

*Paper prepared for the
Fifth Euroacademia International Conference*

Re-Inventing Eastern Europe

Riga, 29 – 30 January 2016

This paper is a draft

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Temporal City. Exploring Urban Change in Tallinn, Estonia. Typologies of Indeterminate Landscapes

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Keywords: post-socialist space, urban change, Tallinn, urban indeterminacy, temporal space

Abstract

The paper looks at urban indeterminacy in post-socialist Tallinn. I suggest that through typomorphological analysis, observing, documenting and analysing (creating 'eclectic atlases' (Boeri, 2003) of culturally, socially or economically motivated (temporary) appropriations of indeterminate sites and mapping continuous urban change, a basis can be created for developing a new model of cooperation between stakeholders in planning, redefining the role of an urban planner as well as influencing policy making in terms of re-conceptualising developing private property in relation to the wider urban context. This paper focuses on documenting and understanding urban change in Tallinn by introducing three case studies. The sites of interest include the inner city coastline (the former Patarei prison, Linnhall, Fishers harbour and beach, the harbour area), Kopli lines (an abandoned residential area on the Kopli peninsula) and inner city wastelands, particularly the site of the former Estonian Academy of Arts as an example of an inner city void.

Introduction

Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, is a fascinating case study when looking at urban indeterminacy, a city where the developments influenced by the Eastern and Western Europe have created a complex landscape, fragmented post-socialist typologies meet earlier historic layers and specific contemporary circumstances. I moved to Tallinn at the age of 19 in 2006 to start my studies in The Estonian Academy of Arts and slowly getting to know the city started to be more and more curious about its diverse landscape. Why is it that a coastal city, where the sea is just a 10 minute walk from the main square, does not have convenient access to the beaches? Why is the inner city coastline a post-industrial wasteland even more than 20 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union and demolishing of industrial structures on the seaside? Why does a sparse city with an abundance of inner city voids pursue the heights and a CBD that makes references to American urbanisation? Why do some residential areas stay in an endless limbo of large scale development plans, but no actual short term solutions that would consider the needs of the present day inhabitants? These were some of the questions that formed in my head as a young urbanist.. Only later did I start putting these observations into context and thinking about temporality, urban landscapes in a continuous flux and formulating an interest in how could cities be planned in a way that would adapt to often sharp, unplanned changes (in economy, politics, demographics etc.). I developed a further interest in indeterminate landscapes, in-between spaces that have lost their initial use and are yet to find a new direction.

From looking at "indeterminate" landscapes in Tallinn, I understood that there is some kind of a common interest in (re)interpreting those spaces – be it artistic ambitions or bottom-up short term planning initiatives aiming to trigger urban change or more large scale alternative urban visions. Complex landscapes of contemporary cities are often characterised by a series of open spaces and abandoned structures with no apparent function. What ever kind is the pattern of urban development, it seems that cities can not exist without producing (temporary) indeterminate space. In the context of Tallinn the questions of landownership, identifying stakeholders, effects of restitution, changes in regime and economic climate become central when trying to understand urban change.

Tallinn has an urban typology that is many ways not unique, but helps to demonstrate the changing character of urban landscapes. I will be using the term post-socialist landscapes when looking at the city and this needs to be explained. When talking about concrete cities in the former Soviet Union, it is important to be careful when using the term 'post-socialism' as this might lead to diminishing the reasons behind urban development patterns. However, I find it important to bring the notion in, as there are distinctive qualities in many post socialist cities, that are relevant to approach in relation to indeterminacy. A focus on concrete cut in time and change of planning systems also enables to tackle the relationship between space and time. However, I remain consciously critical when using that term.

The hypothesis of this paper is that a new type of urbanism can emerge on indeterminate spaces, urban wastelands, land where projects are on hold as these undefined spaces offer an opportunity for the public to get involved, develop an interest and experiment with alternative planning ideas. However, this opportunity has so far often been missed. Voids need to be seen as potential, but in order to do that it is important to challenge the present paradigm of long term master planning. As Peter Bishop and Lesley Williams have suggested, urban planning today is a watershed, a significant period where the way cities are created is re-conceptualized. The period is characterised by emergence of alternatives to typical master planning, so called phased planning with a number of temporary stages (Bishop, Williams, 2012).

However, these flexible perspectives in reality often still seem radical and rarely implemented through policy.

I suggest that through typomorphological analysis, observing, documenting and analysing (creating 'eclectic atlases' (Boeri, 2003) of culturally, socially or economically motivated (temporary) appropriations of indeterminate sites and mapping continuous urban change, a basis can be created for developing a new model of cooperation between stakeholders in planning, redefining the role of an urban planner as well as influencing policy making in terms of re-conceptualising developing private property in relation to the wider urban context. This paper focuses on documenting and understanding urban change in Tallinn by introducing three case studies. The sites of interest include the inner city coastline (the former Patarei prison, Linnhall, Fishers harbour and beach, the harbour area), Kopli lines (an abandoned residential area on the Kopli peninsula) and inner city wastelands, particularly the former Estonian Academy of Arts site as an example of an inner city void.

Research questions and methodology

The paper is based on a set of research questions that approach the question of urban change. The central research question is formulated as follows:

How have the change from socialism to market economy and the related ownership shifts shaped the typomorphology of Tallinn? Could understanding these changes be relevant to devising a more flexible approach to urban planning?

The paper brings together three sets of topics: the question of temporality and urban change; indeterminacy and in-between spaces; and the post-socialist condition and the context of Tallinn. By analysing the case studies I aim to find out how has the urban landscape of Tallinn changed since the collapse of the Soviet Union. By looking at the physicality of the city, I aim to explore what effect does a significant change in the planning system have on the urban development. By exploring the three case studies, I am essentially asking how is power manifested in space and what specific spatial patterns and processes characterise the capitalist society. How do these processes change during the development of capitalism?

Approaching urban change through indeterminate landscapes or so called in-between spaces provides a unique perspective on urban development/non-development. How to understand and document urban change is a question a number of scholars have battled with. Even more researchers (Lehtovuori, 2010, Tuan 1997, Haydn, Temel, 2006, Massey, 2005 etc.) make endless efforts to understand the relationship between time and space and temporality of space. My specific project aims to find out if documenting changes in urban typomorphology as well as plans can be useful for understanding urban change and temporal processes.

By exploring specific sites in Tallinn, mapping the urban change that has occurred over the course of two decades, I am looking at the relationship between temporality of space, urban indeterminacy, land ownership and policy decisions. By looking at indeterminacy I have an opportunity to ask what is the value of in-between spaces and how could they be incorporated in planning/creating better cities. Looking at indeterminate urban spaces as a breeding ground for urban innovations is something that has been done for some time now (Haydn, Temel, 2006, Bishop, Williams, 2012, Hentilä, Bengs, Nagy, 2002), but what are the specific (land) uses that emerge on these sites, are they formal or informal is a question that can be looked into further. What does it mean for a space to be wasted in a city and how do this often temporary urban situations effect the urban experience?

By addressing three sets of terms: urban indeterminacy, temporal urbanizations and post-socialist urbanizations, I aim both to understand the urban theory addressing the topic of temporary appropriations and urban indeterminacy as well as aim to look for relevant connections between the "landscapes of post" and various urban development patterns.

The Post-Socialist Urban Context

Post-socialist urbanisation has specific characteristics which to some degree manifest in most post-soviet cities: after the fall of the Soviet Union urban development has been influenced by the decline of industry, rapid suburbanisation, restitution and extensive privatisation. This has resulted in a fairly scattered urban landscapes, uneven development where dense new developments in central areas are contrasted with just as central urban wastelands where development has been delayed, border-zones that are left unused or continuously vacant sites where development is on hold. Further fragmentation has been brought forward by changes in economy and shifting population. Urban development in Tallinn, Estonia has since 1990s been strongly determined by private actors and urban planner remains in the role of an enabler

who mainly focuses on identifying development opportunities for the private developers, but not a more sustainable vision for the city. Public and private sectors have not yet found a path for cooperation. However, next to this we can witness a rise in self awareness of local communities and the citizen society who bring into the planning vocabulary such terms and concepts like participatory planning and community development.

The Eastern European context, more precisely the urban landscape and planning directions of Tallinn, are opened by analysing some points made by Sampo Ruoppila in an article "Eastern European cities in the making – temporary land use as a tool for cultural projects." published in 2004. Additionally I address some points addressed by Craig Young and Duncan Light about the post-socialist urban landscapes. Interesting are the changes that have taken place in perception, policies and approaches since the discussion surfaced in the early 2000s.

Post-socialism is a complex term which continues to be problematic in many ways, especially within that same 'post-socialist' context (it seems that most texts are written by Western authors and there continuously exists some sort of confusion about how to address the past) where it has until recently been treated with certain distance. A change in this discourse in Estonia has only happened in recent years. The topic seems to suddenly, however, be on the forefront of discussions – key terms of urban studies such as landscape, planning and urbanisation have all acquired an almost obligatory prefix "post-socialist-". Thus, when we talk about Eastern Europe, some sort of distinctness from the West but also a common ground with the rest of the former Soviet countries seems to be found in ideas of "post-socialist landscape", "post-socialist urbanisation" and "post-socialist planning". Many see the need for putting the term into context. It seems that some distance was needed in order to start approaching topics that are common in post-socialist urban development.

It is clear that the term typically indicates multiple social, economic and political changes that took place in East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. According to Young and Hirt the term has been developed to challenge the assumption that there was a clear cut change from command economy to market economy, from socialism to neo-liberal capitalism (Hirt, Young). So the term refers to how many former Soviet countries embraced and manipulated capitalism and in some cases "Europeanness" according to their own agendas. (Hirt, Young). In most cases, also in Tallinn, this means extensive privatisation and loss of public interest. Privatisation has meant that the state became less and less involved in social, cultural and public life and public space (Grzanic, 2007). The way urban space is organised is of course tightly connected to power relations. Craig Young and Duncan Light emphasise that the form of urban space is an expression of the dominant political regime. It means that whatever kind of landscapes can be looked at as ideological – be it socialist or neoliberal. Following that reasoning it can be expected that changes in political regime often bring with them changes in the organisation of space.

Several distinct changes took place in former Soviet cities. Piotr Lorens (2012) divides them into ones with structural importance – such as decline of traditional industries (and therefore emergence of urban vacancy) and ones depending on individual choices – for example suburbanisation, extensive development of commercial functions etc. (Lorens, 2010). According to Lorens, however, former socialist cities were not economically nor socially ready for these changes (low wages, lack of professionals on the field). The collapse of the Soviet Union was followed by a distinct wish to break away from the socialist system and this resulted in strong enforcement of neoliberal doctrine. In terms of spatial planning this has had an effect on urban planners, who tend to be limited to fill roles defined by developers and land owners. This limits the possibility of developing an overarching vision for the city as deal with general topics such as liveability, sustainability as well as general quality of urban landscape (Lorens, 2012).

It is important to take a note how many cities developed in Soviet Union: when socialist regimes took over (by 1948) the cities with already existing development patterns started to grow mostly outwards. New housing estates were built on the outskirts of cities, but the city centres remained industrial or under developed. Some of those new housing estates were never completely finished. After the collapse of the state socialism the focus of city centres have again become the focal point of urban development. Ruoppila writes that since 1990s the development of city centres was characterized by filling in the existing urban structure with new buildings. After the collapse of the Soviet union an effort was made to develop former industrial sites into office areas. However, the supply of these sites has in most bigger cities been large and even in 2010s a lot of them remain under developed. In 2004 Sampo Ruoppila suggested that this is a possibility for cultural actors to get involved. (Ruoppila, 2004), however, this idea has found little realization due to private ownership being dominant and lack of funding. For this reason urban indeterminacy has often been longer than expected.

The main difference with the Western European situation is that while in for example Brussels and Helsinki culture has often assumed a strategically central role in policies dealing with regeneration (after the decline of industries in the 1970s) then in Eastern Europe private interests dominate and cultural policy has not been in the forefront of urban development. (Ruoppila, 2004). Other differences compared to Western cities with equal importance include the fact that since the conversions only started in 1990s there are considerably more indeterminate sites in Eastern cities (Ruoppila, 2004). The post-socialist landscape should provide an interesting field for experimentation with for example temporary uses. However, with no guarantees or support these uses often remain marginal.

Understanding urban indeterminacy

The topic of urban indeterminacy is especially relevant in urban contexts that have faced a sharp change. Urban indeterminacy is a topic that has attracted theorists and activists alike for number of decades. It is theoretically nuanced and abundant field. Gil Doron has argued that urban indeterminacy is actually not a new phenomenon, these spaces that lack a defined use for a period of time, have existed in the city since antiquity. However, since 2000s there seems to be an increasing interest in defining, exploring and interpreting these spaces (Doron, 1997). This trend has also reached Tallinn and other post-socialist cities. But how should one conceptualise urban indeterminacy?

One of the dominant terms used to refer to urban indeterminacy is “no-man's land” - a term taken from the First World War referring to a zone between entrenched positions that is extremely difficult yet extremely necessary to inhabit. The number of these zones in contemporary terms is increasing in many cities, but instead they are no longer only seen as areas of danger and decay, zones of underclass, but also spaces of new kind of ambiguity, uncertainty of meaning. (Moods, 2000). In legal terms usually derelict land is defined as being abandoned by its owner. However, if this would be used as the only criterion for definition, many relevant aspects of indeterminacy would be left out. It has turned out that indeterminate landscape has proved to be more difficult to define – definitions can't be based solely on ownership, visual qualities or even use. Kenneth L. Wallwork has suggested that some kind of a bridge should be created between the economic and aesthetic definitions. For example it is possible for a land to appear degraded without it being economically derelict (and vice versa) (Wallwork, 1974). Often the definition is derived from the visual qualities of the derelict land – there is a long tradition of literary description which equates for example industrialisation with squalor of the landscape. Most definitions suggest this ambivalence (Wallwork, 1974). Hannah Jones' idea of awkward space could be seen as an example of this ambivalence. Awkwardness being an 'inharmonious quality or condition'. The truth is that no matter how well cities are planned eventually there are ambivalent or unresolved spaces. Important in this case is the question if this awkwardness is thoroughly a negative characteristic of space or could it bring forward some new possibilities, alternative ways to understand cities (Jones, 2007). In economic terms this awkwardness can be looked as the lacking of use, but it is also aesthetic awkwardness which can be described with the word uncanny – something different from the everyday draws the attention of the observer.

Panu Lehtovuori looks at vacant sites as full of potential. He claims that more than in neat and regulated centres, a genuine, idiosyncratic experiencing is possible on urban wastelands. He names this attachment that can be formed to space in these sites 'weak place'. This idea suggests that the notion of place is not closed and physically bounded, but rather open and porous. Lehtovuori refers to Stefano Boeri's approach to vacant sites from 1993 when this was still a fairly undefined field. Boeri approached these spaces by calling them 'new nameless' spaces. Since these sites have acquired a vast number of names and definitions and through that also in a way lost some of their indeterminacy. Interestingly Boeri distinguishes so called 'new nameless spaces', terrain vague from other vacant sites in the city – terrain vagues are sites that do not possess a clear or univocal identity and seem to lack any identity what so ever. Contrary to other unclear sites terrain vague's seem to resist all definitions (Lehtovuori, 2010).

Though approaching urban indeterminate landscapes has in many ways changed since the 1990s and early 2000s and these zones are often viewed as sites of alternative economy, this idea of nothingness, vacuum, no-go areas seems to remain. Dylan Trigg has looked at these spaces through the idea of “nothingness” that he defines as a vantage point in which the absent past is traceable in the unformed present. He looks at ruins, waste landscapes as privileged spaces in contemporary urban landscape – they have the capability to mirror an alternate past/present/future (Trigg, 2009). Despite an abundance of signs/uses/traces, indeterminate landscapes seem to suggest a certain idea of “tabula rasa”, an empty page filled with potential. According this definition waste landscapes can be seen as an arena for new types of urban practices.

Temporal cities

Indeterminacy of so called 'post-' landscapes is a state that demonstrates how urban space is in constant flux and cities should not be looked at as fixed and finished entities. There are number of theoretical constructs that take this as a premise. In theory a number of scholars approach urban space as dynamic, but finding a way to include the concept of flexibility in practice is only developing. Bishop and Williams have put into words the question why both, the theory and practice of planning and design are so concerned with permanence when there is an abundance of evidence that cities consist of processes that are in one way or another temporary (Bishop, Williams, 2012). Several theorists claim that a new framework of urban land use planning is needed to cross the barrier between time and space. For example Jürgen Rosemann has expressed the idea that taking change as a premise would help us in having a bigger influence on urban processes (Rosemann, 2005). It is important to ask what is the relationship of alternative land use planning frameworks to land ownership and policy decisions when aiming to challenge dominant planning paradigms. The idea

that while time is dynamic, (urban) space is a stable entity should continuously be challenged. Post-socialist urban context is ideal for experimenting with these ideas.

In her book 'For Space' Doreen Massey (2005) makes several propositions for how to understand space. She suggests that we should recognize space as a product of interrelations, from the global to the local scale. Space should be understood as a sphere of coexisting heterogeneity that is always under construction. Space is always being made and is never finished, space is a story rather than a solid entity. She questions why have we so commonly connect space to ideas of stasis, closure and representation and not heterogeneity, relationality, liveliness. She argues that space continues to be looked at as a negative opposite of time, but the ideas of space and time should be looked at together. Temporality has unrealized implications on how we experience spatial.

Joanne Hudson refers to Harvey (1989a, 1989b), Pile et al (1999), Amin and Thrift (2002) and Oswalt (2005) when discussing the city as a highly differentiated entity. These scholars believe that it is of course possible to see regularities in urban social and spatial relationships, but despite of this the city is “concurrently chaotic and in perpetual flux” (Hudson, 2013). This leads to the discussion of the relationship between space and time. Understandings of space and time are ultimately embedded within each other. Hudson claims that previous theoretical understandings of space and time have typically imposed a distinction between the two concepts (Hudson, 2013)

„Time is understood as the domain of dynamism and progress, whereas space is regulated to the realm of stasis and thus excavated of any meaningful politics“ (May and Thrift, 2001, p.1).

Contemporary urban planning, policy and development in Tallinn and elsewhere seems to not consider that cities have always been dynamic entities and political and economic movements are reflected in the urban landscapes (Bishop, Williams, 2012). Cities are continuously evolving and in order to internalise this Bishop and Williams have suggested the idea of a four-dimensional city, by suggesting to look at time as an intrinsic dimension of urban development. The problem with traditional strategic planning is that by searching permanent final solutions the present day needs of people are not often considered – plans age and when they are being implemented they are often out-dated (Bishop, Williams, 2012). Bishop and Williams mainly look at the popular idea of temporary urbanism, but also suggest that it might hint that there is a fundamental change in the way our cities should be planned. They refer to sociologist Zygmunt Bauman who proposes a concept of liquid modernity. He argues that we have moved from a period that could be looked at as solid modernity (based on the belief in a perfect world) to a phase where we no longer believe in perfection, and end result and look at change as the only constant. Liquid modernity is characterised by certain uncertainty (Bishop, Williams, 2012). As follows I will briefly explore four case studies from Tallinn.

Inner City Wastelands/The former site of the Estonian Academy of Arts

Tallinn is characterized by relatively low density, inner city with an abundance of vacant plots. These sites are often provisionally utilized as parking spaces managed by private companies. There are three companies in Tallinn that offer such a service: EuroPark, CityPark and Ühisteenus. Here I will focus on EuroPark as a case study. EuroPark is widespread and operates on majority of indeterminate sites in Tallinn. On exceptionally visible case of this sort of temporary use and unfruitful plans is on the former site of The Estonian Academy of Arts.

The Estonian Academy of Arts was situated on Laikmaa street since 1917. However, the building was not suitable for contemporary needs and plans of demolishing and new construction had been in the air for some year. The construction of the new building on site was planned for the years 2008-2010. The architecture competition took place in 2008 and was one by Danish architects who designed a project called 'Art Plaza' that gains a lot of positive critical acclaim. The new Academy of Arts would rise next to high rises built in the 1990s and early 2000. Later in the same year, however, EAA faced financial trouble. Despite this the old building was demolished in 2009 and the construction was postponed to 2011. The site is temporarily taken into use as a parking space managed by EuroPark. EuroPark is a company that makes it possible for landowners to make profit from their land during a period of uncertainty or plans being on hold. Private parking as an interim use of urban wastelands is generally seen to be an accepted form of land use, not just in Tallinn, but it is a widespread practice across Europe. This situation is alleviated to an extent by also using the site for temporary art installations.

By autumn of 2013 the EAA has to abandon the plan to build a new university building on the site for financial, but also number of other reasons and decides instead to renovate an old factory for the academy. In 2015 the plot of the academy is put on sale, but continues to function as a parking space that is occasionally also used for art installations. The temporary parking solution on a prime central location has continued for more than 5 years and will exist for an unlimited period.

This is generally accepted situation and understandable, however, there has been occasions where legitimacy of this practice of using indeterminate sites as parking lots, has been questioned, especially by theorists, city officials and the media. The main issue that tends to come up is that often these sites used for parking have a designated use marked in the detailed plan (e.g. housing, public functions) and it is questionable whether these spaces can be used differently

during an indeterminate period. Strictly following the legislation would probably result in a number of those parking spaces having to be closed down, some of them requiring additional investment into infrastructure. As this solution is usually seen as temporary the legality of it is however often overlooked.

This is a case study that exemplifies the haste that is characteristic to many post-socialist urban development plans. Often the visions are not derived from the present conditions, but based on a prosperous future vision. I propose that the widespread practice of using inner city wastelands as parking spaces can be viewed as a 'disguised as temporary' solution. By this I refer to the fact that because this approach to urban space is considered to be temporary, it is also accepted, even though in reality it has several questionable aspects. By this notion I want to refer to the fact that temporary is a notion that seems to make projects less threatening and therefore also seemingly less significant. In the theory of temporary urbanism this aspect of not being threatening to the prevailing order, is seen often as an enabler of innovation, but often when it comes to private land and private interest the results are different. Disguised as temporary also refers to the more strategic aims of contemporary urban planning, meaning that the focus of creating urban change is in long term plans, rather than reacting to contemporary situation like tactical urbanism would suggest.

Kopli Lines: An Abandoned Residential Area

Kopli lines is a housing district, that on the contrary to dominant trends, was not privatised in the 1990s and belonged to the city till the summer of 2015. This has been explained as being a conscious decision by the city aiming to support rapid development of the area as one unit. The neighbourhood situated in North-Tallinn, on the Kopli peninsula consists of barracks built for factory workers in the early 20th century and a railway going through (also used for transporting goods today). The area has been looked at as problematic since its emergence, but in recent decades it has become a location for informal inhabitants and illegal activities. The chosen approach to solve the situation by the city has been the try to relocate the inhabitants and sell the potentially profitable seaside location to a private developer. However this was not successful for a long time. Finding a developer for the area turned out to be problematic for several reasons. The main obstacle was the fact that the developer needed to develop new infrastructure systems that the city could not afford. The city continued, despite of these problems, kept the concept of general strategic development of the area. The residents of the area are being displaced to new social housing units and the city is working on marketing the area to preferably international developers. In August 2015 the area was sold to a developer and last inhabitants were moved out. The regeneration of the area will start in 2016 and take place in stages over the next decades.

The situation that characterised the area for a long period could be characterised by lack of plan for the future. This indeterminate situation kept the city as well as the residents in a field of unknown, making it impossible for them to invest into their living environment. While being in the process of being emptied for potential future development the area became a location for unofficial housing for the homeless and the excluded, a field of non-political squatting. The city government was focused on finding a developer who would take responsibility for the whole area and was not interested in the mid-period – a potential of several years of no use, but dereliction and continuous illicit activities – a permanently temporary state. In order to find a developer the area had to be empty of inhabitants. Developers were not seen to be interested in areas that have a settled use.

This case is interesting because the future plans for the attractive area have formulated over several decades. The quick plans devised for development after the collapse of the Soviet Union shadowed the possibility of small scale temporary investments that could have improved the quality of life of the inhabitants during the mid period. The general opinion of the city government seems to be that temporary uses (especially those emerging from bottom-up practices) might be possible on the cultural sphere, but not in social. Therefore right now in-between uses on indeterminate city owned properties are not considered to be an alternative to conserving the space – especially because the situation of people living in a run-down area waiting for development might have an influence on the atmosphere of the area.

The municipal land and housing district has caused a lot of controversy over the years and I would propose it to be referred to as 'permanently temporary' – an uncertain situation that keeps the developments in a still position. This case is useful in interpreting temporal state as a quality and a characteristic of urban space. This case is relevant as it enables to challenge the qualities that emerge from temporal states and demonstrated that temporary situations can be a top-down strategic approach in order to achieve a more permanent goal. It seems that temporary states first of all occur because of an underlying more permanent aims that often exclude the temporary uses that have emerged in between. I propose that this approach from the side of the city is at the same time strategic and tactical – but in opposition to the theory of temporary urbanism and the positive view, it can be viewed as a tactical non-approach meaning that the development of the area is left to be directed by the international markets and accepted uses for 'valuable locations' while having underlying strategic goals.

Inner City Seaside: The Patarei Prison, Kalarand, Linnahall, The Harbour Area

Tallinn is a unique coastal city in terms of most of its seaside being privatised. This has created a situation where the inner city seaside and a number of institutions on the site have been in an indeterminate state for a number of years. This has created an opportunity for experimentation and slow development where newer urban trends can be taken into account. However, the future of the area continues to be somewhat unclear. This vast area encompasses a former closed industrial area, Kalarand, in the city centre that was privatised after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but has remained in an indeterminate state for more than 20 years, a former Patarei prison with temporary uses and Linnahall – an abandoned concert hall built for the 1980. Olympic games and the harbour area.

This case study covers a rather vast and diverse area, but I have decided to look at it as one because of the geography of the city. The case study can be viewed as a void built into the city surrounded by institutions that lost their function. These types of voids often characterize post-soviet or post-war cities that tend to grow outwards. Inner city plots with ambiguous plans or strong dependency on the economic climate tend to function as unofficial parks, no-man's lands for long periods of time.

All the mentioned sites on the coastline have faced the issue of plans that have not come into fruition. The Patarei fort functioned as a prison till 2002 (the last prisoner from the prison hospital leaves in 2005). A number of new uses have been suggested for the building over the years (for example in 2003 the building is considered as an alternative location for The Estonian Academy of Arts), in 2008 the site was seen as a potential location for the largest public square in Estonia. In 2009 the site so far owned by the state was put on sale, but a buyer was not found. In 2010 a public beach opened on the site and to this day the site continues to operate as a venue for festivals, events and as a museum. At present day the future of the site continues to be unclear, a conference is held for brainstorming for alternative uses.

The Kalarand beach right next to the prison faces similar rocky path with various plans. The initial plan was to develop Kalarand into a high end residential district, but the economic crisis and opposition of the locals have made this area a location for temporary uses. It has in recent years been taken into use as a temporary public beach, however now is the time that the private ambitions seem to get a new start. I see this as a relevant case to observe in upcoming years to provide a perspective on what is and effect of temporary uses and what happens to temporary uses after dominant plans become realized. Kalarand is in a sense of laboratory that has enabled experimentation with variety of forms of collaboration, triggered citizen activism, enabled testing the idea of non-planning and organic urbanism, and had an influence in figuring out conflict resolution in planning questions. This demonstrates that indeterminacy can be a trigger for a number of urban processes and discussions.

The Kalarand beach is bordered with Linnahall on the East – a former concert hall built for the 1980. Moscow Olympic Games. After regaining the independence the city became the owner of the hall and it continues to operate as a concert hall relatively unsuccessfully until it completely closes in 2009. A number of alternative plans surface: an idea to develop the building into a conference hall, a casino. There are plans of finding international developers who would collaborate with the city and also plans to sell the property, there are plans to develop it as one unit or as separate parts. However, most plans fail for number of reasons, one thing remains certain and that is that the building is under protection and needs to be preserved. In October 2015 a special committee for the development of the building is created by the city and new plans surface. In the meantime the building stands empty, the public space available on top of the site is actively used by citizens and tourists.

This case study consisting of number of sites on which developments have been stuck or on hold demonstrates the need for in-between solutions for indeterminate site. A number of projects that have take place on these sites have been successful. Citizens have created a relationship with these indeterminate sites and this in turn has made them more involved and active and offered a certain 'free space' that could be viewed as uniquely post-socialist. The need to redefine continues even more than two decades after establishing a new planning practice.

Conclusion

The urban landscape of Tallinn and many other post-socialist city can really be seen as an arena for urban experiments, but this opportunity could be seized more vigorously. Cities that have faced a sharp change in regime, but also economy are faced with many challenges that when approached with flexible planning perspective could be seen as opportunities. Panu Lehtovuori has written that planning in the future should become an enabling practice, a research that interprets possibilities and finds actors who might bring these possibilities alive (Lehtovuori, 2010). Something similar has been

also written by Tania Toft:

„Proposed [...] is rethinking of 'planning' as a moderation process rather than the establishment of spatial structures, in temporal cultural planning with mediated events. I do not propose a replacement of well-established planning paradigms, only that we open these up to creative adjustments to the cultural transformations of our cities.“ (Toft, 2011:7).

Indeterminate sites that are in-between long term uses could potentially be breeding ground for urban innovations. The cases studies briefly opened demonstrated the need for a flexible approach.

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Bio

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