg-ruumilistele mõjudele. Läbi planeerimise tekivad visioonid, tegevused ja vahendid, mis kujundavad kohtade olemust ja tulevikku.

Uurimuse esimene osa vaatleb planeerija rolli ja planeerimislikku lähenemist ‘summurbias’, nõukogude perioodist pärinevates endistes suvilapiirkondades ja paneelelamurajoonides. Nende elukeskkondade arengu analüüsimisel käsitlen teoreetilise raamistikuna ratsionaalset tervikplaneerimist ja pragmaatilist planeerimist. Kuna sotsialistliku perioodi planeerimise ‘liplulaev’, ratsionaalne tervikplaneerimine on põhjalikumalt uuritud, pööran suuremat tähelepanu pragmatismile. Pragmatism planeerimisetooriana on mind kütkestanud nii igapäevatöös planeerimiskonsultandina kui ka planeerimiskirjandust lugedes. Ülevaade pragmatismi kujunemisloost ja koolkonna erinevatest mõttevooludest, samuti pragmatismi sobivusest planeerimise alusteeoriaks annab väitekirja teine peatükk.

Uurimuse tagasivaatav osa aitab mõista nüansse Eesti planeerimise ajaloolises kujunemises. Nõukogude perioodi pärand mõjutab tänapäevast planeerimist, mistõttu aitab ajaloo parem mõistmine avada planeerijate ees seisvaid väljakutseid. Ratsionalismi ja pragmatismi kui mõnevõrra vastuoluliste teoreetiliste lähenemiste paralleelne eksistents on kujundanud meie planeerijate mõttemustreid ja oskusi ning mõjutab seeläbi planeerimishariduse vajadusi. Planeerimishariduse ning planeerijate oskuste arengud on fookuses minu uurimuse teises osas. Kokkuvõttes annab minu doktoritöö ülevaate Eesti planeerimise kui valdkonna ja elukutse kujunemisest, alates sotsialistlikust perioodist läbi üleminekuperioodini tänapäevani.

Keskendun doktoritöös järgmistele uurimisküsimustele:

1. Kuidas on aja jooksul muutunud Eesti planeerija roll?
   a. Milline on olnud planeerija roll "summurbias"?
   b. Milline on olnud planeerija roll paneelelamurajoonides?
   c. Milline on planeerija roll täna?
2. Kuidas avaldub pragmatism Eesti planeerimises?
3. Millised on pragmatismi ja Eesti planeerimishariduse vahelised seosed?

Kasutan oma töös ulatuslikku ja mitmekesist, valdavalt kvalitatiivset andmestikku. Andmeid ja metodoloogiat kirjeldan peatükis 3. Tuginen neljale erinevale intervjuude grupile. Intervjuud on läbi viidud suvilapiirkondade elanikega, kohalike omavalitsuste planeerimisnõunikega, nõukogude perioodi planeerijate ja nõukogude perioodi juhtivate arhitektidega. Kolm esimest intervjuude gruppi on läbi viidud Kadri Leetmaa ja Mari Nuga juhtimisel, neljanda intervjueeritava grupi, juhtivate arhitektidega tegelesin mina koos Daniel B. Hessiga. Paljud intervjueeritavad on nüüdseks austusväärses eas, mistõttu on viimane aeg nende personaalsete, omaaegsele planeerimispraktikale suunatud hinnangute ja arvamuste talletamiseks. Intervjuude käigus kogutud andmestik on tundliku iseloomuga ja olemuselt subjektiivne, kuid pakub siiski ainulaadset võimalust dokumenteerida omaaegsete planeerimispraktikute arusaamu ja selgitusi. Intervjuude lindistused ja transkriptsioonid on kättesaadavad Tartu Ülikooli geograafia osakonnas. Kuna intervjueeritavad andsid ametliku nõusoleku informatsiooni kasutamiseks uurimustöödes, on tegemist väärtusliku andmebaasiga ka edasisteks retrospektiivseteks uurimusteks.

Intervjuude raames kogutud teadmisi täiendasin arhiivimaterjalide läbitöötamisel kogutud teabega. Minu uurimuses olid algallikateks ametlikud planeerimisdokumendid ja planeerimisprotessi menetluslikud lisad nagu ametkondade kooskõlastused, töökoosolekute protokollid ja otsustajate heakskiitmisaktid. Oluliseks teabeallikaks oli tolleaegne ajakirjandus, eriti ajalehes Sirp&Vasar ilmunud asjakohased artiklid. Materjalidega käisin tutvumas Tallinna Linnavalitsuse arhiivis ja Arhitektuurimuuseumis.

Planeerija oskuste ja haridusvajaduste väljaselgitamiseks viisin koos kolleegidega läbi kaks uurimust. Tartu Ülikooli ja Eesti Planeerijate Ühingu koostöös viidi läbi planeerija kui elukutse jaoks vajalikke oskusi ja teadmisi

käsitlev küsitlusuuring. Küsitlus saadeti 800 planeerimisega seotud isikule nii avalikus- kui erasektoris. Vastused saadi 44% respondentidest. Uuringu läbiviimiseks koondati esmakordselt Eesti planeerimispraktikuid koondav andmebaas, samuti oli tegemist esmakordse selleteemalise uuringuga.

Planeerimisalase kõrghariduse hetkeolukorra väljaselgitamiseks viidi läbi õppekavade uuring. Osalesin uuringu ettevalmistamisel ja tulemuste tõlgendamisel, uuringu viisid läbi L.Lihtmaa ja H.Sepp. Uuringus käsitleti kuue kõrgkooli, Tartu Ülikooli, Eesti Maaülikooli, Tallinna Ülikooli, Tallinna Tehnikaülikooli, Tallinna Tehnikaülikooli Tartu Kolledzhi ja Eesti Kunstiakadeemia bakalaureuse ja magistritasandi õppekavu. Kasutades kõrgkoolide kodulehtedel avalikult kättesaadavat teavet, tüpologiseeriti õppeained ainekirjeldustele ja õpieesmärkidele tuginedes ja analüüsiti nende planeerimisele suunatust.

Täiendava andmestikuna olen oma uurimuses kasutanud Eesti ruumilise keskkonna planeerija kutsestandardit. Osalesin kutsestandardi ja kutse omistamise korra väljatöötamisel ning olen planeerijate kutsekomisjoni liige.

Doktoritöö diskussiooniosas, viiendas peatükis esitatud tulemustest selgub, et ruumilise planeerija roll Eestis on aja jooksul oluliselt muutunud. Kannapöörded ühiskonnakorralduses ja läänemaailmast meile jõudnud arusaamad planeerimisest kui kommunikatiivsest, poliitiliste väärtushinnangutega seotud tegevusalast on tugevalt mõjutanud Eesti ruumilise planeerimise olemust. Planeerija roll on teisenenud ratsionaalsest tehnikust pragmaatiliseks elluviijaks, loovaks kohaldujaks ja seejärel leebeks moderaatoriks. Nõukogude perioodil kaheldava väärtusega eristaatust omanud planeerimisest on saanud läbi keerulise üleminekuaja pigem tagaplaanile jääv ja pidevas identiteediotsinguis tegevusvaldkond. Siiski on läbi ajastute võimalik tajuda Eesti ruumilise planeerimise loovalt pragmaatilist olemust.

Pragmatism planeerimisteooriana tõdeb, et meie uskumused ja teadmised põhinevad praktilistel tagajärgedel. See arusaam on Eesti planeerimises sisaldunud läbi aegade, avaldudes erineval moel. Nõukogudeaegseid ratsionaalseid planeeringuid suvilapiirkondadele ja paneelelamurajoonidele tõlgendati ja viidi ellu pragmaatiliselt, hiilides mööda kehtestatud regulatsioonidest. Suvilakruntide omanikud ja nüüdsed elanikud võtsid endale koheselt planeerija rolli, kohandades algselt aianduskruntideks planeeritud maatükke oma vajadustele, lähtudes pragmaatilistest sotsiaalsetest ja kohapõhistest vajadustest. Kohalikud omavalitsuste suhtumine suvilapiirkondadesse on samuti pragmaatiline, aktsepteerides pika-ajalise visiooni puudumisel elanike spontaanset ruumilist planeerimist alade edasiarendamiseks. Paneelelamupiirkondade kavandamisel said arhitekt-planeerijad realiseerida suurejoonelisi linnaehituslikke visioone, ammutades inspiratsiooni Põhjamaadest ja kohandades Moskvast tulenevaid reegleid oludele ja oma visioonile vastavateks. Võimu poolt aktsepteeritud arhitektid omasid tugevat positsiooni nii erinevatel valitsustasanditel kui planeerimismeeskondade juhtidena. Leidsin oma uurimuses arvukalt tõendeid nii rahvusvahelise koostöö kohta (nt õppereisid lääneriikidesse) kui ka üllatuslikult tiheda avalikkusega suhtlemise kohta meedias. Paneelelamu-kriitilisi artikleid avaldati nii elanikelt kui arhitektidelt koheselt peale esimeste elamute valmimist. Uurimus

kinnitas, et meie paneelelamurajoonide kavandamist mõjutas tugevalt lääne-maailma modernism.

Planeerija oskusi ja planeerimisharidust käsitlev osa uurimuses näitas, et planeerimisharidus Eestis on killustunud. Terviklik arusaam planeerimiseks vajalike oskuste ja teadmiste näol on olemas küll planeerija kutsestandardis, kuid ei ole veel juurdunud hariduses ja koolitustes. Mitmed pragmaatikute poolt väljatoodud suhtlevale-analüüsivale planeerimispraktikale omased oskused leiavad rõhutamist kutsestandardis, mis näeb planeerijat läbirääkija ja planeeri-mismeeskonna juhina. Samas on sarnaselt läänemaailmaga planeerija roll neo-liberaalses ühiskonnas ähmastunud. Nagu Allmendinger (2009, 2200) küsib – kuidas saab planeerimine olla elukutse, kui ekspertteadmine kui selline puudub, oluline on vaid erinevate arvamuste koondamine. Sellises olukorras nõuab planeerimise kui professiooni jätkuv areng tõsist tähelepanu.

Reeglite kohapõhine kohandamine ja *a priori* põhimõtetest hoidumine on pragmatismile sügavalt omased. Samuti on oluline usk inimese kaalutlus- ja otsustusvõimesse ning kahepoolsesse kommunikatsiooni. Samas on Eesti pla-neerimises hästi tajutav ka pragmatism tumedam pool. Üldistest põhimõtetest kõrvalehiilimine, pika-ajalistest plaanidest hoidumine ning sisukate alter-natiivide kaalumise vältimine on ehk kõige selgemalt pragmatismiga seonduvad planeerimisnähtused Eestis. Siiski jõudsin oma uurimuses arusaamale, et pragmatismil on palju pakkuda nii planeerimisvaldkonnale kui planeerimisele kui professioonile. Siinkohal on oluline väärtustada loovust selle kõige laiemas tähenduses, mis on Eesti planeerimisele olnud läbi aegade omane. Loovust pean oluliseks kõige laiemas mõttes, nii kitsastes (rahalistes) tingimustes leidlike lahenduste otsimise näol kui pealehakkamise ja julgete arhitektuursete visioonide valguses. Selleks, et planeerijad tegutseksid 'visionäärsete võimaldajatena' on vaja pragmatismi tugevamaid külgi edasi arendada ja nõrkusi leevendada läbi tervikliku planeerimisõppe. Loov, stsenaariumipõhine mõtlemine peaks olema üheks planeerimisõppekava ja täiendkoolituse võtmeteguriks. Läbimõeldud planeerimisalane haridus aitab planeerijatel vääriliselt reageerida tänapäevase maailma ruumilistele suundumustele. Loodan, et minu doktoritöö, milles laiendan tavapärast arusaama pragmatismist, aitab kaasa planeerimise kui professiooni jätkuvale elujõulisusele.

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Planning post-summurbia: From spontaneous pragmatism to collaborative planning?

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Abstract

The possibilities to apply collaborative planning frameworks in formerly strictly planned areas that have experienced spontaneous transformations since the demise of the Soviet Union are examined in this paper. The enquiry is based on a case study of the Tartu region in Estonia, former socialist summerhouse settlements ('summurbia'), which are experiencing a transition towards permanent residence resulting in a new year-round form of suburbia. Both the residents and local planning authorities were interviewed in order to understand the prevailing planning and building activities, as well as the social relations between these stakeholders. The collaborative planning process is then elaborated by exploring the social dynamics and learned practices of the local residents.

Keywords: *summerhouses, suburbanization, pragmatic planning, collaborative planning, Tartu, Estonia*

1. Introduction

The conditions for collaborative planning practices to be used in suburban residential areas that have deep roots in Soviet planning practices, and which have been spontaneously transformed during the post-socialist years, are examined in this article. Estonia, like the rest of the demised Soviet regime, suffered from economic hardships associated with the collapse of the command economy. As a result, there emerged serious conflicts and contradictions between the comprehensive and top-down planning system that characterized the Soviet economy, and the post-1991 market-led developments, which required deregulation and decentralization (Roose and Kull, 2012; Tsenkova, 2010 and 2014). Indeed, the planning discourse in post-socialist cities has centred on a number of conflicts: comprehensive vs. pragmatic planning; centralized vs. decentralized decision-making; top-down vs. bottom-up approaches; and interventionist vs. entrepreneurial market-driven, planning (Altrock et al., 2006; Hirt and Stanilov, 2009). In order to keep up with contemporary 'western' planning theories, more strategic, including collaborative, planning approaches have also been applied at various levels (Simpson and Chapman, 1999; Golubchikov, 2004; Hirt and Stanilov, 2009). Nevertheless, the planning-related literature on the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region is mostly limited to the abstract level, and is characterized by a relative scarcity of concrete case studies. Our article addresses the latter gap through an in-depth examination of a particular suburban milieu, allowing for a deeper understanding of the challenges facing planners in the present stage of post-socialist transformation.

Our study area consists of socialist-era summer house settlements that were originally planned as seasonal destinations for urban dwellers. We refer to these areas as 'summurbia' to reflect their simultaneous suburban and summer-seasonal nature. Although we focus on one post-Soviet planning example in Estonia, these areas are a near-ubiquitous feature of the urban regions of post-socialist countries (Ioffe and Nefëdova, 1998; Fialová, 1999; Pócsi, 2011; Vágner et al., 2011). Summurbia represents the strict planning and functional regulations that characterized the socialist years. Additionally, situated in the suburban zones of cities, these settlements are good examples of the rapid and liberal post-socialist development that has taken place over the last 25 years (cf. Hirt, 2007; Ouředníček, 2007; Leetmaa et al., 2012). Contemporary 'post-summurban' milieux typically combine modern suburban living with remnants of the dacha culture of the still recent socialist past (see Fig. 1).

This article focuses on how residents and local municipality officials relate to planning issues in post-summurbia. We chose a research strategy built on qualitative interview methods, as we view these as essential to provide personal insights into the ideas, needs and visions of our informants towards permanent residence in post-summurbia. While mapping out the planning arena from the perspectives of local planning officials and post-summurban residents, the article gives special recognition to the lack of rules and principles that have emerged. In contrast, principles are a fundamental feature of planning as a common governance practice (cf. Healey, 2009). In our discussion of the case studies, we view the absence of proactive planning as a form of 'spontaneous

Fig. 1: Post-summurban milieux (Photo: A. Kährik, 2009)

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pragmatism', which evolved through the residents' activities and actions. By 'spontaneous pragmatism', we refer to the planning principle of pragmatism-incrementalism (Næss, 2001) which brings us back to one of the foundational ideas of collaborative planning (Healey, 2009).

Our account proceeds with a discussion of the relevant planning theory relating to suburbia, setting the theoretical context for the subsequent description of past and present planning practices in the case study area, and allowing us to frame our research questions. Then, after presenting our case study locale and methods, we continue with the results of our interview study.

2. Theories of suburban planning

The planning of suburban areas has a long and varied history, rendering it difficult to identify unified experiences of suburbanization. Instead, researchers and planners must come to terms with a variety of planning frameworks and approaches. Broadly speaking, suburban homes tend to be either built: (i) systematically, to the specifications of the owner, or indeed by the owner over time; or (ii) by developers and builders on the neighborhood, municipal, or regional scale (Forsyth, 2012). Hence, these two approaches echo the two most prominent planning methodologies, respectively, the pragmatic-incrementalist, where suburbs are allowed to expand spontaneously, and the rational-comprehensive approach, through which suburban areas are master-planned as neighbourhoods or communities (Rosenhead, 1980).

Incrementalism is described as "one bite at a time" planning (Næss, 2001: 513). It arises from the philosophical idea of pragmatism that states that there should be no rules for planning and that everything should be discovered and asserted in the flow (Healey, 2009). In this way, the consideration of alternative goals and policies is only marginally different from the status quo, and the examination and comparison of different alternatives are relatively simplified. The results are thus experimented as in social situations rather than built in theories. As Healey (2009: 287) puts it: "… the pragmatists insist on focusing transformative attention in the flow of practice and the practical challenges and puzzles that are continually confronted in the particularities of practices". Following this approach, the planner would see no value in comprehensiveness, preferring instead to deal with problems as they arise. By relying on such small steps and cycles of learning and adaptation, the more restrained incremental approach has been recognized as the antithesis of planning (Kemp et al., 2007). At the same time, as a planning approach it still takes into account that it has to "address the difficulties created by the complex collocations of activities and their relations and the impacts these collocations generate across space-time" (Healey, 2009: 277).

In contrast, the rational-comprehensive methodology, which is based on positivist theories, offers a comprehensive planning process that is logical, consistent, and systematic, and it follows an idealized 'analysis-problem-solution-implementation' planning model (Lawrence, 2000). The rational-comprehensive approach in its pure form emphasizes predictability and seeks to eliminate such aspects as uncertainty, human fallibility and indecisiveness (Rosenhead, 1980). In the context of the present study, rational positivist planning is seen as a basis for Soviet and socialist planning (French, 1995; Smith, 1996).

In principle, the incrementalist and rational-comprehensive approaches have been used concurrently throughout the history of suburbia in Western countries, with the dominance of one or the other determined by the idiosyncrasies of the prevailing social, economic and institutional setting. The growing concerns over environmental and sustainability issues that emerged in the 1980s, however, affected both styles: therefore, planners turned to mixed land use, connected street patterns and pedestrian-friendly communities (Grant, 2009), and to developments that favoured amenity-rich and sustainable urban lifestyles (Danielsen et al., 1999), as well as traditional neighbourhood designs (Duany et al., 2000). Armed with these principles, planners pushed through such strategies and ideas as smart growth, liveable communities and new urbanism, gradually introducing them into suburban planning throughout the West.

In parallel with the upsurge of interest in sustainability issues, another new approach attracted the attention of planners in the 1990s. Realizing that planners typically mediate between various interests, planning theorists acknowledged the existence and encouraged the development of 'collaborative', 'communicative', or 'community planning', which emphasize communication, participation, and consensus-building throughout the planning process (Forester, 1989; Healey, 2003; Innes and Booher, 2010). This approach combines incrementalist and comprehensive planning, as it simultaneously deals with the everyday issues of the participants and puts together long-term strategies and goals. The most important contribution of collaborative planning theorists was therefore that the claim that planning would only be successful if its stakeholders were able to participate in the process in a meaningful way. Many aspects of the collaborative approach are laudable. Firstly, it recognizes the multiplicity and diversity of planning stakeholders within an increasingly complex, pluralist, and unpredictable world. Secondly, it adopts a holistic perspective towards development and accepts the implicit value of subsidiarity. Thirdly, it involves an informed and engaged citizenry in the settlement of disputes (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007).

The largely enthusiastic reception that greeted the communicative approach in urban planning in the 1990s, however, was accompanied by both a questioning of the theory and suggestions on how to improve it (Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2002; Healey, 2003). In particular, the fact that planning practice rarely reflects the qualities of a potential collaborative process, fuelled some criticisms of the overall conceptualization and practical relevance of the collaborative planning idea (Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000). For example, Healey (2003) argues that authoritative and allocative "systems" operate within the interactive process of planning, which suggests that these systems depend not only on the interplay of different actors with specific interests, but also on the way in which routine social relations and practices are structured through institutional designs and deeper values and conceptions. Indeed, collaborative planning theorists strictly emphasize taking account of the concrete settings in which planning takes place, which relates back to the incremental-pragmatic philosophies and practices of planning (Healey, 2003, 2009).

In this regard, post-summurbia offers an interesting setting to study the potential of collaborative planning, relating it back to its roots in the incremental approach. In order to better understand the background of this setting, we continue by introducing the planning history and context of post-summurbia.

3. Summurbia: an anomaly of socialism and a hallmark of post-socialist planning

3.1 Summer houses from the socialist planning perspective

In the Soviet Union, the task of planning was to command and allocate: regional and urban planning were subservient to the complex hierarchy of central economic planning (Shomina, 1992; French, 1995). Detailed and strict rules produced in Moscow regulated planning activities in Estonia. The urban and regional Executive Committees (gorispolkom and rayispolkom, respectively, in Russian) were responsible for the plans to be fulfilled, but they had little influence on their contents.

Hence, urban and regional planning was largely a technical exercise. Planners, who were trained as architects or engineers rather than as overseers of social change, translated the detailed instructions into finished designs for, say, a complex of settlements, a particular city, or a city district (Hirt and Stanilov, 2009; Golubchikov, 2004, 2006). The rayispolkom ordered planning projects from the Union-Republic's Building Committee. The latter, in turn, organized competitions for architectural designs and created detailed solutions for the specific objects. All the detailed plans, e.g. plans for private houses, were examined by the committee of experts on architecture, fire safety and sanitary issues, and each project required the consent of the electricity provider (Bruns, 2007).

The plans were not required to be made public, and planning documents (including, not least, the genplan or master plan itself) were usually secret or for official use only. Still, in Estonia, by the end of the Soviet period, the plans were more and more discussed in public (Bruns, 2007). Despite its lack of democracy, transparency, and accountability, socialist planning has been recognized for its ability to restrain urban sprawl and as conscious towards nature preservation in general (Bater, 1980; French, 1995).

Our summurban case study areas were typically created around larger cities to provide a way for some urban dwellers – particularly apartment dwellers (French, 1995) – to enjoy weekend getaways and summer living, and to engage in private kitchen gardening (Ioffe and Nefëdova, 1998; Lovell, 2003). Although this "individualist" recreation function of the dachas (as the summer houses are called in Russian) was not considered to be genuinely socialist because of its excessive proximity to the concept of 'private property', it was tolerated by the authorities mainly because of its long tradition in Russia (Shaw, 1979). Moreover, it effectively helped counter the effects of the food shortages that were a relatively frequent occurrence in the Soviet Union. In more contemporary research literature, the summer house settlements have been referred to in using the concepts of seasonal or recreational suburbanization, quasi-suburbanization, or even exurbanization (Ioffe and Nefëdova, 1998; Lovell, 2003; Rudolf and Brade, 2005). Wanting to stress both the seasonal and the suburban nature of the settlements, we choose to refer to them by the concept of 'summurbia'.

To better understand the historical background of our case study districts, our lead author interviewed two experts that have been working for the Estonian Building Committee, Anne Siht (2011) and Eve Niineväli (2011). Both were involved in establishing the summer house settlements between the 1960s and 1980s.

In accordance with the rest of the planning and building activities of the Soviet period, summurbia was established following commands from Moscow, with the more detailed decisions about the size and location of the developments decided upon by the rayispolkom (Siht, 2011). Summurbia was planned in a technically detailed way. It was not built on good agricultural land, but rather on fields that were not accessible to large agricultural machinery. The land used for settlements consisted mainly of wild brushy 600–1100 m^2 wetland plots (Niineväli, 2011; Siht, 2011). Each settlement typically included many 'cooperatives' (a set of plots) that were combined by the members of work places or trade unions.

The allocation of the summer house plots took place as follows. The work places and trade unions where the cooperatives were formed, applied for the land from the rayispolkom. After the land was provided, the Building Committee was responsible for putting together the detailed plan, covering the subdivision of the plots, main roads, water wells, drainage, and electricity supply (Niineväli, 2011). The cooperative members could meet with the chief architect in a social gathering in order to choose the design of the buildings from up to 50 standard designs, asking for adjustments (Siht, 2011). The architect then arranged the summer house buildings into suitable combinations, taking the surrounding environment into consideration – e.g. a pitched roof was combined with the spruce forest on the edge of the settlement (Siht, 2011). The construction-related activities, including clearing the area of shrubs and building the huts and fences were carried out by the summurbanites themselves (Niineväli, 2011; Siht, 2011). The building activities were controlled by the other cooperative members and their coherence with the plan was every now and then inspected by the respective authorities (Siht, 2011).

Although the maximum permitted building size gradually increased over time, plot-owners still found ways to circumvent the regulations (Siht, 2011; Niineväli, 2011), resulting in a spontaneous evolution from garden cooperatives (which only permitted small huts or shacks) to modest summertime settlements. Already during Soviet times, some people moved to their summer houses permanently; and creativity and self-reliance became commonplace. Although comprehensive, planning could not fully control the activities that took place in summurbia, people adjusted their summer houses in accordance with their dreams and available resources (Niineväli, 2011). In this regard, we consider summurban settlements to be anomalies within the socialist system of central planning.

3.2 Post-socialist 'twists' in planning

Socialist ideology and planning vanished during the early years of the post-1991 market transition, favouring the rise of a liberal planning regime characterized by "boosterism" (Ruoppila, 2007) and ad hoc pragmatism (French, 1995). Many Soviet norms and regulations – even the reasonable ones – were vigorously rejected. Even now, when the Planning Act regulating planning affairs has been adjusted several times since its first adaption in 1995, there are only a few concrete norms and rules. Nevertheless, Estonian national planning is "rooted in rational thinking and technocratic management promoting straightforward, command-and-control solution-oriented plans", as was the common practice during Soviet times (Roose and Kull, 2012: 498). Planning is still managed by a wide range of professionals instead of by specifically trained planners (Adams et al., 2014).

During the transition, most post-socialist countries embarked on a path towards administrative decentralization and increased self-government at the local level (Hirt and

Stanilov, 2009; Tsenkova, 2011). The main responsibility for planning, including detailed residential planning, was assigned to the local authorities that were newly empowered but financially poor (Simpson and Chapman, 1999; Samarüütel, et al., 2010). Also, in Estonia, more general plans for the country and the regions are rather visions that could be easily amended in accordance with local needs (Roose and Kull, 2012).

One of the main changes in the planning context, and for residential planning more specifically, was the fact that private property was reintroduced, and public interests may no longer impose restrictions on private property. Both the general mistrust about planning that lingered on from Soviet times and low public interest and participation encouraged the development of liberal and eclectic legislation (Simpson and Chapman, 1999; Tsenkova, 2011). This trend, in turn, resulted in a period of institutional uncertainty (Raagmaa, 2009). An ad hoc approach in which planning initiatives were developed with few resources, little time and little attention to strategic thinking, emerged in Estonia during the first half of the 2000s, when the national economy developed steadily (Roose and Kull, 2012). During this period, residential suburbanization boomed, following a trend that characterized many post-socialist countries (Ouředníček, 2007; Brade et al., 2009; Tammaru et al., 2009).

Most summurban plots were privatized, and the gradual conversion of simple huts into solid suburban residences for use in all seasons gained momentum (cf. Mason and Nigmatullina, 2011). At present, post-summurbia is diverse: although many residents live there permanently, some houses are used as second homes, while a few plots are simply deserted (Leetmaa et al., 2012). The territory offers a variety of visual impressions: one may find genuine ("untouched") and renovated Soviet summer huts, buildings at various stages of construction or renovation, simple single-family housing, and the occasional architectural faux pas design(at) ed for the new rich (see Fig. 2).

Summurbia, however, received little attention from planners, and it was and is being transformed in an unregulated fashion. Conveniently for local municipalities, the now year-round residents of the former summurbia are already accustomed to coping on their own. Moreover, the habit of challenging high-level planning regulations facilitated residents' independent approach to make and manage changes in post-summurbia.

This trend pushes us to view these areas as the epitome of post-socialist planning and interpret planning in these areas through the lens of 'spontaneous pragmatism'. While not grounded in the philosophy of pragmatism per se, the concept of spontaneous pragmatism captures the spontaneous changes, lack of comprehensiveness and ad hoc approaches that permeate the literature on planning in the post-socialist context (Altrock et al., 2006; Hirt and Stanilov, 2009).

Next, we look into our specific case to describe this context in detail and discuss the possibilities for changing the contemporary situation in post-summurbia into planning based on more collaboration. We formulated the following main research question:

- How can the current understanding and discussions surrounding planning in post-summurbia foster collaborative planning?

To provide a comprehensive answer to this question, we addressed the following sub-questions:

- What characterises spontaneous pragmatic planning in post-summurbia?
- What are the experiences and practices of communication in post-summurbia between the residents and authorities?

Fig. 2: Examples of the visual impressions from post-summurbia (Photo: A. Kährik, A. Org and H. Lainjärv, 2009)

4. Study design

Our research took place in the Tartu urban area. Tartu is the second largest city in Estonia with approximately 100,000 inhabitants in the core city. The vast majority of the post-summurban settlements are located within a 40-km radius of the city limits (Fig. 3). There are approximately 3,000 summurban plots around the city (Fig. 4). The most intense new suburbanization is observable within 10 km of the Tartu city limits (Roose et al., 2013), which also affects the summurban settlements located within this radius to a greater degree (Fig. 4). The scale and extent of suburbanization around Tartu are comparable to similar processes surrounding comparable cities across the post-socialist realm (Roose et al., 2013).

In spring 2010, one of the authors of this paper conducted 19 informally structured in-depth interviews with municipal officials from all municipalities that include summurban settlements within the Tartu region. The interviewed officials were responsible for property affairs, environmental issues, or were experts in building and construction in their respective municipalities.

The interviews focused on the following three topics: (i) post-summurban residents' relations with the municipality; (ii) the main problems related to post-summurbia; and (iii) officials' planning visions for these areas.

In addition to these expert interviews, we have conducted twenty-one interviews with permanent post-summurbanites in the Tartu region in autumn 2009. This endeavour was part of a wider interview study that aimed at understanding the reasons people decided to move to former summer areas (Leetmaa et al., 2011). The interviews were carried out by five interviewers (three of us are the authors of the current article). One of the interviewers spoke in Russian, in order to address the preferences of the significant

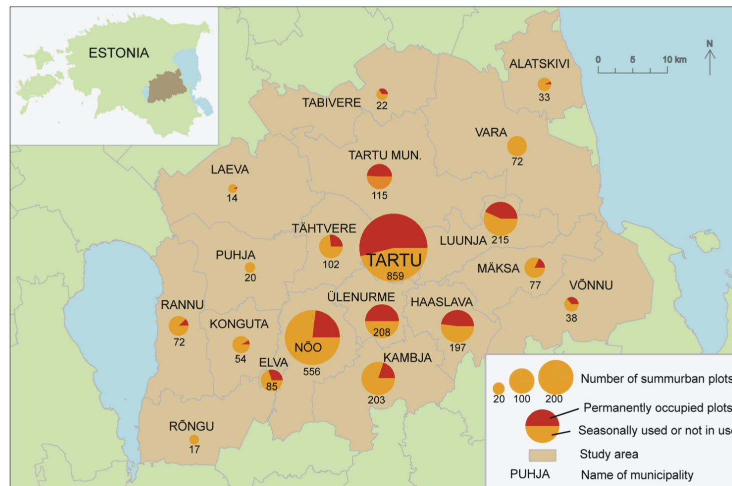

Fig. 3: Share of permanent residents in post-summurbia by municipality. Data is estimated by the interviewed municipality officials

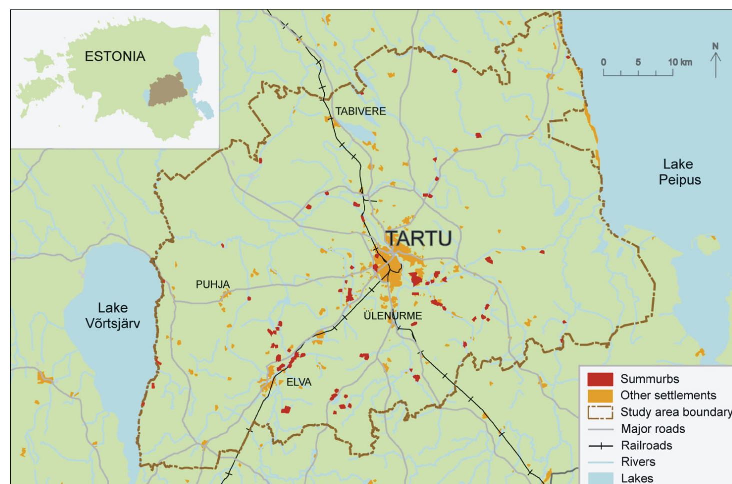

Fig. 4: Locations of summurban settlements in the Tartu region

Russian-speaking ethno-linguistic minority present in the country. The participants were selected based on two criteria: (i) geographical location (in relation to Tartu) and morphological characteristics of the settlements, and (ii) the physical condition of the specific buildings occupied by (potential) informants. The latter was assessed based on the degree of renovation (original summer house, renovated summer house, or new house). This approach enabled us to capture the diversity of the residents' living milieux and also the diversity of possible planning-related ideas.

The resident participants were approached door-to-door, and in only a few cases did the approached persons refuse to cooperate, and people were overall very open to participate. Interviews were conducted on the spot, either immediately or by later appointment, and lasted about one hour.

All interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded. Open coding was applied to the text as the first step, in order to avoid imposing an outside set of categories and to get as close as possible to emic knowledge (Crang and Cook, 2007). These codes were categorized during the intuitive interpretation of the interview transcripts, keeping in mind the planning-related research questions.

The interview data presented us with a diversity of opinions and ideas relating to the planning-context of the settlement. Eventually, with an increasing number of overlapping opinions, our study approached saturation in relation to our main aim.

We combine the views of the summurbanites and of the municipality officials in the following two sections. The first section (5.1) describes the planning situation and building activities in post-summurbia in order to elaborate on the residents' and planners' learned customs for living and solving (planning) problems. Moreover, it offers novel insights into the specific context of socialist history and post-socialist change that influences the planning process. The second section (5.2) describes the social dynamics that are unfolding in post-summurbia. It also presents the basis for barriers to developing a communicative planning approach in such settlements.

5. Findings of the study

5.1 The spontaneous pragmatic approach in post-summurbia

Self-sufficiency is a principal feature of life in post-summurbia. A topic frequently raised by residents was how they proudly self-manage everything at home and in their neighbourhoods. As mentioned earlier, summurbanites prepared, cleared, and built on their plots themselves. Further, households make their choices carefully after weighing the advantages and disadvantages of living in post-summurbia, especially with respect to its inadequate infrastructure:

When you live in the countryside, you have to take into consideration that sometimes the roads are impassable and the power supply is down. You just have to manage (middle-aged married man, int. R16).

The residents of post-summurbia perceive their lives as rural and beyond the need of interference by classical settlement planning. It is also worthy of note that the municipal building regulations on design and (re) construction are minimal. Commonly, they do not stretch beyond an approximate building height or function. Sometimes, municipal planners are satisfied with just any reconstruction and are either unable or unwilling to issue more specific building regulations. Similarly, former summer huts are commonly rebuilt by the residents themselves, with only more specialized work being paid for. Indeed, only a few of the interviewed households had settled into a ready-made dwelling. According to them, their homes are often never-ending creative building projects inspired by their own dreams. As one of our participants told us:

My main activity here is to redesign the house… There are always more ideas than time to fulfil them (middle-aged woman living alone, int. R18).

Such activities have led to the areas being developed in a unique, alternative, and somewhat chaotic way. Structures built some years ago may be redeveloped into something that has quite a different purpose, for example, into a garage or a sauna. This is in stark contrast to the socialist period, when the ubiquitous concrete architectural schemes could be changed only marginally – and then only with the prior consent of the authorities (Niineväli, 2011). A corollary of such self-management is that residents can regulate how much they spend on everyday expenses such as heating, water, garbage collection, and so forth.

A closer look at post-summurbia, however, reveals a number of problems related to the deficiencies of the general infrastructure, including the water supply, sewerage and drainage, waste management, power lines, and roads. Even though these problems are present elsewhere too, no planning guidelines have been devised to solve them, so the residents have started to look for temporary solutions. In addition to building and renovating their own homes, residents have dug wells, built sewerage systems, and even constructed shared roads:

We built our own biological treatment plant. It was expensive to install, but the maintenance costs are basically zero... Let's assume the municipality was to come to inspect the situation in our area and other similar places. They would probably discover that 90% of the sewerage systems do not correspond to modern requirements (wife in a young couple, both educated as biologists, with two children, int. R03).

Such activities indicate the presence of sustainability thinking, and of a frugal yet urbanized approach among the residents (cf. Danielsen et al., 1999). While some residents saw their independence from the authorities as resulting in lower infrastructure-related expenses (i.e. positive), the poor overall state of the infrastructure was an issue that disturbed many. Nevertheless, despite the need for investment in this area, few thought that they would have been able to afford all of the necessary costs. As a result, almost no one complains about the municipality's lack of interest in the living conditions in the neighbourhood; rather, the residents, not the municipalities, initiate most of the current solutions to infrastructural problems.

Of course, there exist also exceptions to this trend as a sign that post-summurbia is diverse. As an official from one municipality explained:

At first, the National Health Board did not allow people to permanently reside there. The main reason was the poor quality of the drinking water. But now, a collective water system has been established in most of the area, as the desire to live there was high and we needed to react (expert from a municipality office, int. M01).

One particular problem is drainage, because summer houses are often situated close to bodies of water or simply in areas subject to seasonal flooding. For a problem such as this, finding solutions can be complicated because the land

is divided among various owners. The major barrier for comprehensive planning and solutions nowadays lies in the private ownership rights for each plot. Clearly, plot owners attempt to fix the problems within their own boundaries:

After two years of living here, drainage problems appeared. The basement was always full of water and it made the walls rot. I have now filled the basement with gravel and renovated the walls. I hope the problem is solved (middle-aged man living with wife and elderly mother, int. R08).

Although infrastructural problems are the most common reason for communicating with other plot-owners or the municipality, residents only do this when they cannot think of any solutions themselves. Municipalities offer some help to solve problems, but they do not initiate renovation works, even though such problems often require comprehensive investigation and planning. For example, according to Estonian law, municipalities are responsible for ensuring the provision of water and sewerage in densely populated areas, but post-summurbia is still not always officially designated as densely populated.

Municipalities thus challenge whether it is even their task to provide a sewerage system, because settlements are not fully inhabited (which is technically true, but the density is still rather high in most cases). This connects to the overall institutional uncertainty related to planning and extra expenses that municipalities would probably want to avoid (Raagmaa, 2009). This points also to an extreme case of pragmatic planning, or perhaps simply 'non-planning' (cf. Kemp et al., 2007). There is minimum reaction to the problems by the planning authorities, but there should still be at least some step-by-step progress, as hinted at by the following interviewee:

The increase in the residential function makes the water and sewer system issue important. So far, the residents have fixed it, but those areas are not meant for such volumes of wastewater generated by so many residents (expert from a municipality office, int. M04).

Roads are another example of the problems faced by residents. Firstly, overall maintenance is poor, because the roads were not built for intensive use, especially during the non-peak season. Secondly, the legal ownership status of the roads is often unclear. In some cases, roads belong to the municipality, but in many others they have been privatized by the former cooperative, which no longer exists, neither de facto or de jure. In yet other cases, road ownership is shared between the properties, or there are no legally-defined roads, but rather designated segments of plots that, combined together, constitute them. The reasons for this disarray lie in the rapid conduct of land privatization, which caused complex problems in relation to ownership and maintenance responsibilities. Residents often maintain roads despite their messy legal status, just to make access possible. In the best of cases, this is done with the support of the municipality:

After many attempts, we finally wrote a polite and probably reasonable application to get the roadwork done. Before that we collected money from the neighbours and my husband used to be very active in ordering the road-filling material every once in a while. But each time the filling was washed away relatively fast… In fact, the local government saw that we had invested a lot in it by ourselves, but that this was not enough. So, they finally did it [paved the road] two years ago (wife of middle-aged couple with young children, int. R10).

This quotation also suggests that despite the wish for independence from the municipality in finding solutions, residents are most satisfied when the authorities play an important role in renovating roads, putting up streetlights, establishing water and sewerage systems, organizing a school bus route through the neighbourhood, and other services. In hindsight, this type of help from municipalities was seen as having a positive effect. Nevertheless, in areas where systems had not been renovated, residents demanded little input from the municipality, or were even skeptical about it.

Overall, the current planning approach in post-summurbia is rather eclectic. Residents have learned to be creative and to depend on their own resources; indeed, in many ways, they are happy to be independent and free from regulations. One can even recognize a hint of rebelliousness, which is clearly a reaction to the former socialist regulatory planning activities in these settlements. Local planners prefer not to interrupt residents' activities and tend to react only if residents ask first, if even then. Planning regulations are also difficult to enact when the landownership situation is fragmented, while property rights themselves are sacrosanct. Residents have learned to look positively on finding their own creative solutions and to be skeptical about collaboration. In contrast, they have also shown some initiative in cooperating with each other and with the municipality, whenever possible, to find collective solutions. We describe the issues related to collaboration and cooperation in more detail in the following subsection.

5.2 Communication practices in post-summurbia

The everyday social dynamics between neighbours highlight tacit local values (Healey, 2003) and form the basis for forging common coalitions for planning ideas. The traditional Soviet summer house community ideal: intensive communication between neighbours; communal working activities in settlements and on each other's plots; and celebrations of national and personal anniversaries (Lovell, 2003), may be what distinguishes the socialist-era summurban lifestyle from its capitalist suburban counterpart. According to the presented analyses, this type of 'dacha community' is a dwindling phenomenon in our sample settlements, quite unlike the situation in the so-called 'garage areas' of the core cities, where gendered community-building practices persist unchallenged (Tuvikene, 2010). Old-style community life persists in post-summurbia when the original summer hut owners are still present. Although old connections and traditions may remain alive, however, they are maintained and practised, respectively, less intensely, or only during the summer months when the seasonal residents arrive:

I am the only person living here [a small cooperative – Authors] during winter. In spring, the summerhouse people come and life begins. Everybody manages their own gardens, but the interaction between the neighbours is also intensive. They are all old friends or old friends' children like me (single middle-aged man, int. R05).

The next level of community life could be called 'the new community'. In some areas, new owners have blended into the community and started to interact with other newcomers, who are often from similar life situations (e.g. young couples with children). Communication also provides mutual benefits: older people help look after the children, while young families help the elderly with their everyday needs (e.g. shopping, shovelling snow). These communities, however, often only engage with the more active residents, as one participant told us:

Sometimes we find ourselves in someone else's garden talking, talking, and talking for hours. But this happens chaotically and in an unplanned way… For the New Year celebration we have a tradition of spending a few hours in different neighbours' homes. But not all the neighbourhood is included, just some close friends (wife in a middle-aged couple with three children, int. R15).

Residents typically form closer relations with only a handful of locals. Such connections are often developed following requests for help in everyday situations – lifting something, building something, transporting something or somebody by car, finding a missing ingredient for cooking, or, not least, solving the shared infrastructure problems in the settlement. In this way, although dwellers do not feel any special need to create a community life in post-summurbia, neither do they reject it if it develops naturally:

We did not know anybody at the beginning. One day, I was baking a cake but discovered at the last moment that I did not have any sugar left. There were only a few people living here at this time. One was an old lady that did not like us; I went to the other house where I had not met the people before. It happened to be a young family like us. We have really started to get along well. We even have a tradition to invite each other for a sauna most weekends (young married mother with one child, int. R10).

There can be hard feelings among residents. Some dwellers have the impression that while others are interacting, they have been left out for some reason. Others feel anxious about the neighbours not being interested in communicating, while prejudice, hostility, and quarrels occasionally damage the social environment:

I was born in Estonia and I know that Estonians are very calm and introverted people… On the other hand, it is also good that they don't stick their noses into our business (wife in an older couple, Russian speaking, int. R12).

Many residents avoid close (or any) communication with their neighbours apart from a simple greeting on the street. They do not know their neighbours and have little interest in them. For these people, home is a private place for family and friends, who often live in the city or who are spread over a larger area. People in this category may lead a very active social life unconnected to the settlement:

Maybe the neighbours interact with each other but we don't. We had bad relations with the one neighbour next to us, but luckily he sold his plot. We have relatives living in the settlement close to here – we interact a lot with them (wife in a young couple with two children, int. R20).

To summarize, the social dynamics between residents in post-summurbia vary by life stage, settlement type and, above all, household. Some people live self-oriented lives, while others have strong ties with their neighbours. In fact, there is no concrete pattern in the evolution of the connections between residents. All groups – newcomers, the elderly, young families, the middle-aged, and retirees – communicate to varying degrees. Nevertheless, our interview findings show that residents are mostly satisfied with their communal lives in the studied settlements – be it active or passive – and they enjoy choosing with whom to communicate and establishing their own ways of living. In this respect, post-summurbia characterizes how diverse suburban areas can be (cf. Teaford, 2008).

From a collaborative planning perspective, it is positive that people are largely satisfied with the social dynamics of their home settlements because this makes them more attached to the place, thereby allowing greater commitment to developing community spirit (Healey, 2003). At the same time, however, the diversity in the quality and depth of social connections makes it difficult to listen to all voices and to find consensus among residents, notably concerning feasible planning alternatives. Such diversity also prevents local planning authorities from understanding the social dynamics of settlements. Municipal officials would like to improve communality in these areas, although their perceptions are somewhat blurred by memories of the Soviet-style close-knit summurban communities of the past. Some officials stated that collaboration practices had previously been established by old summurban community members, but in comparison that new plot-owners and residents neither knew about them nor were interested in getting involved. Post-summurbanites consider themselves to be individual landowners and prefer to address their personal problems and solutions to the municipality:

We have established ways and contact persons to communicate with summer house users. But the new residents are not aware of them. They come here and demand whatever they need, not taking into account the overall situation in these settlements (expert from a municipality office, int. M13).

Municipalities would prefer to meet with a representative body of plot owners, to simplify the communication process. Such representative bodies, however, are rare in post-summurbia because the disjointed needs and attitudes of plot owners make forming them difficult. Presented with this situation, municipalities tend to cling to the memory of how things were regulated in Soviet times and are reluctant to find new ways of meeting the diverse needs of modern post-summurbanites. As a result, while it would make the planners' jobs easier if a representative body or even a single representative person for the entire settlement could be found who could stand for everyone's interests, this might be unrealistic for most municipalities:

Summerhouse residents should choose a spokesperson and submit their wishes in a compact form. [However,] we do not even know who to contact there. This would be easier for us and for them (expert from a municipality office, int. M10).

Even though municipal officials are aware of the difficulties involved in collaborating with plot-owners, they rarely take the initiative in terms of planning or renovating infrastructure, preferring to wait until residents contact them:

Residents approach us only when something really annoys them. Otherwise there seems to be no collaboration between them and it is difficult to understand what they need (expert from a municipality office, int. M17).

In part, this attitude in consideration of the municipalities may be due to the fact that they are poorly informed about how problems in post-summurbia are managed, and do not recognize that the limits of residents' activities are generally set by their plot boundaries. In addition, the municipalities' attitude may be due to reservations on the part of the residents themselves: some grass-root ideas for co-financing joint systems with all owners and the municipality have been proposed, but these have been contested by plot owners who fear the new expenses these systems may generate. Our participants did not state that the driving force to live in former summurbia was economic, but the topic was raised repeatedly in relation to the cost of investing in the overall infrastructure. For example, one participant told us:

We tried to initiate the establishment of a central water and sewerage system at our community meeting in spring. To do things properly, you know… It was really difficult to get people to even start thinking about it. They were afraid that they would have to start paying for their neighbours' water. Many families are very small here and some still use the plot as a summer house (husband in a young family with two children, int. R03).

For their part, residents are not generally interested in the actions of the municipality. They believe that they should resolve technical issues themselves, without reliance on the municipality. Indeed, many residents are ill-disposed towards and distrustful of official bureaucracy in general, and they often only register their residences officially in order to receive small benefits, such as a snow plough in the winter or places in the kindergarten. The following two quotations describe such attitudes:

All our life is related to the city. We work there, the kids go to school and have their sports training there. We don't care about local politics. My wife is only registered here to get the roads cleared of snow in the winter. I am still officially living in town (married middle-aged man with two children, int. R03).

The municipality is all about bureaucracy. We do not need that and can manage here without any help from them (wife of an older couple, int. R06).

Municipality officials claimed to be open to developing ideas about post-summurbia, despite the fact that they had hardly considered them in their planning strategies thus far. They do pay some attention to those areas where the permanent residents outnumber the seasonal ones, but there is still a lack of vision and few practical planning ideas:

Those areas are not specifically addressed in our Master Plan. The residents there have not proposed anything to change that. We support the idea that these areas are becoming more and more residential, but we do not really know how to accommodate the process (expert from a municipality office, int. M16).

We have not considered those areas in our master plan but the opening up of a new group in the kindergarten and renovating the school are definitely related to the needs of the former summer house district (expert from a municipality office, int. M11)

Municipal planners register the signals of self-reliance coming from residents and consider it to be easier to leave the areas as they are, allowing for the spontaneous transformation of these settlements into residential districts. The overall position of planning officials, however, suggests that the existence of a path-dependent planning lock-in where, following the top-down establishment of summurban cooperatives, no further attention is given to such areas.

6. Conclusions

This article registers some of the ways in which we can come to understand the challenges of contemporary collaborative planning approaches in suburban residential areas that have experienced the transition from socialist- to post-socialist planning practices. Based on the relevant theoretical planning literature, and sensitive to the particular experiences of our case study settlements, we formulated our main research question: How can current understandings and discussions about planning in post-summurbia foster collaborative planning?

Our interviews indicate that post-summurbia is evolving into a fully-fledged form of stable residential suburbia, not least because of the residents' attitudes of self-reliance. The post-summurbanites aversion to their socialist past is vividly manifested in their somewhat rebellious activities. This desire for self-reliance also suits the local municipalities, who are weakly positioned in a 'neoliberal' planning context. The outcome of this situation is that post-summurbs are spontaneously being redrawn as residential districts, with the interests of local residents at the forefront and with little guidance or control being offered by the local municipalities. Moreover, the relative success of such a transformation thus far seems to have strengthened the autonomy of the residents, further weakening the role of planning.

Still, planning needs to reassert its status because of the environmental, infrastructural and social problems the residents themselves bring out in our interview study. In practice, the post-summurban residents' spontaneity and self-sufficiency affect the environment significantly, but their independent activities and rejection of the authorities have resulted in the near-absence of general perspectives and planning. This, combined with the passivity of the authorities, has prevented planning from playing a more active role: problems are solved only when they cry out loud or are presented within a politically powerful framing.

Our study confirms the tendency to listen to unequal voices, which is a classical focus of critiques of collaborative planning (Healey, 2003). The challenge for planners lies in seeing the bigger picture of post-summurban development. The municipal officials interviewed in this study are, of course, also affected by the post-socialist attitudes of rejecting comprehensive planning altogether. It appears that this stance inhibits them from seeing the alternatives that lie between the two extremes of comprehensive planning and non-planning.

The responsibility to foster the communicative approach in post-summurbia rests heavily on the local planning agents. Their passive attitudes have stayed in limbo for a long time, but they are probably connected to the wider problems of unclear institutional assignments and budget decisions (Raagmaa, 2009), or to the fact that professional planning education has developed slowly in Estonia (Adams et al., 2014).

The present study shows that in order to launch collaborative planning in post-summurbia, it should be brought back to its roots in pragmatic philosophy. The residents' learned experiences of self-sufficient problem-solving are a valuable untapped resource for planning in these settlements. This uniqueness is worth preserving as it has made the locals bond to their living places in multi-dimensional ways. They are strongly motivated to develop post-summurbia as a liveable and sustainable environment. The main obstacle in these areas consists of the tensions between individualism and self-sufficiency versus the willingness to demand or accept municipal investment in the improvement of the public infrastructure. The main challenge for planning is to take the lived experiences, resources and needs of the residents seriously. How this can be done is an issue that requires further research.

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II

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Revisiting the role of architects in planning large-scale housing in the USSR: the birth of socialist residential districts in Tallinn, Estonia, 1957–1979

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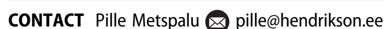
ABSTRACT
In Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, housing estates are often associated with inhumane architecture and unwelcoming public space, an outcome that can be attributed to strict design requirements in a rigid centralized system. Due to the uniformity of residential housing produced during socialist times, both the design process and its master – the architect – are believed to have played only minor roles in shaping townscapes. This study, situated in the large housing estates of Tallinn, Estonia, challenges these assumptions using analyses of archival material (relating to planning procedures during state socialism) and articles in specialized magazines. The study also explains – through first-hand interviews with senior architects who were key players in building socialist cities – the relations between Soviet regulations and vital elements of the city-building process, including creativity, power, and artistry. Analysis of primary source materials highlights an oversimplification of socialist modernism, which suggests more nuanced explanations for town planning outcomes. Findings suggest that regulations issued in Moscow for Union of Soviet Socialist Republic-wide planning played a less important role than previously assumed in town planning outcomes in Estonia. International modernist city planning ideals, combined with local expertise, strongly influenced town planning practice in the Soviet 'West'.

KEYWORDS
Architecture; city planning; housing estate; mikrorayon; modernism; socialism; Soviet Union; Tallinn; Estonia; USSR

Introduction

State socialism provided unique opportunities to experiment with new models of city planning. Centrally planned systems – and government ownership of all land and industry – permitted a grand-scale approach to urbanization and a mechanism for promoting rational use of human and industrial assets, improving life quality, and reducing costs. Through central planning, state socialist governments sought to re-order society and plan new urban territory during rapid urbanization, industrialization, employment-driven migration, and military consolidation.[1] Much power resided in central government decision-making. With land in state ownership, the development process occurred under central authority, and a powerful single-party system had great control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[1]Domański, *Industrial Control*; Ericson, *Priority, Duality*; Ofer, "Industrial Structure," 219–244; and Shomina, "Enterprises and the Urban Environment," 222–233.

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over land development decisions to promote the expansion of industrial strength and military might.

Vast housing estates – residential complexes dominated by high-rise block apartment buildings – were established between the 1960s and the 1990s to respond to crushing demand for urban housing due to employment-based migration triggered by expansions of industry and military that were critical to the ideology of the Soviet regime. They were critical components of modern, planned cities for housing socialist lives in industrial-utopian centres.[2] Architects charged with planning new housing estates had great power to shape cities, demonstrating that city planning was a centrepiece of central economic planning.

The peculiarities of town planning (and resulting urban form) during state socialism have intrigued scholars for decades. When the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was in operation, the spatial structures of socialist cities – and the social politics that supported the system – were of interest to both western and eastern researchers.[3] A number of contemporary studies have retrospectively critiqued socialist urban systems, particularly policies leading to the formation of mikrorayons, or comprehensively planned residential districts composed of standardized buildings.[4] While previous research has highlighted the role of central planning and socialist principles in shaping modernist housing estates that are prevalent throughout Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Former Soviet Union (FSU), this article, drawing upon on first-hand information gained from interviews with planners from the socialist period, reconsiders several dogmatic notions about urban planning under socialism. We argue that positioning local architects as mere executors of higher political commands controlling city planning oversimplifies the formation of modernist housing estates in socialist cities. Our findings suggest more powerful western influences on large housing estate design than previously assumed and demonstrate the existence of independent architectural thought in the Baltic republics.

The article is organized as follows. The following sections describe the socialist framework for city planning that produced the mikrorayon as a novel urban form; we also synthesize the contemporaneous urban planning system and the role of socialist architects. Next, our research strategy is presented, followed by a detailed empirical analysis of three residential districts in a capital city in the former Soviet space. We distil from the analysis key themes related to: contact that facilitated knowledge acquisition about international modernism; contemporary critical discourse about city planning in the Soviet Union, and the role of architects in the Soviet city-building process. Our concluding thoughts emphasize how, contrary to conventional wisdom, architects had more power than the Soviet system suggests and were able to embrace opportunities to create unique building environments.

Mikrorayon: centrepiece of socialist urban form

In Soviet times, city planning was part of the production process – a 'construction job for the government'[5] generally believed to lack artistry. Egalitarianism and a lack of differentiation across urban space were driving objectives; no residential area should be more appealing than any other because of

[2]Power, *Estates on the Edge*; Wassenberg, "Large Social," 223–232; Gentile et al., "Heteropolitanization," 291–299; and Kovács and Herfert, "Development Pathways," 324–342.
[3]Andrusz, "The Built Environment," 478–598; Bater, *The Soviet City*; Bunkśe, "The Role," 379–394; DiMaio, *Soviet Urban Housing*; French and Hamilton, *The Socialist City*; Frolic, "The Soviet Study," 675–695; and Herman, "Urbanisation," 203–220.
[4]Hatherley, *Landscapes*; Lizon, "East," 104–114; Stanilov, "Nine Housing Trends," 173–190; Turkington et al., *High-Rise*; and Wassenberg, "Large Social," 223–232.
[5]Meuser and Zadorin, *Toward a Typology*, 13.

style, size, or location.[6] Equality, a key ideological feature of socialist residential planning, was vigorously expressed in Soviet housing estates and mikrorayons through pre-defined and universal maximum (walking) distances to schools, bus stops, shops, and parks. Everyone was, in theory, meant to have comparable access to comparable assets and amenities:

> within the city there should be no particular areas that attract or repel people; they should all be of standard design with equal space (per person) and amenities so that it makes no difference to people whether they live in one neighbourhood or another. The socialist neighbourhood will be characterised by equality and classlessness.[7]

The architectural ensembles[8] composing mikrorayons and residential housing estates were meant to be socialist–modernist and, owing to influences from Le Corbusier,[9] free from historical references.[10] As a result, many projects denied their immediate context,[11] instead relying on serial implementation of pre-determined standardized forms.

The first apartment houses built using pre-fabricated panel walls, established in the early 1960s, took advantage of industrial production to orchestrate residential building more cheaply. This was followed by improved standard designs, introduced in the Soviet Union in the mid-1970s and used widely by the 1980s.[12] Each housing unit included 'modern' conveniences – kitchens, washrooms and toilets, central heating, large windows – that were available to only a limited degree in the pre-Second World War housing. As the design process matured and mechanisms within it advanced during subsequent iterations, the height of residential buildings increased and the size of individual dwelling units expanded.[13]

Considered to be a highlight of modern city planning, enormous housing estates included apartments (at high density, in standardized high-rise blocks) with modern conveniences in mixed-use settings containing schools, everyday services, day-care, and recreational and socialization opportunities. Usually, one housing estate consisted of several mikrorayon*s*, which were designated by central authority according to housing requirements that were calculated proportional to the needs for workers in enterprises. Site selection for large housing estates was usually designated in general town plans prepared for up to 25-year horizons.

Within new residential districts, site planning was conducted at the district or mikrorayon level with detailed planning projects that were magnificent in size and comprehensive in scope,[14] covering street networks, architectural elements, access and transport, and greenery, as well as infrastructural considerations including heating, water, and sewage. Strict norms dictated the living space that was allowable for each family, and housing units were allocated according to need (based on family size) with rent computed proportional to income (with large state subsidies).

The role of socialist architects in city planning

Important decisions about urban growth and housing policy occurred at high levels in the USSR, and local authorities were involved in mundane decisions, primarily in site selection for new housing

[6]Hausladen, "Planning," 108.
[7]Ibid., 110.
[8]Zhuravlyev and Fyodorov, "The Microdistrict," 37–40.
[9]Berman, *All That Is Solid* and Boyer, *The City of Collective*.
[10]Charley, "The Concrete," 195–214.
[11]Choay, *The Modern*.
[12]Andrusz, "The Built," 478–598 and Meuser and Zadorin, *Toward a Typology*.
[13]Lehmann and Ruble, "From 'Soviet' to 'European'," 1085–1107 and Smith, "The Socialist."
[14]Port, "Linnade."

districts that were prescribed by Soviet administrators.[15] Local architects' contributions to city planning occurred as follows:

> … the role of Soviet urban planners was to translate the detailed instructions of a state developer into a finished design of either a complex of settlements, a particular city, or a part of a city. Since the national priority was production for collective needs, urban plans normally focused on servicing industrial enterprises. Social infrastructure, including housing, services and green spaces was allocated according to the standard norms of minimum individual needs.[16]

City planning in USSR republics – and especially the addition of vast residential housing estates – was firmly based on administrative norms and instructions issued by supervising authority and directed by the communist party. Trained architects undertook all city planning duties. General plans and detailed plans for mikrorayons were, as a rule, prepared by professional teams whose members possessed various backgrounds (engineers, traffic specialists, landscape architects, etc.). Such teams were always led by a chief architect.

Soviet density norms became instruments of town planning and pre-defined access to workplaces, services, and recreational facilities[17] and the distribution of funds for construction. Standard high-rise apartment block designs developed in Moscow were adapted locally[18] in state design institutes (interview with J. Lass, 2016). Through site design in particular, architects created an ensemble – composed of residential buildings, service structures, pathways and roads, and open space – that form the long-lasting effect of mikrorayons on urbanization. Local governments were only partly in charge of the location and site design of housing estates (the level of control differed depending on the city or the sister republic) (interview with J. Lass, 2016). Such weak contributions to city planning have often been described in scholarly literature as follows: 'the majority of the housing units were prefabricated apartment blocks, and the architect's role was reduced to site planning for a limited number of housing types'.[19] Given the large number of inarguable directives to be followed in city planning under socialism, it was suggested that 'the discipline of urban planning has abolished itself in favor of fulfilling guidelines'.[20] It is likewise argued that, throughout the Soviet Union, 'since the building forms of the standard designs were pre-determined, this meant that the urban design concept was greatly diminished to the extent of fulfilling guidelines'.[21]

The actual power resting within the hands of local architects is consequently debatable, since the state suggested the location for residential space, dictated its volume, and furnished land and financing.[22] This notion has been periodically captured in scholarly literature:

> architects, as employees in mammoth state design offices, had no say in the actual design and were reduced to draftspeople whose role was to draw site plans of the predesigned blocks of slabs and point towers to house a maximum number of residents picked from long waiting lists and crowded into a cookie-cutter housing estate.[23]

Second- and third-generation standardized apartment towers were designed to be sectional and interchangeable and could be assembled in various forms but always in large quantities;[24] the

[15]Tosics, "European," 67–90.
[16]Golubchikov, "Urban Planning," 231.
[17]Yanitsky, "Urbanization," 265–287.
[18]Bunkśe, "The Role."
[19]Lizon, "East Central Europe,"106.
[20]Meuser and Zadorin, *Toward a Typology*, 145.
[21]Ibid., 153.
[22]Ibid.
[23]Lizon, "East Central Europe," 109.
[24]Meuser and Zadorin, *Toward a Typology*.

requirements for standardization and prescribed repetition itself implies modest emphasis on artistry and individuality. However, with a fast-paced and vast expansion of housing supplies in cities of CEE and FSU, the architects who planned modernist housing estates had great power to shape city form, and their effects have been long lasting, since few residential districts have been demolished or significantly changed and most are fully occupied.

Research strategy

We use multiple methods to illustrate the making of socialist cities and explain the relations between strict Soviet regulations and creativity, powers and artistry. Our aim is to address an oversimplification of socialist modernism and search for more nuanced explanations for town planning outcomes that differ from what adherence to strict Soviet guidelines would produce. We explore whether local architects possessed power to design and shape vast urban territories and sought opportunities, regardless of the regulations and standards, to introduce originality (we refer to local architects as trained professionals working in State Design Institutes, city governments, and state institutions of republics of the USSR. Our aim is to differentiate local architects from the central architectural system in Moscow in which designs were produced for generic buildings and housing that could be constructed in any of the 14 republics.). We also gauge the degree of creativity in the design of housing estates and analyse the extent to which local architects could propose original solutions and unique designs. Lastly, we analyse whether influences from international modernism played a role in the design of Soviet large housing estates.

Within the body of research about Soviet-era urbanization, however, few studies return to original research material. Therefore, to explore the role of architects in practice, we turn to primary sources from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s to gather key decision-making information about the formation of residential districts in Tallinn, Estonia. We use official planning documents and, importantly, semi-structured interviews with critical informants. Personal interviews carried out in Tallinn and Tartu with senior architects (D. Bruns, Tallinn Chief Architect, 1960–1980; I. Raud, Eesti Projekt, 1969–1989 and Tallinn Chief Architect 1989–1991; O. Zhemchugov, Eesti Projekt, 1970–1977; J. Lass, Estonian State Building Committee, 1982–1990; R. Kivi, Eesti Projekt, 1969–1972 and Tartu Chief Architect 1972–1991; P. Männiksaar, Architect, Tartu District Executive Committee, 1981–1993), now at the end of their professional careers, give us access to their observations which seldom appear in written form because of censorship during Soviet times. Because of the respectable age of the architects who were active during the socialist period, it is vital to include their knowledge in studying the nuances of socialist planning practice. Primary source interviews and review of archival documents – plans and planning documents, including original protocols and memos and contemporaneous newspaper and magazine articles – allows us to assemble a meaningful picture of planning practice related to large socialist housing estates. We also review various materials published in Estonian Socialist Republic newspapers and weekly magazines.

An ensemble of mid-twentieth century of housing estates in Tallinn, Estonia

The socialist industrialization process was accompanied by fast urbanization throughout the USSR and particularly in communism's western periphery in the Baltic states. Due to various factors

shaping socialist urbanization,[25] cities in the Baltic States are uniquely preserved. Apart from certain scholarship about Lithuania,[26] a lack of reliable written material exists about state socialist residential planning theory as implemented in planned developments in the Baltic States.

As a site for our empirical inquiry, we select Estonia, the smallest of the three the Baltic States, where there is comparatively less literature on residential housing formation than in other parts of Europe.[27] During the Soviet occupation, several hundred thousand Russian-speakers emigrated to or were settled in Estonia, and all Estonian cities experienced population growth between 1944 and 1991.[28] In the 1950s and subsequent decades, there was strong demand for new housing in Estonia, especially in the capital city Tallinn, as Estonians moved from the countryside to towns[29] and Russian-speaking immigrants arrived to support various enterprises of the Soviet Union. During Soviet times, approximately 76% of housing units in Tallinn were state-subsidized rental units (a higher share than elsewhere in CEE) and by the end of Soviet occupation, about two-thirds of the population lived in large pre-fabricated housing estates.[30] Each city in Estonia had a master plan, which reserved space for future detailed site planning (interview with R. Kivi, 2013; P. Männiksaar, 2013).[31]

Today, housing estates in Tallinn offer bold visual symbols of the socialist past. Pre-fabricated panel buildings do not suffer from a bad reputation and have not experienced ghettoization[32] predicted following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.[33] However, official policy within the housing sector sometimes reinforced social separation and exclusion. Housing in mikrorayons is often unpopular, and many families are driven by a desire to escape the drab environments of Soviet-era housing estates and relocate when possible to new or renovated upscale dwellings or detached homes in the growing suburbs.[34]

In the capital city of Estonia, Tallinn, three large mikrorayon-based residential districts – Mustamäe, Väike-Õismäe, and Lasnamäe – were constructed successively and at comparable distances from the city centre (see Table 1 and Figure 1). The districts depict an evolution of town planning ideology during the Soviet decades and reflect a maturation of the mikrorayon concept and a requirement for larger per person living space improved design standards experienced throughout the Soviet Union.[35]

In the following passages, we provide a detailed analysis of the three Tallinn housing estates – including their conception, design, and implementation – which we use to explore the role of architects in city planning. Subsequently, an overview of the criticism and debates about the new housing estates in Estonia is given. Based on the findings of the analysis of the establishment of large housing estates in Tallinn we discuss the inspirations and role of Soviet architects.

[25]Bater, *The Soviet City*; French, "Changing Spatial Patterns;" French, *Plans, Pragmatism and People*; and Lewin and Elliott, *The Soviet Century*.
[26]Dremaitė, "Modern Housing in Lithuania;" Rimkutė, "Soviet Mass-housing in Vilnius;" and Maciuika, "East Bloc, West View."
[27]Kährik and Tammaru, "Soviet Prefabricated Panel Housing."
[28]Tammaru, "Suburban Growth" and Kulu, "Housing Differences."
[29]In 1951, the combined population of cities and towns in Estonia was 490,800; by 1979, the combined number of people living in urban areas was 10,168,000; Puur, "Eesti. Rahvastik."
[30]Kalm, "Saunapidu suvilas."
[31]Port, *Architecture* and Bruns, *Tallinna peaarhitekti mälestusi*.
[32]Sild, "Modernist City Plans."
[33]Szelényi, "Cities under Socialism."
[34]Tammaru et al., "Temporal and Spatial Dynamics," 423–439.
[35]Andrusz, "The Built Environment," 478–598.

Table 1. Characteristics of large housing estates in Tallinn, Estonia.

	Mustamäe	Väike-Õismäe	Lasnamäe
Total area	5 km^2	1 km^2	30 km^2
Distance from city centre	6 km	6 km	5 km
Detailed planning project	1959	1968	1978
Number of microrayons	9	1 macrorayon	8 built of 12 planned
Total residential space (all dwelling units combined)	538,000 m^2	357,000 m^2	3,913,000 m^2
Population (original plan)	57,000 (ca 11% of Tallinn's total population)	38,000 (ca 8% of Tallinn's population)	175,000 (ca 35% of Tallinn's population)
Population (2016)	67,000 (ca 15% of Tallinn's total population)	27,000 (ca 6% of Tallinn's total population)	118,000 (ca 27% of Tallinn's total population)

Figure 1. Location of large housing estates in Tallinn, Estonia.

Mustamäe: a cautious test of socialist residential planning principles

To liquidate the housing shortage in an optimistic period of 10–12 years,[36] the communist party launched an ambitious housing construction programme in the USSR in 1957. Following directives from Moscow, site selection for the first large housing estate in Tallinn was immediately initiated,

[36]Bruns, *Tallinna peaarhitekti mälestusi.*

Figure 2. Mustamäe architectural competition entry by Group X. Original drawing, 1958. Source: Museum of Estonian Architecture, used with permission.

since the Tallinn General Plan of 1946 did not foresee the need for a massive new residential district. The Estonian Soviet Republic Council of Ministers issued the initial task for planning Mustamäe;[37] an official planning process was launched in 1958 with an architectural competition, organized by the Executive Committee of Tallinn City, the State Architectural Board, and the Architects Union, in which 11 prospective architectural teams envisaged the structure, layout, and composition of the new residential district. Archived entries of the competition demonstrate mostly timid attempts at modernist city-building, with some architects displaying a lingering enthusiasm for Stalinist neo-classicism (see Figure 2).

The winning design by T. Kallas, M. Port, and V. Tippel was approved by the State Council of Ministers as a guiding conceptual plan for Mustamäe.[38] In 1959, the plan was elaborated in a detailed planning project in which key planning principles – mikrorayon composed of large residential building blocks and schools, kindergartens, shops within walking distance – were for the first time in Estonia expansively applied (see Figure 3). Later, in the 1960s and 1970s, additional detailed planning projects were compiled to provide additional residential space in Mustamäe for Tallinn's rapidly increasing population. Reports about the gradual construction of Mustamäe were continuously published in local newspapers and Estonia's weekly cultural magazines like *Sirp ja Vasar*.

The plan[39] offers the first attempt in Estonia at free-form planning, considered novel at the time, in which large residential buildings are distributed freely and do not follow traditional street

[37]Estonprojekt, "The Detailed Planning Project."
[38]Ibid.
[39]Ibid.

Figure 3. Mustamäe concept plan, 1959. Source: Drawing by S. Samuel (2016) based on original plans.

rights-of-way, producing more sunlight and open space between buildings. A number of features in the planning concept can be identified as characteristic of Finnish and Swedish modernist residential planning, where building blocks are harmoniously attuned with surrounding landscapes. Foreign influences in city planning can be attributed to the Khrushchev thaw,[40] which made possible organized study trips for Baltic professionals to capitalist countries and limited distribution of international city planning and architectural literature. More than half of the members of the Estonian Architects' Union visited Finland during the1960s, following an inaugural trip in 1957,[41] coinciding with the formation of ideas about Mustamäe. Architects who had the chance to visit capitalist countries openly popularized western ideas upon their return by writing articles and columns in newspapers.

Adhering to a density norm of 9.5 m^2 per inhabitant, the total residential space in Mustamäe was 538,000 m^2, embodied in 9 mikrorayons. A majority of buildings (88%) were five storeys high and a small share (4%) were high-rises. Within every mikrorayon, between four and six elementary schools and one high school (or gymnasium) were planned; in addition, two cinemas, a library, hospital, four canteens, a restaurant, and four saunas were required. Shops and service centres (hairdressers, laundry, etc.) within so-called ABC centres (the name ABC standing for Arbete-Bostad-Centrum/

[40]McCauley, *The Kruschev Era* and Peirumaa, "Hruštšovi aja 'sula'."
[41]Dremaitė, "Modern Housing in Lithuania" and Kalm, "Saunapidu suvilas."

Labour-Housing-Centrum was originally used in Swedish post-war satellite towns like Vällingby[42]) were evenly distributed within a radius of 500 m of residences. Greenery was preserved in a surrounding forest park, and each mikrorayon included sports facilities and playgrounds. A network of pedestrian paths connecting major destinations was carefully planned. Public transport played an important role; in addition to trolleybuses and buses, a tram was planned, and the location of stops was integrated with the pedestrian network. Garages as well as shops were designed in the proximity of major thoroughfares to avoid heavy traffic in the mikrorayon interior. A commercial and community centre, with various attractions (including dance halls, fashion studios, and sports centres) were planned as an organizing focus in the southern part of the district at the intersection of major radial thoroughfares. The plan stresses unique designs – avoiding standard Soviet projects – for important community assets like a cultural centre, department store, market hall, and hotel.

The construction period of Mustamäe lasted from 1962 to 1973. Major shortcomings in the operation of the district appeared when certain features were not built, including a centrally located business and community centre and several 16- to 22-storey tower blocks. A lack of recreational facilities, greenery development, and landscaping was evident immediately after construction.[43]

Väike-Õismäe: aerial architecture in a 1970s makrorayon

Tallinn City officials requested a detailed planning project for Väike-Õismäe from the state-owned planning and building institute Eesti Projekt in 1967. A detailed planning project for Väike-Õismäe was completed in 1968, overseen by architects M. Port and M. Meelak. A redevelopment enhancement plan was subsequently issued in 1974, adding a library, church, additional supermarkets, service centres, and beach pavilions (but none were actually built).

According to Soviet building regulations, the area should have originally been divided into three or four mikrorayons. However, during the detailed planning project, several alternative solutions were proposed (see Figure 4) which disregarded the central principles of mikrorayon formation and abolished the strict population normative. In the end, the architectural team courageously devised a novel *macrorayon* approach instead:

> The makrorayon concept evolved quite unexpectedly when we tried to avoid the usual shortcomings of a traditional mikrorayon-based approach. There were four different solutions at work simultaneously. At first we were charmed by the aesthetic appeal of a single makrorayon, which was soon supported by its superiour technical specifications, functional details, and finally economic rationale. The main logic is quite simple: the street is fringed with buildings on both sides, radial avenues are unneeded, the traffic operation scheme is more simple, and the required street length is halved. To avoid monotony, the buildings are grouped in various combinations; 9-story buildings are interspersed with 'freely placed' 16–storey highrises.[44]

During the planning process, a number of heated arguments took place between the chief architects – who fervently defended their novel ideas – and the city government and State Building Committee.[45] Original documents and interview with D. Bruns conducted in 2013 demonstrate that although the makrorayon-approach did not adhere to official standards, it was supported,

[42]Lankots and Sooväli, *ABC-keskused*.
[43]Port, "Linnade planeerimisest."
[44]Ibid., 35–37.
[45]Eesti Projekt, "Väike-Õismäe makrorajooni detailplaneerimine."

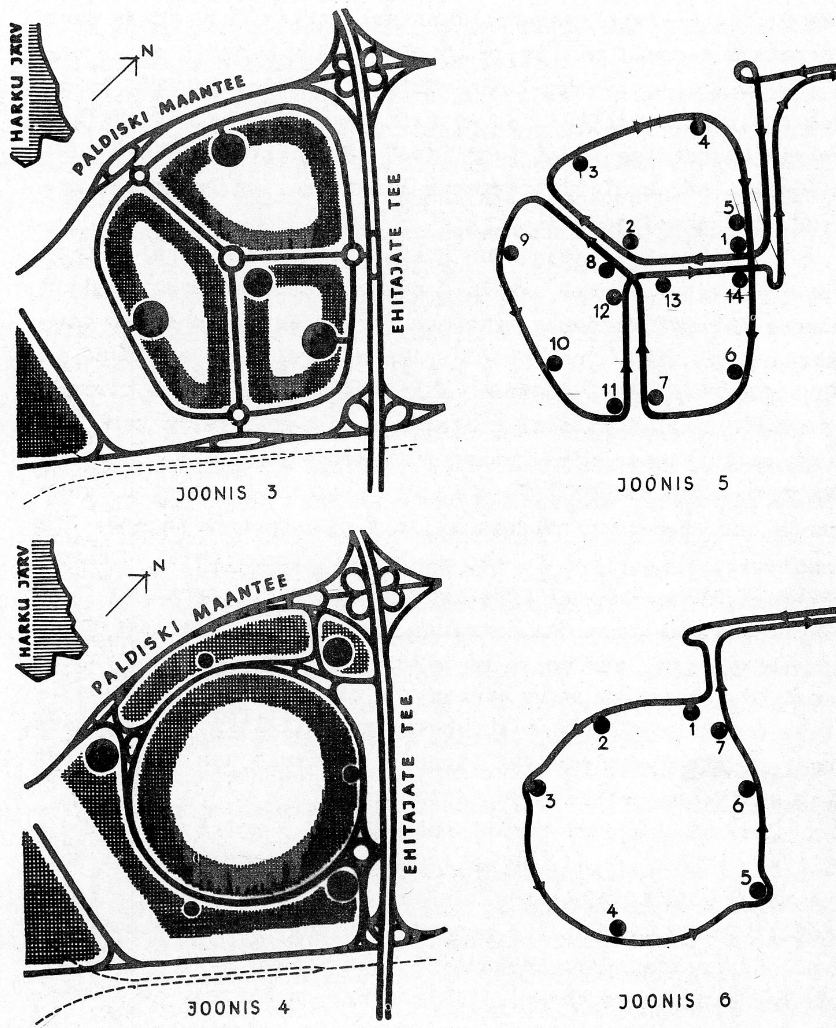

Figure 4. Original drawings for Väike-Õismäe detailed planning project, 1968. These process drawings represent alternative transportation network schemes; option 4, lower left-hand image, which configures the district as a single macrorayon, was the selected option. Source: Mart Port, Linnade Planeerimisest, permission not required.

due to its creativity, by the chief architect of Tallinn and leading architects from the State Building Committee.

Compared to Mustamäe, the concept of Väike-Õismäe suggests a bold vision of imaginative architects inspired by pure modernist ideals.[46] A fellow architect from Eesti Projekt describes the chief architect, Mart Port as a 'shaker of ideas on paper and in words who did not let the others dispute his thoughts'.[47]

[46]Ibid.
[47]Stöör, *Ühe arhitekti mälestused.*

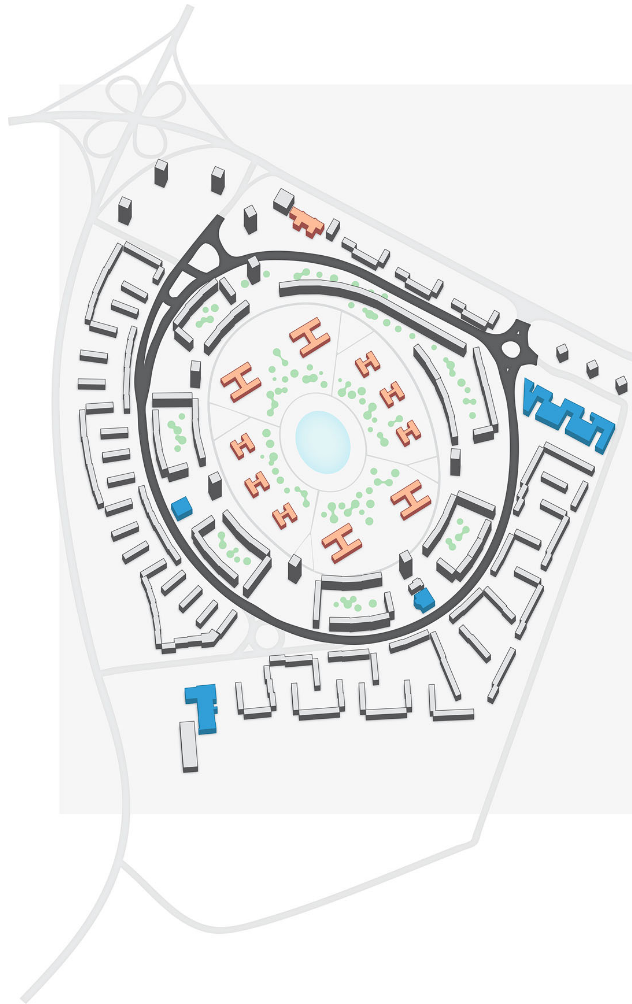

Figure 5. Väike-Õismäe concept plan, 1968. Source: Drawing by S. Samuel (2016) based on original plans.

The district was planned as a makrorayon with a compositional focus on a broad encircling street, which was, characteristic to socialist–modernist urban form, impressive when viewed from above (see Figure 5).[48] The outer parts of the oval contained mostly 5-storey buildings and the inner part mostly 9-story buildings (with occasional accenting with 16-storey high-rises) (see Figure 6).[49] The circular layout is punctuated by an artificial lake at its core. Schools and child care centres are situated symmetrically around the centre. Due to natural circumstances (location on a limestone plateau), green space is restricted in size. According to the plan, the total residential space is 357,000 m^2 for 37,750 occupants [adhering to a density norm of 9.5 m^2 per resident (initially) and 12 m^2 (after full implementation)].

[48]Hess, "Transport in Mikrorayons."
[49]See note 44.

Figure 6. (a) A curving road in Väike-Õismäe, 1970s, Tallinn, Estonia. Photo by Johannes Külmet. Source: Museum of Estonian Architecture, used with permission. (b) A curving road in Väike-Õismäe, 2017, Tallinn, Estonia. Photo by Pille Metspalu.

Car parking spaces were planned for 5050 vehicles (norm of 170 cars per 1000 people). Following the normatives, 75 groceries and 12 shops for other goods were planned, as well as 3 canteens, 30 beauty salons, and community centres. Only 25% of these planned services were ultimately built.

Implementation of the Väike-Õismäe plan was scheduled to begin in 1972, immediately after construction of Mustamäe was complete. Unexpectedly, preparatory works took longer, and Mustamäe was instead spontaneously densified with new apartment buildings to avoid wasting ready-made building panels.[50] Construction of the Väike-Õismäe *macrorayon* thus began one year later. Despite the fact that in Väike-Õismäe, USSR building regulations were creatively interpreted – for example, a single *makrorayon* instead of three mikrorayons, pedestrian crossings not separated from vehicles, etc. – the architectural team was awarded the Prize of Architecture of the USSR Council of Ministers in 1976.[51] Some parts of the original plan were never implemented (such as large communal car parks between dwelling groups). Deficits in shops and services were severe: only three grocery shops were built, which resulted in constant queues, and only two of three planned community centres were constructed.

Lasnamäe: soviet megalomania, built to only half completion

The decision to create another new residential district to accommodate Tallinn's growing population was made in 1968 by the Estonian Soviet Republic Council of Ministers. An all-union design competition for Lasnamäe, an enormous residential area, took place in 1969.[52] The winning design (one of four submitted) produced by M. Port, M. Meelak, O. Zhemchugov, H. Karu, and R. Võrno, became the basis for the detailed planning project prepared in 1970 by the State Planning Institute Eesti Projekt (see Figure 7). M. Port, the chief architect, notes that the underlying idea of the final concept differs from earlier versions, although certain initial concepts were retained.[53] In 1979, an updated general plan was issued to increase residential densities and provide better connections to neighbouring industrial zones.

The guidelines issued by Tallinn City officials and prepared by the city architect's office in 1970 established additional principles for detailed planning: the general structure should be based on *makrorayons* (25,000–30,000 inhabitants) with administrative and business centres; residential buildings arrangements should form inner courtyards for wind protection; expressive exterior 'gateways' should be composed; buildings of citywide importance should be included; and a pedestrian esplanade should top the limestone cliff (see Figure 8).[54] The backbone of the detailed plan included two key east–west thoroughfares, one of them sunken (7 m deep), making possible flyover bridges and permitting higher traffic speeds below while enhancing safety by removing vehicular traffic from pedestrian space.[55] Pedestrian precincts were planned as landscaped boulevards planted with trees, running parallel to the motorways and crossing the traffic lanes via footbridges near community centres and parking lots (see Figure 9). All community centres adjoin pedestrian streets. In addition to five large sports halls, a cultural-memorial centre was planned on the edge of the limestone cliff. Housing is concentrated around the centres within a radius of 500 m. Each mikrorayon has a population of 12,000–16,000 inhabitants. The large-panel houses have mostly 5, 9, or 16 storeys. Two and three-storey rowhouses and 22- to 24-storey towers are included.[56] The total planned residential area exceeded 3.9 million m^2 (adhering to a density norm of 22.5 m^2 per capita).

[50]See note 36.
[51]Port, *Arhitecture in the Estonian SSR*.
[52]Ibid., 12.
[53]Ibid., 13.
[54]Eesti Projekt, "Lasnamäe elurajooni generaalplaan."
[55]See note 48.
[56]See note 49.

Figure 7. Lasnamäe concept plan, 1970. Source: Drawing by S. Samuel (2016) based on original plans.

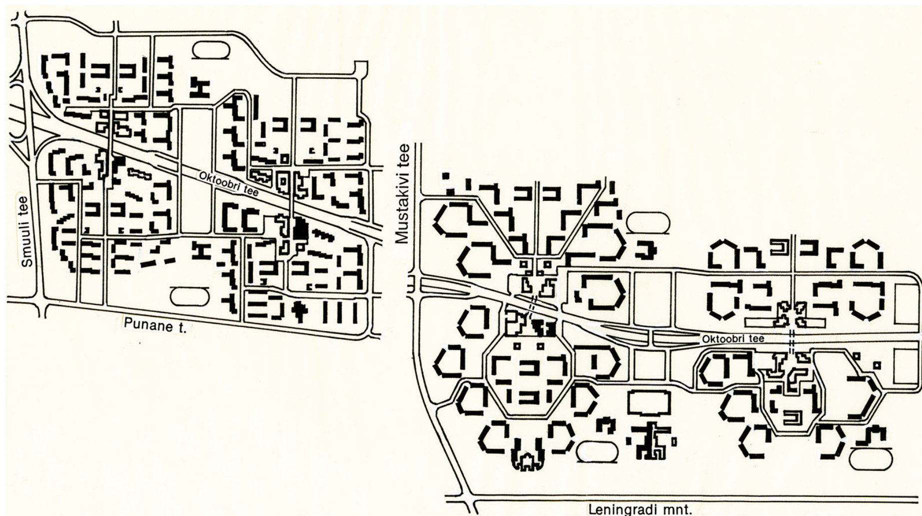

Figure 8. The plan for a housing estate at Lasnamäe (Tallinn, Estonia). Centres on four mikrorayons. Source: Museum of Estonian Architecture, used with permission.

In our interviews, architects actively participating in designing Lasnamäe – O. Zhemchugov (interviewed in 2013) and I. Raud (interviewed in 2016) – pointed out parallels between Estonian housing estates and Finnish modernist residential districts (such as Tapiola and Pihlajamäki), consistent with observed similarities between socialist housing estates in the Baltic States (especially in Lithuania) and Finnish modernism.[57] However, Scandinavian modernism and Finnish and Swedish orientation are not easily traceable in the Lasnamäe planning scheme. The cosiness characteristic of

[57]Dremaitė, "Modern Housing in Lithuania."

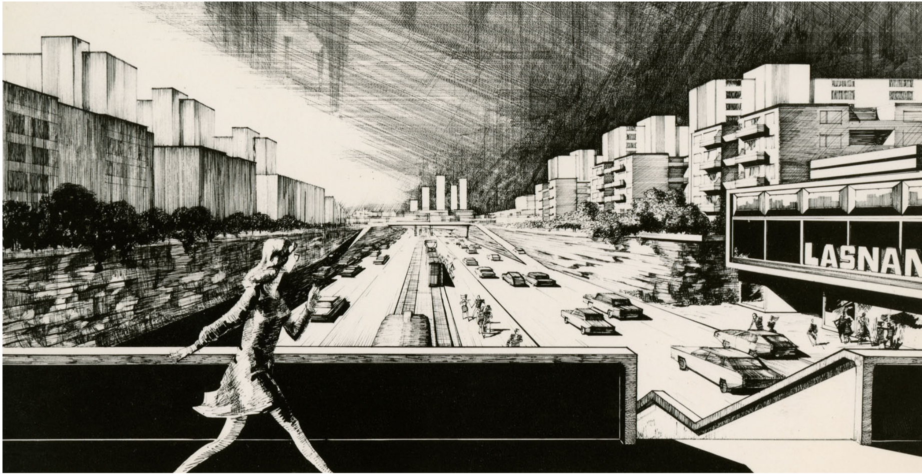

Figure 9. A sketch of a pedestrian overpass providing access to the commercial centre of Lasnamäe, Tallinn. Source: Museum of Estonian Architecture, used with permission.

Scandinavian new towns that, according to one expert (interview with O. Zhemchugov, 2013), should have been expressed in Lasnamäe (through high-rise building blocks arranged to form inner courtyards) was lost due to the enormous scale of the housing estate. Poor growing conditions for trees (due to the location on the limestone cliff) did not help achieve the impression of apartment towers 'melting' into nature, which was to some extent achieved in Mustamäe.

One-third of the planned apartment houses in Lasnamäe (microrayons IX–XII) were not constructed; the spatial structure of the largest housing estate in Tallinn is functionally incomplete because the commercial centre of the district was never built (nor was the cultural-memorial centre). As usual, there were shortcomings in providing recreational facilities and shops, and greenery and parks are almost non-existent. The transport facilities essential for commuting are remarkably inadequate, as the high-speed light-rail originally planned in a sunken motorway was not built.

Contemporaneous perspectives of housing estates

A modernist-inspired socialist city planning strategy, for which an all-embracing goal was to create comprehensive urban space for a socialist populace, was imposed by the party leaders of the USSR. However, people were critical of new large housing estates as soon as the first buildings were erected. Debates occurred in professional circles and in public media, contrary to common belief that strict socialist censorship stifled meaningful discussion. First-hand accounts – acquired through interviews and memoirs of chief architects – demonstrate that the inspiration for critical views was often drawn from international architectural magazines available in limited numbers in the library of the Estonian Academy of Sciences.

Debates in the media were usually initiated by architects, who enjoyed great respect from both the public and officials, since they were highly trained and indispensable specialists. This attitude was especially evident in Estonia, a small nation proud of its architectural traditions developed during the first independence period in the early twentieth century.

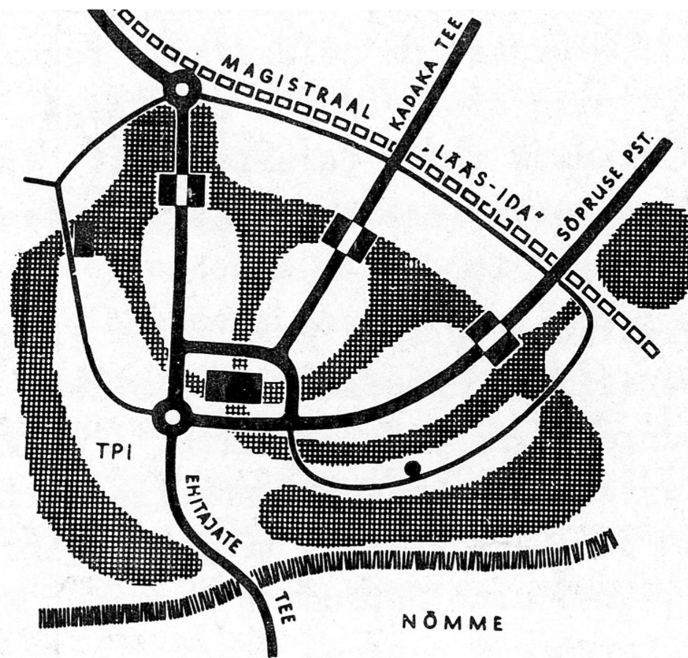

Figure 10. Alternative concept plan for Mustamäe by M. Port. Source: Mart Port, Linnade Planeerimisest, permission not required.

The housing estates of Tallinn received varied reception from the public. In the 1960s and 1970s, coinciding with the construction of Mustamäe, critical viewpoints were expressed mainly by professionals, architects, and engineers. M. Port, a chief architect of the concept plan for Mustamäe (who was not involved in detailed planning projects), criticized the monotonous housing and sparse and confusing physical layout of the district. He notes that although each new mikrorayons in Tallinn displays visible advancements in urban planning techniques, the success of the layout of Mustamäe district is questionable.[58] He was not directly involved in Mustamäe detailed planning projects, and he subsequently proposed an alternative spatial plan (see Figure 10) with fewer centres and a more efficient street network. Architect L. Lapin[59] vigorously denounced open-style planning method which placed people, buildings, and the environment in elementary technical schemes.

Criticism intensified by the late 1970s, when citizens bravely published their opinions in popular media. Although praised as a unified planning concept, Väike-Õismäe was denounced in numerous newspaper articles in which citizens lamented its incomplete construction and low quality living environments (that had looked promising on paper). For example, a citizen of Väike-Õismäe expresses his disappointment in the lack of recreational and cultural facilities and argues that otherwise efficiently designed urban space does not support 'individual cultural and intellectual enrichment' and does not 'inspire social activity',[60] which should be the aim of

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[58]Port, "Linnade planeerimisest," 29.
[59]Lapin, *Arengujooni Eesti*.
[60]Sootna, "Mõranenud perspektiive," 12.

comprehensive socialist planning; he further declares that providing an inadequate number of cultural facilities has an effect of confining people to their apartments and encouraging a *petit bourgeois*[61] mentality. Comparing Väike-Õismäe with Mustamäe, Sootna[62] acknowledges an improvement in standard building design but criticizes the mass of dense gray housing as depressing and monotonous.

Similarly, architect J. Kruusimägi denounces Väike-Õismäe and Mustamäe as 'villages' because of a lack of communal services, business, and recreational facilities.[63] Contrary to the socialist spirit of collectivity, Kruusimägi suggests personal initiatives for improving the urban environment: 'citizens are those who actually design the city, not one or two architects'.[64] Well-known novelist L. Tungal asks rhetorically where children in Väike-Õismäe and Lasnamäe should play hide and seek amid an absence of trees and playgrounds.[65] Economist E. Roose succinctly labels Soviet mikrorayons as aerial architecture – geometric shapes impressive from above but unsatisfactory for on-the-ground living.[66] He suggests, among other things, that public involvement in early stages of planning processes – unheard of during Soviet times – could lead to improvements.[67]

The 1980s ushered in a new era – known as Gorbachev's *перестройка* (perestroika) – of reformation within the Communist Party and society as a whole. Outspoken criticism towards the socialist system (as well as cities produced under socialism) slowly became part of everyday communication. This reformation period coincided with the end of the construction of Lasnamäe, which was by then roundly criticized. For Estonians, Lasnamäe transformed into a symbol of unwelcome Soviet occupation, with a song entitled 'Stop Lasnamäe' used as an unofficial national anthem during the Singing Revolution which led to Estonia's 1991 re-independence.

Criticism of Lasnamäe was openly expressed by even those responsible for the district's general plan. For example, architect M. Port has acknowledged challenges during the planning process: 'the designing of the housing estate of Lasnamäe caused a lot of problems and a lively discussion among architects and townsfolk'.[68] Public criticism concentrated on the vast scale of the district and grandiose modernism of infrastructure, especially the sunken thoroughfare creating a 100 m-wide divide between buildings. Architects expressed grave concerns about budget cuts demanded by the pre-fabricated panel industry to achieve building efficiency, resulting in a grey and monotonous appearance (interview with I. Raud, 2016). Due to cuts in construction budgets, a number of important details like artificial ponds, green corridors, and even carparks were never built (interviews with D. Bruns, 2013; O. Zhemchugov, 2013; I. Raud, 2016). A synthesis of discussions in the State Architects Union, published in *Sirp ja Vasar* in 1980, notes that it is impossible to hide the functional and architectural drabness of the mammoth-sized Lasnamäe despite the district's town planning innovation. Members of the Architects Union muse that city planning and design as a discipline had become a storage yard for a single pre-cast panel plant.[69]

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[61]Ibid.
[62]Ibid.
[63]Kruusimägi, "Meie kõigi jaoks," 13.
[64]Ibid.
[65]Tungal, "Laste lihtaasta," 7.
[66]Roose, "Kilde linnamajandusest," 4.
[67]Ibid.
[68]Port, *Architecture in the Estonian SSR*, 14.
[69]Härmson, "Lasnamäest," 8.

Challenges and opportunities in large housing estates in Soviet Estonia

Three key themes emerge when we synthesize the findings of our detailed discussion of Tallinn's three large socialist housing estates. First, we demonstrate how international modernist ideals inspired local architects – to a greater extent than previously recognized – and influenced the development of housing estates in Soviet Estonia. The second theme suggests a greater degree of open and candid discussion (than previously identified in scholarly literature) about Soviet-era town planning and especially housing estates, including opinions (written by the general public) and expert pieces (written by architects for broad consumption). Third, we explore the powerful role in Soviet Estonia – which perhaps departed from the norm in USSR republics – of local architects in town planning practice as revealed by first-hand accounts.

International knowledge inspires architects of large housing estates

Estonia's geographic position on the western periphery of communism made possible the preservation of close relations with neighbouring capitalist countries. We find that Finnish and Swedish influences are consequently evident in city planning and architecture of the day in Estonia (references to Tapiola, Finland in interview with D. Bruns, 2013; I. Raud, 2016) and that international modernist ideas from the western world played an important role, too, in the design of large housing estates (interview with D. Bruns, 2013; O. Zhemzhugov, 2013). An adherence to modernist ideals can be detected in the 'clean sweep' urban development method – entailing the complete demolition of existing semi-urban space in order to build something new and boldly different – heretofore untested in Estonia.[70]

Our findings suggest that the city planning system in the Soviet Union was not as controlled as previously assumed. The 1950s Kruschchev thaw – often referred to in hindsight as a 'brilliant failure' – transformed certain aspects of the Soviet system (but not the system itself[71]) and was highly significant for city planning. Liberalization of state and foreign politics in the USSR influenced all aspects of life, including cultural landscapes.[72] In the Baltic countries (and other USSR republics, although due to proximity and similarities in language, Estonians were perhaps more likely to participate), official study trips to Finland and Sweden were the manifestation of fostering international connections (and for Estonians, perfectly timed with concept development for Mustamäe). The trips became more frequent when, in 1965, direct ferry connection between Tallinn and Helsinki was restored.[73] Upon return from the study trips, Estonian architects published articles about their experiences and impressions (in both public media and in professional outlets) in surprisingly candid ways, frequently debating the possibilities for urban planning practice and critiquing the planning of large residential districts. During the Khrushchev period, social contacts with war-emigrant Estonians (mostly in Sweden and Germany) were enabled, permitting information from abroad to be easily delivered through family connections. An official slogan of the socialist system – 'learning from the mistakes of capitalist countries' – was given special meaning in the way professional architectural knowledge was openly developed from foreign books and magazines.[74] While the atmosphere of censorship was strict in the USSR, inhabitants of the northern part of Estonia were able to receive Finnish television signals, due to physical proximity, readily granting them exposure to

[70]Hess and Hiob, "Preservation," 29.
[71]McCauley, *The Kruschev Era*.
[72]Peirumaa, "Hruštšovi aja 'sula'," 107.
[73]See note 30.
[74]See note 46.

visual depictions of modern cities and residential spaces across the Baltic Sea. For these reasons, we argue that Estonia is distinctive among the sister republics for its outward connections and influence and offers an intriguing array of inter-related modernist residential planning approaches.

Orientation towards Estonia's northern neighbours was a conceptual tendency in Estonian architecture and city planning that usurped the standard design models of the USSR.[75] Compared to architectural design of individual buildings, the influence of Finnish and Swedish town planning innovation on site planning for large housing estates is more difficult to trace. The vast scale of socialist housing estates in Soviet Estonia amplified the drabness of the districts and at the same time diminished the comforting features of Scandinavian modernism, like natural terrain emphasis and use of existing trees to create 'tower in the forest' settings for new housing blocks.

However, parallels between the layout of housing estates in Estonia (from the Soviet years) and contemporaneous Nordic city planning can be easily detected from our analysis of original planning documents and statements made by chief architects of the plans (interviews with I. Bruns, 2013; I. Raud, 2016; O. Zhemchugov, 2013).[76] This was unique in the USSR, although it was matched to a certain degree in Latvia (in Āgenskalna priedes in Riga)[77] and Lithuania (in Lazdynai in Vlinius)[78] and to some extent, in Russia. Both Estonian and Lithuanian housing districts received awards from all-Union architectural and planning competitions[79] and Estonia and Lithuania were the only republics that regularly fulfilled new housing construction quotas required by Soviet authorities in Moscow.[80]

The design of Lithuania's Lazdynai, which, like the housing estates in Estonia, pushed the boundaries of Soviet design – and, in some senses, composed in opposition to a standard Soviet mass housing scheme – was later heralded by the communist party for its socialist design excellence.[81]

Local newspapers publish critical discussions about mikrorayons

Not surprisingly, the role of city planning as a pillar of the Soviet system was frequently discussed in local media. Various newspaper articles, especially editorials declaring progress in creating new and better cityscapes (see Figure 11), might at first appear to be typical socialist propaganda. However, closer inspection suggests that the authors often reflected sincere belief in modernist ideals and an aim to solve social problems through comprehensive city planning. What we find remarkable in published opinion articles and travelogues is an apparent neutrality of the discussion, with a lack of customary criticism of the West and absence of exaltation of the Soviet sphere of influence. For example, reflections of architects' study trips to western countries in local newspapers and magazines were often quite positive, providing straightforward celebrations of modernist city planning with minimum socialist rhetoric. D. Bruns, chief architect of Tallinn, describing Tapiola, Finland in *Arhitektuur* (an Estonian architectural quarterly) as 'one of the most successful and interesting example of Scandinavian urban developments' and 'vividly engrained in the memory',[82] provides a detailed overview of the projects' details. Local cultural magazines, such as Estonia's *Ehituskunst* and *Sirp ja Vasar,* functioned as forums for lively theoretical and ideological debates, frequently expanding

[75]See note 30.
[76]Bruns, "Tapiola," 49 and Kalm, "An Apartment," 189–202.
[77]See note 30.
[78]Dremaitė, "Modern Housing in Lithuania" and Rimkutė, "Soviet Mass-housing in Vilnius."
[79]Port, *Architecture in the Estonian SSR*; Bruns, *Tallinna peaarhitekti mälestusi*; and Dremaitė, "Modern Housing in Lithuania."
[80]Pesur, "Kuidas loodi Lasnamäe."
[81]Dremaitė, "The (Post-)Soviet," 24.
[82]Bruns, "Tapiola."

Mustamäe elamumassiiv

Hiljuti valmis instituudis «Estonprojekt» Mustamäe elamurajooni detailplaneerimise lõplik kavand, mille autoreiks on arhitektid V. Tippel, L. Pettai, T. Kallas ja insener A. Prahm.

Projektis on autorid arvesse võtnud möödunud aastal toimunud Mustamäe elamumassiivi planeerimise ideekavandite saamiseks toimunud võistluse tulemusi.

Planeerimiskava haarab ca 360 ha suurust maa-ala, mis on piiratud Rahumäe tee, Mustamäe nõlva, Haberstl tee ja uue magistraaliga, mis ühendab Kadaka teed Matrossovi tänavaga. Väljapoole elamurajooni püstitatakse siia ümbrusse kohaliku tööstuse ettevõtted, TPI hoonete kompleks, Teaduste Akadeemia instituudid jm.

Valminud projektis on lahendatud ühiskondlike, kaubanduslike jm. hoonete paigutus, peamised liiklusteed ja transpordiliigid, maa-alused kommunikatsioonid jne.

Autorid on planeeringu teostanud kaasajal üldist tunnustust leidnud vaba hoonestamise põhimõttel.

Elamurajooni peatänavaks kujuneb kahe sõiduteega Sõpruse puiestee, mille huvitavale kujundamisele on pandud erilist rõhku. Sõpruse puiestee äärde rajatakse kultuuri ja kaubanduse keskus. Siia on grupeeritud sellised ehitused, nagu teater, kino, hotell, administratiivhoone, restoran, kohvik, söökla, kaubamaja, turuhall ja rida kauplusi.

Peatänava ümbrusse on paigutatud neli gruppi 8-korruselisi tornelumaju mis omapäraste aktsentidena tõusevad esile madalama hoonestuse keskelt.

Elamurajooni lõpliku väljaehitamise tähtajaks on 1970. aasta, millal siin elab ca 57 500 elanikku. Teede ehitamist alustatakse veel käesoleva aastal, esimesed elamud aga kerkivad Habersti tee piirkonda 1961. aastal.

H. Härmson

Figure 11. Announcement (in Estonian language) of an approved plan for Mustamäe published in Estonia's cultural newspaper *Sirp ja Vasar*, August 28, 1959. Source: *Sirp ja Vasar*, used with permission.

upon foreign experiences with contemporary architecture and famous contemporaneous architects. International transfer of knowledge is also evident in the agendas of Architects' Union activities; for example, lectures about outstanding French and American modernist architects were often advertised in local media.

Architects in Estonia maintain a consistently strong role in town planning practice

Since architectural education began in Estonia in the 1920s, local professional architects had gained several decades of experience prior to the socialist era. Estonia was one of the few republics in the FSU that preserved an independent site-planning design capability in its state planning and design apparatus (Eesti Projekt, EKE Projekt, Tööstusprojekt, Kommunaalprojekt), a practice that can be

traced to a mature architectural tradition dating from the early twentieth century (interview with J. Lass, 2016). Professional self-awareness combined with institutional powers granted by the new regime encouraged Estonian architects to take an active role in city planning under state socialism. In other republics of the Soviet Union such as Belarus and Kazakhstan (interview with J. Lass, 2016), architectural and city planning were designed and implemented from central headquarters in Leningrad or Moscow (using only standard building and district designs), with virtually no involvement with local or national experts.[83] Consequently, architects in Estonia maintained a considerable voice in shaping cityscapes. City planning practice in Estonia was thus not based solely on reproduction of centrally formulated urban design models or economically efficient engineering but was formulated locally, under the leadership of skilled Estonian architects. In municipal governance, an architectural department and architectural advisory board were important bodies, largely composed of architects, and architectural commissions reviewed plans and projects issued by state planning and design institutes.

A strong tradition of architectural competitions in Estonia, originating in the 1930s, continued throughout the Soviet occupation, generating unique designs for significant buildings and site planning for new residential districts.[84] As a result, a non-Soviet international influence is highly apparent in Estonian plans for large housing estates, a phenomenon that can be attributed, at least in part, to western knowledge and information about city planning from international sources. Notably, foreign architectural magazines were used in universities as teaching materials. Similar phenomena are recognized in Lithuania, where Dremaitė argues that modernist aesthetics and western-oriented ambitions of Baltic architects were reflected during Soviet times in mass housing as architects sought to modernize cities and also declare their membership in an international cadre of modern architects.[85] We thus find support for a 'westward gaze'[86] among architects in Estonia, matching a pattern in the Baltics, as an expression during Soviet times of national and cultural identity.

Our research confirms significant roles for bold and daring local architects in the Baltic republics in planning and designing large socialist housing estates. In the FSU, town planning was recognized as a critical function since it ensured the propagation of socialist ideology by translating collectivism to urban built environments which would endure. Our interviews with key architects of socialist housing estates revealed that clever interpretation of the norms and guidelines was required for architects to achieve a specific vision, and that experience and confidence helped architects to perfect the practice of creative interpretation of Soviet dicta. Architectural and planning officers in State Building Committees were known to avoid the commands of power, when possible, while working earnestly to improve the social space of cities.[87] Architects in Estonia – and perhaps no other USSR republic – were permitted to practice privately (in addition to their state employment), designing detached homes and smaller buildings (interviews with J. Lass, 2016; I. Raud, 2016).

Our detailed investigation of mikrorayon in Tallinn demonstrates that professional architects were represented in almost all levels of official decision-making in town planning processes that produced large housing estates. The State Building Committees in the USSR republics – often referred to as the 'architectural KGB'[88] – were traditionally led by a chief architect. The leader of the State Building Committee of Estonia from 1965 to 1988 has said that he accepted the position out of loyalty after

[83]Ruseckaite, "Sovietinu Mietu" and Rimkutė, "Soviet Mass-housing in Vilnius."
[84]Lapin, *Arengujooni Eesti* and Port, *Arhitecture in the Estonian SSR*.
[85]Dremaitė, "The (Post-)Soviet," 12.
[86]Maciuika, "East Bloc, West View," 23.
[87]Oja, "Voldemar Herkel – oma aja."
[88]Ibid.

being warned that if he did not assume it, a Russian would be imported to direct the institution. Undisturbed by voices of the public nor landowners, the chief architect of Soviet Tallinn was solely responsible for all decisions with spatial dimensions.

Conclusion

The massive scale of residential districts in socialist urban space required a comprehensive approach for an unprecedented scale of urban development. Chief architects, when designing mikrorayon, were tasked with designing myriad inter-related urban systems: proposing a road and traffic system, locating services and recreational areas, conducting mobility planning, establishing infrastructure, and orchestrating the compositional structure of new urban fabric. We synthesize our findings to conclude that, in undertaking these enormous challenges, architects in socialist Estonia (as well as Latvia and Lithuania) can be considered visionary city-builders who, when handed standard building designs for residential space, seized opportunities to innovate in site design and layout, embracing possibilities to create unique built environments in vast housing estates that influenced urban landscapes. We further find that architects appropriated the maximum authority they possibly could (and perhaps even overreached in certain cases) within the communist system, helping them to create state-of-the-art modernist living environments that shaped lives in important ways.

What resulted were distinctive modernist spaces that, although they contained standard Soviet residential buildings at their core (this could not be helped), were otherwise state-of-the-art. Apartments in new housing estates provided coveted conveniences (for example, modern kitchens, comfortable toilets and washrooms, central heating) that were superiour to amenities offered in the contemporaneous pre-Second World War housing and were thus quite prestigious.[89] Individual apartments in new Estonian housing estates had grown larger during the Soviet years, and, by the late Soviet years, Estonians enjoyed the highest living space per capita at 11.7 m^2 in the Soviet Union (the USSR average was 9.4 m^2).[90] Only budget constraints and notoriously cheap construction materials dampened the modernist vision that Soviet-era Estonian architects created for new residential space in Estonia's capital city (interviews with I. Raud, 2016; D. Bruns, 2013; O. Zhemzhugov, 2013).

If the conditions in Estonia that allowed town planning innovation that we describe in this article had not existed, built environments in housing estates could be of much lesser quality than what endures today.

We also demonstrate a new perspective of Soviet-era city planning in Estonia by helping to correct inaccurate assumptions that architects' contributions to city planning practice were generally weak and strongly controlled by the Soviet system through unchallengeable designs and plans from the USSR central party. Based on detailed analysis of original planning documents, we suggest that, regarding site planning for mikrorayons, the regulations issued in Moscow played a less important role in town planning outcomes in Estonia than previously assumed for USSR republics. While it was necessary for architects to strictly adhere to density norms, the physical structure and site planning of mikrorayon*s* was, as a rule, the outcome of original design processes by local architects who were strongly inspired by modernist ideals popular at the time throughout the western world. We depict in this article a series of three large housing estates, built in the capital city during the Socialist years, showing the relatively powerful position of Estonian architects in socialist city-building processes

[89]Kährik and Tammaru, "Soviet Prefabricated Panel Housing," 204.
[90]Bater, "The Soviet Scene."

and how, using more information from abroad than is often recognized, they gained expertise in modernist city planning techniques and produced original and state-of-the art designs. The process we describe in this article produced more desirable housing estates in Estonia than would result from strict adherence to system constraints, giving party leaders exemplary town planning ensembles to support residential expansion, while Estonian architects experienced a supportive atmosphere (contrary to common assumptions about the USSR) to pursue modernist ambitions that they hoped would be admired beyond the borders of the Soviet Union.

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III

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Chapter 13
Advancing Education for Planning Professionals in Estonia—Between New Qualities and Path-Dependency

Antti Roose, Garri Raagmaa and Pille Metspalu

Abstract The chapter examines the factors and drivers influencing planning-related university programs in Estonia. In recent years, both the planning system and academia have been coping with high levels of societal dynamism and transition associated with the assertion of national independence in 1991, while seeking to overcome path-dependencies and to capture and implement innovative planning approaches. A shift from land use to strategic spatial planning requires the introduction of a new knowledge set in respect to balanced interdisciplinary and specialized directions. Results from a survey of planning practitioners illustrate the need for qualified planners, and upskilling of current practitioners who lack of competencies for contemporary planning approaches. Although in the 2000s, the number of quasi-planning degree programs reached a peak at 20 planning-related programs in six universities, the educational provision in the country lacks diversity and remains mostly limited to programs rooted in environmental and engineering disciplines. An alternative model for a cross-university joint planning program advancing the diversity of current programs, widening the array of subjects and depth of scholarship to enhance future qualities of the planning profession for a small European country could not be implemented thus far. However, as a major positive shift in professional advancement, setting professional codes and certification for spatial planners serves as post-curriculum standardization and harmonization of knowledge and skills, as well strengthening planners' position in the Estonian planning scene.

Keywords Planning education · University program · Path-dependency · Institutional collaboration · Estonia

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Introduction

In Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), spatial planning has undergone a significant transformation (Adams 2006, 2008; Adams et al. 2014; Tsenkova and Nedovic-Budic 2006) and Estonia represents one of the 'new' European countries that phased out a centralized spatial planning system and replaced it with a new decentralized system while also introducing democratic, legal, and governance approaches for a market economy (Adams et al. 2010). After an initial period of mismanagement, failures and the vacuum of planning and an interregnum of the planning profession in 1990s, planning has rebounded and grown in maturity in the 2000s and 2010s. Reconceptualizing planning since late 1990s, Estonia progressed well in terms of Europeanization between contradictory tendencies of metropolitanization and peripheralization (Raagmaa et al. 2014). Contrary to Western Europe, where since the 2008 recession, formal planning has experienced contraction and is being replaced by localism and deliberation in England and the Netherlands (Haughton et al. 2013), development and planning in Estonia have remained buoyant due to EU-funded infrastructure projects and a growing real estate market, particularly in the metropolitan area of Tallinn.

Developing planning capacities, both in terms of numbers of qualified planners and professional know-how, has posed a considerable challenge for Estonia with a population of only 1.3 million. The shift from land use to more complex strategic spatial planning requires practitioners to obtain a new skill set (Nadin 2007; Shaw and Lord 2007; Tewdwr-Jones 2004; Roose and Kull 2012), and has led to a substantial skills gap in respect to interdisciplinary and specialized skills and knowledge amongst Estonian planning practitioners. In 2011 only one quarter of local authorities (56 from total 226) had specialist staff with planning-related qualifications in post (Ministry of Finance 2011). As a result, many mainly suburban and rural councils failed to meet statutory duties in respect to planning applications (Roose and Kull 2012).

The shortfall in administrative and professional capacity in planning has been recognized since the early 2000s. Although the number of students taking planning-related university courses has increased, it takes years to bring trained and experienced planners into the system. Moreover, there has been no successful effort so far to establish comprehensive spatial planning programs. Instead, planning education provision in Estonia to date has depended on niche programs launched by universities based on economic rationales. Such programs tend to focus only on new topics in urban development and as a result, spatial planning education in Estonia is not fit for purpose; it is, at present, conceptually loose and fragmented.

A review of the evolution of the planning system in post-1990 Estonia contextualizes the interrupted nature of the country's planning scene and the exploration of planning practitioners' needs reveals details of the current skills mismatch in the profession. This forms the canvas upon which the authors consider an ideal curriculum for planning integrating built environment and environmental disciplines as well as the social sciences. Rather than establishing an entirely new

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program, it is envisioned that this ideal curriculum is realized through collaborative provision: pooling courses offered through existing planning programs at various Estonian universities, public authorities and private planning consultancies. The proposal also includes public–private staff exchanges and professional training as an innovative pathway to enhance planners' skills. It responds creatively to two major developments affecting Estonian planning education. First, the introduction of tuition-free higher education, which has forced public universities to specialize and consolidate programs for financial reasons; and, second, the introduction in 2014 of a professional code and a certification for planners by the Estonian Association of Planners together with the Qualification authority which indirectly necessitates a review of curricula to ensure criteria can be met through educational programs.

Evolution of Planning in Estonia

While Western European countries changed their planning doctrine, institutions and culture from positivist planning to more pluralistic approaches from the 1970s onward, Eastern European planning traditions remained largely unchanged until the 1990s. From there on, however, complex social and economic transformations which also affected the planning system occurred at an accelerated pace. By the 1990s, many CEE countries rushed to introduce new planning laws based on spatial planning, which even a decade later still had to see full implementation (Balchin et al. 1999). Faced with the reality of planning in situ and pressurized by private investors and stakeholders, planning officers tended to revert to their previously practiced habits and approaches. Thus, the mere imitative application of Western policies led in many ways to controversial results in CEEs because of the different economic and social environment, strong institutional dependency, and path-dependency of know-how, methods, and practices.

Estonia, also conducted fundamental structural reforms, and introduced planning principles and laws practiced in Western democracies from 1990 onward. Four transition phases can be distinguished: (1) a "non-planning" era in early 1990s; (2) establishing a new planning system mid to late 1990s; (3) ad hoc planning accompanying the real estate boom 2000–2008; and (4) from 2009 to the present, the correction of planning system errors, including development and introduction of new planning legislation in 2015.

In the first phase, the government created a land market through land and property restitution. Additionally, extensive decentralization transferred planning powers to newly established local governments requiring them to compile development plans. Many of these first plans were statistical compendiums and reports, rather than documents guiding growth and development with respect to territorial resources and conditions. The absence of comprehensive national spatial development strategies and consistent regional policies created a vacuum and institutional uncertainty (Balchin et al. 1999). Ministries, local governments, and

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developers applied their narrow agendas without considering wider public interest on national, regional or community level. Consequently, this period has been labeled as systematic "non-planning era."

From 1995 onward, in the second phase, a stronger planning framework and regulation became apparent (e.g., Estonian Planning and Construction Act, 1995). The Estonian government introduced the concept of sustainability as a key planning principle (Sustainable Development Act 1995). Following further amendments of the 1995 Estonian Planning and Construction Act in 2002—which were inspired by Nordic, and in particular Finnish planning laws—land use and environmental issues became an integral priority of planning (see Planning Act 2002–Riigi Teataja I 2002). The distinction between planning understood as land use planning and development as regional growth was significant. Institutionally, the planning mandate and responsibilities were transferred from the Ministry of Environment to the Ministry of the Interior, pioneering a brand new concept of integrated multilevel comprehensive planning from detailed plans up to national plan.

Despite drafting strategic agendas on the national, county, and local levels, documents often remained quite ineffective in terms of decision-making and investments. Part of the problem was that at national level there were more than 100 strategy documents which were overlapping, and only loosely coordinated and enforced (Keskpaik 2013). Collaboration by municipalities which could strengthen and consolidate implementation of regional plans remained exceptional and confined to the rare non-competitive projects such as green networks and major infrastructure works. Overall, municipalities have been struggling to empower comprehensive plans during piecemeal 'ad hoc planning' since mid-2000s. Nevertheless, the quality of plans has improved steadily (Roose and Kull 2012) and public participation has been implemented, albeit only sporadically and for contested projects. One of the key barriers in pursuit of a transformative planning practice has been the hidden politicization of planning with effective lobbying by private investors via multiparty alliances to assert development interests in an ad hoc fashion. As a result, investments and land allocations by permits are often only superficially grounded in spatial planning reasoning.

The period of 'ad hoc planning' has seen massive issuing of detailed plans for residential development. Planning increasingly relied on outsourcing tasks to private consultants and planners, architects and engineers who directed the plan-making. Planning of new housing estates often ignored zoning in comprehensive land use plans as developers could simply apply for amendments to the comprehensive plan on the basis of a proposed detailed plan. Planning initiatives by private investors therefore forced amendments to upper level plans. In cases of public opposition to new developments, developers tend to use various soft political, legal, and operational means to influence plan processing and decision-making.

Unsurprisingly, the last 15 or so years of post-communist planning practice has revealed some weaknesses in the current legal framework. While the overall system of four interdependent planning levels and compilation of planning documents is well established and works adequately, there have been issues with interpretations of the Planning Act. This has given rise to a number of unexpected court verdicts

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that have surprised practitioners. Gradually corrections in the planning system have been carried out by municipalities learning from earlier errors, improving their competence, employing architects and planners as well as tightening their planning and construction regulations. As a result, detailed planning procedures of suburban municipalities, which used to be rather unsophisticated and fast when compared to those in cities, have become equally demanding and time consuming. This also meant that due to NIMBY attitudes a growing number of plans, including strategic projects like Rail Baltic or military exercise fields, were resisted at local level.

In 2008, the Ministry of Justice started the process of harmonizing laws concerning spatial matters (so-called codification). The 2012 draft of the new Planning Act received stern opposition from planners as under the guise of codification substantial changes in Estonia's planning framework had been introduced including a recentralisation of planning, new and controversial types of plans, reduced need for detailed planning, and less public participation to name only few. Despite the active opposition of the Estonian Association of Spatial Planners together with the Architects Union and the Union of Towns and Local municipalities, the act came into force in February 2015. The planning powers at national level were transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Finance.

This new Planning Act requires, again, new planning knowledge, i.e., juristic accuracy, familiarity with an increasingly complicated planning framework, detailed know-how in issues like mining, greenery, marine planning. The law softens detailed plan requirements and initiates two new 'special' planning types that allow central government agencies to avoid local resistance. As the law sets strict deadlines for every single procedure during the planning process, efficiency and management skills will become crucial in future.

In sum, initially the planning system was malfunctioning due to a lack of professional planners, missing planning knowledge, and the shortage of skills for processing and assessing applications. The majority of plans were implemented in the frame of project-based business planning with an emphasis on short-term financial return. In the aftermath of the real estate bubble and economic crises in 2008 the speed of development and the associated volume of planning decreased substantially leading to higher quality plans and a streamlining of the process. In order to improve strategic planning and coordination, in the 2010s planning responsibilities were recentralized at county level, devaluing the local authorities. Yet, the implementation of strategic objectives remains hampered by pro-growth localism.

In addition to ad hoc pressures of private capital in 2000s, planning in Estonia experienced a significant push towards Europeanization over the past two decades. This Europeanization (e.g., Radaelli 2004) means that domestic institutional reforms and governance pattern were conditioned by EU rules and directives with perhaps the most important impact on strategic planning practices (e.g., Waterhout et al. 2009).

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Reinventing the Planning Profession

In parallel to the planning system, the planning profession and education for planning needed to be reformed. The question of planners' and planning' identity has been explored repeatedly by planning communities in the USA (Anselin et al. 2011) and Europe (AESOP 2013, 2010; Frank et al. 2014; Stead and Cotella 2011). It is also a constant discussion topic in the revitalized Estonian planning scene which has its intellectual roots in architecture. While, the predominant role of architecture was strengthened during the early 1990s, its importance waned when from 1995 onward a broader territorial, sustainable development and land reform based approach was adopted. Subsequently, from the mid-2000 onward, there was a resurgence of the architect planner, as booming real estate development, commercial and housing projects demanded fast, lean, and impressive designs.

In this respect, the development of a professional code for spatial planners by the Estonian Association of Spatial Planners and Estonian Qualifications Authority in 2014 represents a breakthrough. The Planners' qualification certificate has been welcomed warmly by local and state planning officials as the need for quality assurances is growing, particularly in light of the new 2015 Planning Act. Under this code, planners are seen as generalists who lead planning teams. Attributes and competencies of the 'ideal' planner include communication and negotiations skills, high ethical standards, being adaptable, innovative and versed in strategic thinking. There was also agreement that planners are to be knowledgeable about research methods, planning theory, forecasting and visualization techniques, which highlights the need to cover such topics consistently in planning curricula.

To explore the profession's skills needs, a survey was conducted by University of Tartu in collaboration with the Estonian Association of Planners. This survey mapped the educational background of professional planning practitioners and sought to identify possible shortcomings in their skills base. The questionnaire was e-mailed to 800 individuals working in planning practice achieving a response rate of 44% (351 responses). The majority of responses (63%) were received from the public sector; the remaining respondents were from the private sector (24%) and non-profit/self-employed sector (13%). Respondents from local authorities were also asked how many working hours they spend on planning-related versus other tasks. The outcome confirmed the assumption that in many small rural municipalities planning is only part of officials' duties. In fact, only 19% of respondents noted that their work involves exclusively planning issues, while 39% of the respondents spent at least half of their office hours on planning issues, and the remaining 42% only around one quarter of their time.

Respondents' educational background was highly diverse with only around 50% being educated in a conventional planning-related field such as Geography, Landscape architecture, Geomatics or Architecture (Fig. 1). The turn towards a social science orientation in planning, reported in emerging markets (UN-Habitat 2009), cannot yet be corroborated in the background of Estonian planners.

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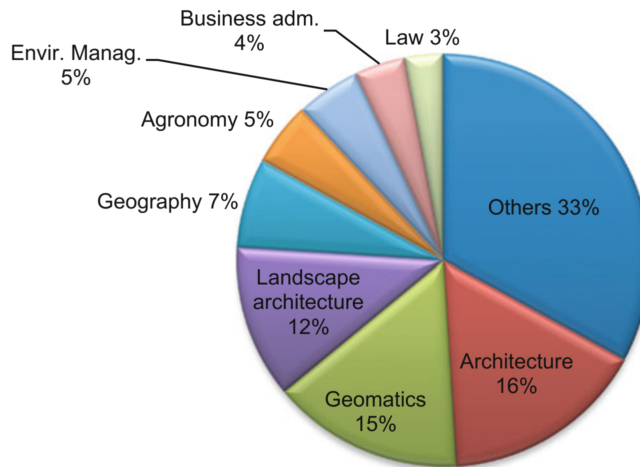

Fig. 1 Educational background of employees in Estonian planning sector

The respondents were asked to specify whether they were engaged in developing strategic plans, land use plans, county-level plans or detailed plans, managing planning processes, elaborating specific surveys and analyses, or conducting inspection and quality control. Answers were correlated with educational background to understand whether specific training fosters specialization. The results show that architects and landscape architects are more likely involved in detailed planning and processing plans in local authorities; geographers are more likely engaged in strategic and comprehensive planning and supervising plans at regional or national level. Land surveying graduates are often employed to process plans. Specialists primarily contribute to individual stages of the planning process; generalists, on the contrary, work in upper tier and strategic spatial planning positions.

In relation to skills needs, responses were unanimous without differentiation by background and job specialties. Analytical and logical thinking (94% respondents), ability to formulate spatial relations (87%), communication and teamwork (37%), accountability (14%) and creativity (12%) were keywords mentioned most. Around one third of the respondents found their skills were most deficient in planning theory, GIS, and cartography (Table 1). The results are somewhat alarming and highlight both, the need for planning education and the inadequacy of current programs in planning-related subjects.

Despite the variegation of educational backgrounds of planners in Estonia, the consistent responses on skills needed for practice indicate a convergence of diverse understandings about the essence of Estonian planning. The results of the survey and the establishment of the professional code, thus, mark the end of a long tradition of planning seen as merely a specialization of architecture and technocratic instrument (Hirt and Stanilov 2009; Maier 1994), a development recognizable not only in Estonia but in other CEE countries. The question for the future is how to support this new community of planners institutionally and educationally. The

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Table 1 Reported deficiencies in planning skills (multiple responses allowed)

Subject area	n	% of respondents
Planning theory	130	37.0
GIS and cartography	120	34.2
Planning impact assessment	111	31.6
Development trends and social processes in the society	109	31.1
Analysis of planning solutions	106	30.2
Negotiation skills	106	30.2
Legal system, legal acts	97	27.6
Presentation skills	94	26.8
Creative skills in drawing up planning solutions	86	24.5
Sociological research methods	86	24.5
Formulation of spatial relations	85	24.2
Shaping the spatial environment	83	23.6
Team leading skills	76	21.7
Leading the planning process	71	20.2
Spatial perception of activities and matters	69	19.7
Content and structure of plans	40	11.4
Development trends in home region	33	9.4
Coordination of planning process	30	8.5
Local authorities institutions	28	8.0
Estonian planning system	26	7.4
Responses	1586	
Respondents	351	

integration of design and social sciences in planning curricula, as promoted by the 2009 UN-Habitat report *Planning Sustainable Cities* could be one of the ways forward. Similarly, the UK's Royal Town Planning Institute's planning education guidance and its support of a diverse and multidisciplinary approach to planning (Ellis et al. 2008).

Adapting and Enhancing Planning Education

A key issue for spatial planning education in Estonia is the absence of a single comprehensive curriculum or even a set of agreed topics and learning outcomes as exists, for example, in the USA with the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) guidelines, Poland (see Chap. 12, this volume) or the UK. Rather, in the 2000s Estonian higher education institutions (HEI) developed numerous degree programs in planning (Table 2) in an opportunistic manner. Alongside a dramatic increase in student numbers in higher education overall, the number of students enrolled in planning-related programs reached a peak in 2008 when over 800

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students were enrolled in BSc/BA and 270 in MSc/MA programs across six universities. The growth was accompanied by the Bologna reform process, introducing a 3 + 2 year study scheme, restructuring courses and an overall Europeanization of higher education (Frank 2013).

As of 2015, altogether 18 ‘planning-related’ programs exist. As the higher education sector in Estonia is under-resourced and academics are pushed to prioritize research over teaching, little attention is given to curricula development and quality assurance. It has been argued that most planning programs are neither academically nor financially sustainable. HEIs have continued to teach what staff expertise allows but that may not be what is needed to prepare students for planning practice.

In general, different university profiles support the provision of specialized niche courses. For example, the University of Tartu focuses on regional planning and human geography, while the Estonian University of Life Sciences excels in landscape architecture, landscape planning and environmental impact assessment. The Estonian University of Arts provide courses with an architecture and urbanism focus, and Tallinn University of Technology specializes in landscape architecture, civil engineering and transport planning, and since 2013 also architecture and urban planning. Tallinn University has begun urban studies based on their research excellence in post-modern cultural geography. Thus, across all universities there are planning courses which would cover the entire spectrum from growth and urban management to planning and conservation, from neighborhood via city regions to national planning. Yet, the current provision and specializations of courses is unbalanced with a strong leaning towards environment and sustainability, which originates from science-oriented programs and path-dependence in academia. It also can be seen as a response to Europeanization in environmental affairs especially for EU-funded developments and a desire in capacity building in respect to conservation and heritage particularly in rural areas. The majority of environmental planning specialists gain expertise in environmental management and end up competing with the earth sciences graduates in an overcrowded labor market, while the skills gap in other planning topics remains.

Similar to other EU countries such as Spain, the 3-year BA degree in planning (Frank et al. 2014) does not satisfy the minimal professional requirements of

Table 2 Planning-related programs in Estonia

	2000	2008	2015
Number of HEI	4	6	6
Diploma and applied	2	1	1
Bachelors programs	4	6 + 1 integrated	4
Master’s programs	4	8	6
PhD programs	2	4	2
Total	12	20	18
Students		>800 BSc/BA >270 MSc/MA	

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practicing planners. Planning-related master's programs have been criticized as planning content remains secondary with the exception of landscape architecture programs (Fig. 2). Even if present, the planning content is structured in unsystematic ways. In many programs core subjects such as planning theory and process are missing totally and law, urban management, and governance are taught by lecturers from other faculties with little reference to planning. A lack of practical training is also a problem. As a consequence, graduates are not ready to enter planning practice lacking both multidisciplinary as well specialized skills.

Due to the expansion of the past decades, the higher education system is under enormous financial duress, balancing quality and quantity of programs in a volatile student market, and changing didactics is an ongoing challenge for university leaders. In respect to planning, curricula development is constrained by various limitations and tension between long-term strategies and present day needs in planning education and practice as well at academia, where for example admission policy of universities gives preferences to ongoing programs rather than supporting new innovative schemes. Since 2013 the intake of students has been begun to decline substantially. Project-based uncoordinated action has been dominant also in further education and professional training.

In order to develop a strategy that would support the provision for high quality, comprehensive planning education in Estonia, a comparative analysis of European planning education trends, the above elucidated survey of planning practitioners and several information gathering missions to the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Slovenia and United States of America were organized. It is clearly noticeable that the communicative turn in planning theory has changed the professional code in many countries. Innes (1997) noted that the shift away from modernist, rational

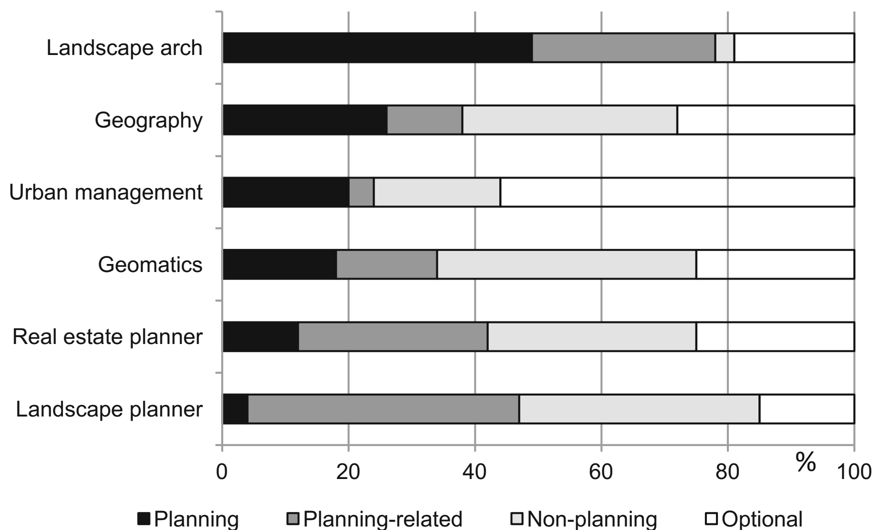

Fig. 2 Share of planning content in existing planning-related programs

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planning towards the collaborative model initiated an emphasis on communicative skills in planning. Likewise, Schon (1987) argued for strong communicative skills and experiences to present alternative views, and problem solving situations. Faludi (1987) draws explicitly on pragmatist ideas to underline that planning work is always situated and contingent on specific situations. He thus advocates seeing planning as a methodology for exploring consequences prior to making choices, linked to Popperian ideas about hypothesis testing, leading to an idea of rationality as a method for justifying and legitimizing risky decisions. This relates to the profound challenges posed by climate change, refugee crises, economic uncertainties and the emergence of new technologies and big data. It is easy to enter into the planning discourse of wicked problems referring to the Cultural Theory approach by Hartmann (2012) which discusses clumsy solutions as a response to wicked planning problems. From the three emerging notions of planning, i.e., (1) planning as a physically oriented search for ideal territorial forms, (2) planning as a process-oriented discipline, and (3) planning as a multidisciplinary field, ultimately the latter was selected to inform the professional code and planning education criteria in Estonia.

The definition foresees that planning brings together experts with varied educational backgrounds such as architects, engineers, geographers, sociologists, economists, landscape architects, real estate developers, geomaticians, environmentalists, and others to tackle planning problems in a comprehensive and integrated manner. Politics and policy represent another important planning dimension. In practice, most planners work in one of several specializations that overlap with other professional fields. In survey responses, planners stressed the need to teach practical skills for day-to-day tasks in addition to conveying to students a contemporary ethical framework. This differs from academic preferences to focus on core knowledge and structured methodological approaches. Balancing the need for practice relevance and theoretical foundations has been a long standing issue in the education of professional fields (Edwards and Bates 2011). In the Estonian context, however, the primary issue is whether universities can modify their rather fragmented programs to offer a more rounded and less specialized education.

In the past years, the planning academy stimulated not only new thinking and innovation in the planning profession, but also attempted to set framework parameters for master programs in spatial planning. Conceptually, the discussion revolved around the following approaches:

- Generalist approach: serving broad range of professional futures;
- Specialist approach: following specific targeted knowledge areas and know-how (e.g., urban planning, environmental planning, GIS, and visualization);
- Compatibility with current planning scene: compromising between both universities academic capacity and planning sector needs.

In a series of programming workshops it was agreed that a multidisciplinary and problem-oriented spatial planning program should focus on establishing a sound link between environmental, engineering and social sciences and concepts. Such a

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program would involve the interaction between scientific knowledge and applied planning policy leading to smart and sound decision-making. Graduates would have to be able to apply contemporary methods such as predictive modeling, socioeconomic, and environmental analysis and be knowledgeable in legal framework and public relations. The program would have to reflect the dynamism and change of conditions under transition as experienced by the Estonian society since 1990s and should be research led by developing effective synergies between universities, research teams and teaching. Another cornerstone would be the quality and coherence of taught courses supported by staff development in respect to teaching and learning.

The proposed cross-university multidisciplinary program intends to offer students a thorough understanding of advanced theories and methodologies of urban and regional planning, with a special focus on urban regions and rural areas. Core elements of the subject are spatial planning and policy formulation, and the institutional aspects of spatial interventions. The program offers courses on decision-making processes and managing socioeconomic issues. Special attention is given to city regions and shrinking cities. The planning studio contains interdisciplinary group work and individual assignments drafting plans on interrelating spatial scales and issues with various temporal horizons allowing the evaluation of alternative scenarios. Professional skills and ethos are also covered in studio settings. In addition, students have the opportunity to be actively involved in planning projects in the most innovative planning companies during an internship period.

In particular, the program proposal (Fig. 3) consists of four core modules: planning theory, planning process, planning themes and human geography (15 ECTS each during 1st year). Planning themes encompasses courses on 'architecture/urban design', 'transport and infrastructure', 'environmental issues', and 'functional areas and services'. Studies are then continued with an internship (9 ECTS), planning studio (8 ECTS), elective courses (13 ECTS) and master's thesis (30 ECTS).

For the majority of planners who work in land use planning, the most important activity in terms of workflow is the preparation of comprehensive plans and the design of implementation mechanisms. The most important activity in terms of human resources and time, however, is the evaluation of development projects against plans and regulations. Planners have to rely on quantitative standards and qualitative criteria to assess the merits of proposals and their conformity with official policies. Planners also need to focus on process to open up opportunities for public learning and awareness. This assists in compensating for imbalances of power in society in terms of access to information, to forums of decision-making, and to decision makers. This advocates public discussions on territorial issues that are transparent, constructive, and respectful of differences. Developing a spatial planning program that addresses the perspectives of organizational patterns, comprehensiveness and practicality, as well as various possible teaching methods is complex. Obviously, some limitations remain in our understanding of the capacity of the spatial planning program to deliver on critical elements of an Estonian national spatial planning agenda.

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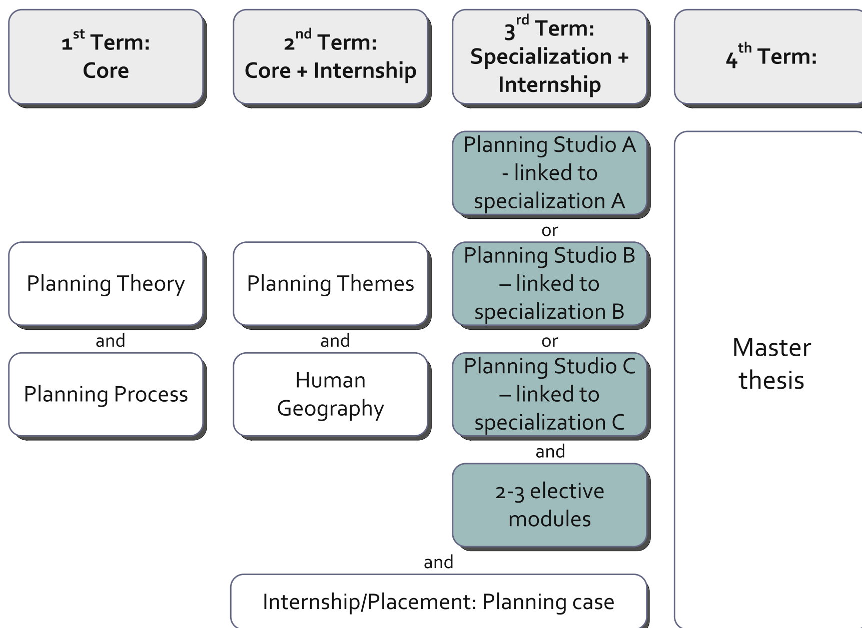

Fig. 3 Structure of 'ideal' spatial planning master's program

First, in general, there is a need to better understand the needs and scope of the planning profession in Estonia. A variety of practicing planners as guest lecturers from outside the universities should be engaged to support the program with their knowledge and experience.

Second, all engaged university representatives should explore impacts and added-value for the present programs in their core subject (geography, environmental management, engineering, architecture, landscape architecture) and consider the ways in which these professions contribute to the education of the planning profession. The required knowledge and skills for planning include a heavy emphasis on strategic problem solving and on communicative action and an attempt at balancing academic and professional skills. The program tends to achieve goals of leadership, forward thinking and communication proficiency in the profession. Graduates can build their career as project managers for public and private projects at various planning scales.

Third, the program promotes innovative planning techniques and analytical methods. The rather competitive nature of the relationship between universities means stressing on strengths and admitting limitations in terms of academic resources and capacity. There are opportunities for mutual learning and to reflect on institutional capacities in an evolving cooperation. Still, progress of the planning profession in Estonia depends on cooperation between universities.

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The program elaboration of the above described 2-year 'ideal' master program in spatial planning represented a test of academic and institutional collaboration of Estonia universities. Eventually the program failed to be adopted due to institutional barriers and academic competition within chairs, faculties and universities. As student intake has been declining due to demographic reasons, the major instrument remains further consolidation of present programs within universities instead of launching cross-university specialized programs. An annual conference series on planning "The Tartu planning conference" was launched as a key discussion platform underpinning progress in Estonian planning.

Conclusion

In this chapter, key drivers of change in Estonian planning academia, current trends, developments and changes concerning the consolidation of planning education in relation to emerging planning practices, processes, and culture are discussed. Planning education can only be fully understood in the broader institutional and societal context of planning practice. In the context of Estonia, a small new European country this means coping with fast dynamic changes in economic conditions and a constant adjustments to the planning system. The Europeanization in the 2000s included changes to the planning system and planning practices in Estonia. Recent decades have manifested project-based housing, transport and infrastructure planning for EU co-funded projects. Despite the establishment of numerous planning-related courses, there is no single designated spatial planning program Estonia. Thus, there is a substantial shortage of skilled planners as planning-related degree programs provide merely a fragmented and disconnected set of skills and knowledge.

There are 18 planning-related programs at six universities in Estonia. Planning programs exist in a variety of institutional contexts leading to considerable differences in how they emphasize research and teaching. The autonomy of universities is high and change can only be initiated with strong external signals and influences from the planning sector. So far, Estonia has demonstrated a specialization of planning education based on a competitiveness model instead of the promotion of a cross-university generalist and interdisciplinary approach. Universities are accredited by broader areas of subjects such as environmental management or architecture and construction, not for profession-oriented programs. The current fragmented provision of planning programs derives from opportunistic decisions by universities.

Moreover, there are concerns over the quality and number of students enrolling on quasi-planning programs raising uncertainties about the independence and maturity of the planning profession in a small marketplace. While in 2008, 800 students were enrolled in planning-related degree programs, the recent decline in intake could have significant consequences for some universities, particularly those without a strong research profile. A major shift in professional advancement is

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establishing a professional code and certification for spatial planners, which was launched in 2014. The Estonian Association of Spatial Planners has been awarded the status of a certification agency for accrediting planning practitioners.

A better understanding of the challenges facing the academy as well as recognizing the trends in planning practice and territorial governance is critical to mapping out the future for planning education and rejuvenating the multidisciplinary profession. Planners in Estonia often play several roles in parallel—likely a function of the country's size. Thus, they need universal knowledge backgrounds and a balanced skill set. The proposed collaborative university consortium offering a joint program in spatial planning would be a way forward to overcome resource issues and offer a complementary rich set of planning courses while also creating opportunities for collaborative research in the interstices between planning and other subjects. Having a broad professional coalition and engaging universities, students, and practitioners in the design of planning education curricula could lead to a unique profile and identity for the program and its graduates. However, academic pragmatism tells the opposite story, with cosmetic inserts of planning path-dependence on multiple planning-related programs.

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