

Infrastructure, Sovereignty and Urbanity in the Baltic Region

This project is focused on the shifting meanings of infrastructures of cities currently being radically redefined through modes of technological innovation, geographical rescaling and concomitant mobilities. The workshop brings together scholars from the fields of

Anthropology, Sociology, History, Geography and Economics in order to critically discuss what is involved in the transformation from the modernist era organisation of urban space into current conditions of urbanity, and to speculate as to what may be further developments and consequences of this. Within this setting the workshop asks particularly about the changing modes of sovereignty as traced in various dimensions of city dynamics.

In the era of late socialism and late modernist capitalism, urban space was the very obvious product of the dictates of the state. In socialist cities, political decisions at the state level + infrastructure modernisation generated particular modes of habitation, work and citizenship. In the case of Visaginas, a new town built to service the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant starting from the mid 1970s, in many ways this looked like a success story of modern urbanism: the town is close to a cheap energy source and place of work, pedestrian-friendly, with a well-planned micro-district structure, a highly developed school and culture infrastructure, pleasantly embedded in nature, with decorative architecture features in well designed public spaces, etc. Problems started when the nuclear technology exploited in

Visaginas was deemed inappropriate in the new scalar context of the EU after the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe. Thus, after the end of state socialism in 1991 the inhabitants of Visaginas were confronted with a set of major changes in a complex setting of multi-lateral and multi-scalar influences. We consciously organize the workshop in Visaginas. While its history is rather specific, our discussion of the various scales in which urban space is produced changed will place this particular case in a broader European context.

Among the questions we would like to address in Visaginas are: what do current practical re-uses, symbolic re-interpretations and political re-instrumentalisations of urban infrastructures reveal about an emergent social order? What kinds of relations between infrastructure, welfare, work and politics are today developing in the towns and cities of the European periphery against a backdrop of a complexity of spatial scales, transforming nation-states, long-term economic austerity and increasing international instability? What kind of outcomes should we expect from the fact that in the states of Central and Eastern Europe, the EU is a highly visible player investing in new infrastructure projects and encouraging active citizenship at the urban level?

Organization

Laboratory of Critical Urbanism,
European Humanities University

Target group

Scholars in Urban Planning,
Cultural Studies, European Studies,
History, Sociology, Anthropology,
Geography and Communication
from German, Lithuania, Latvia,
Estonia and Belarus working on the link
between infrastructure and urbanism
in the Baltics & Germany.

Partner

Herder-Institute Marburg,
Urban Institute Riga,
Tallinn University,
EHU Center for German Studies,
German Historical Institute Warsaw,
Laimikis.lt

Support

Baltisch-Deutsches
Hochschulkontor Riga

Info & Contact

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International workshop

Infrastructure, Sovereignty and Urbanity in the Baltic Region

4-6 May

Vilnius/Visaginas



May 4th

1
pm

arrival of non-Lithuanian participants,
Ecotel, Slucko g. 8

2
pm

Community Management, Gentrification & Public discourse:

Jekaterina Lavrinec (Vilnius), Laimikis.lt
**Inclusive neighbourhood development: from creative
community initiatives to the alternative topologies**
Ecotel, Slucko g. 8

4
pm

Felix Ackermann (Warsaw)
**A modern infrastructure.
The Vilna power plant as an example of
earlier XXth century crowd funding**
Museum of Energy and Technology, Rinktinės g. 2

5
pm

Public Key Note

Asta Vonderau (Mainz/Stockholm):
**The Making of State and Infrastructure.
Implementing the Cloud in Sweden's North**
Comments: **Andrei Sciapanau** (Vilnius) &
Benjamin Cope (Vilnius)
Museum of Energy and Technology, Rinktinės g. 2

6³⁰
pm

reception,
Restaurant Neries vingis, Upės g. 5

May 5th

7³⁰
am

Transfer to Train station from Ecotel,
Slucko g. 8

8⁰⁴
am

Transfer to Visaginas by train
from Vilnius train station

10³⁰
am

Check-in at the Hostel "Kolegija Bendrabutis"
Festivalio g. 9

11
am

City Tour led by Participants of the Summer School
on Sources of Urbanity

12³⁰
am

dinner Kavinė,
Vilties g. 16

1³⁰
pm

Workshop Introduction

Siarhei Liubimau (Vilnius):
Urban change from the angle of border studies
Felix Ackermann (Warsaw) & **Benjamin Cope** (Vilnius):
**Infrastructure, Sovereignty and Urbanity
in the Baltic Region**
Tautinių kultūrų ir bendrijų namai, Vilties g. 1

2³⁰
pm

Epistemologies of Urban Change after 1989

Felix Ringel (Berlin/Wien):
**Sidestepping Decline by Re-Appropriating the Future? -
On Postindustrial Urban Regeneration,
Sustainability and Temporal Agency**
Jens Adam (Berlin):
**The remaking of Post-Industrial Spaces
in an Anthropological view**
Comment: **Olga Sasunkevich** (Vilnius)
coffee break

4
pm
4³⁰
pm

Comparing Urban Regimes in Post-Nuclear Cities

Alexandra Kasatkina (St. Petersburg):
**"Infrastructural Citizenship" and "State-Scale
Approach": Local Activism of the Atomic Industry
Veterans in Obninsk**
Jevgenija Gubkina (Kiyv):
**The post-nuclear town of Slavutych:
Late Soviet architecture as nationalized heritage?**
Comment: **Andrei Sciapanau** (Vilnius)

6
pm

Mapping Visaginas

Exhibition opening:
Results of the Summer school on Sources of Urbanity
Viktorija Stalybka (Vilnius). Design project presentation:
Who is Visaginas
Visagino kultūros centras, Vilties g. 1

7³⁰
pm

reception Art Pizzerija,
Veteranų g. 9

May 6th

8
am

breakfast in *Kolegija Valgykla,
Festivalio g. 7*

9
am

Modernist Infrastructures and Local Participatory Urbanism

Andrey Vozyanov (Regensburg):
**Urban Electric Transport in Ukraine since 2005 -
the path of participation and
enthusiasm-dependency**
Tauri Tuvikene (Tallinn):
**Making urban mobility infrastructures via activism?
Some reflections from Tallinn, Estonia**
Comment: **Andrei Karpeka** (Minsk)

10³⁰
am

Coffee break

11
am

Agenda-setting from Above vs. Urbanism from Below?

Indrė Ruseckaitė (Vilnius):
**Between Architecture History, Architectural Work
and Urban Activism in Post-Soviet neighborhoods**
Jonas Büchel (Riga):
**City culture and communication:
Urban participation and social movements
in times of the economical crisis**
Comment: **Elena Archipovaitė** (Vilnius)

12³⁰
am

lunch at Kavinė,
Vilties g. 16

2
pm

Urban Participation in Changing Political Configurations

Miodrag Kuč (Berlin):
**The Periphery becomes the Center:
The Moabit Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik**
Tina Veihelmann (Berlin):
**Wolves are back and we are still here
Surprising News about Shrinking,
Growth and Projections in East Germany.**
Comment: **Terezie Lokšová** (Prague)

3³⁰
pm

An Agenda for the post-post-socialist town? Open questions towards Infrastructure, Sovereignty and Urbanity

Moderation: **Felix Ackermann** (Warsaw)

18⁰⁴
pm

train back to Vilnius