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Resource Efficient Planning of Housing Developments: Hamburg (Post-1990s) and Niš (Post-Socialism) Narratives



IMPRINT

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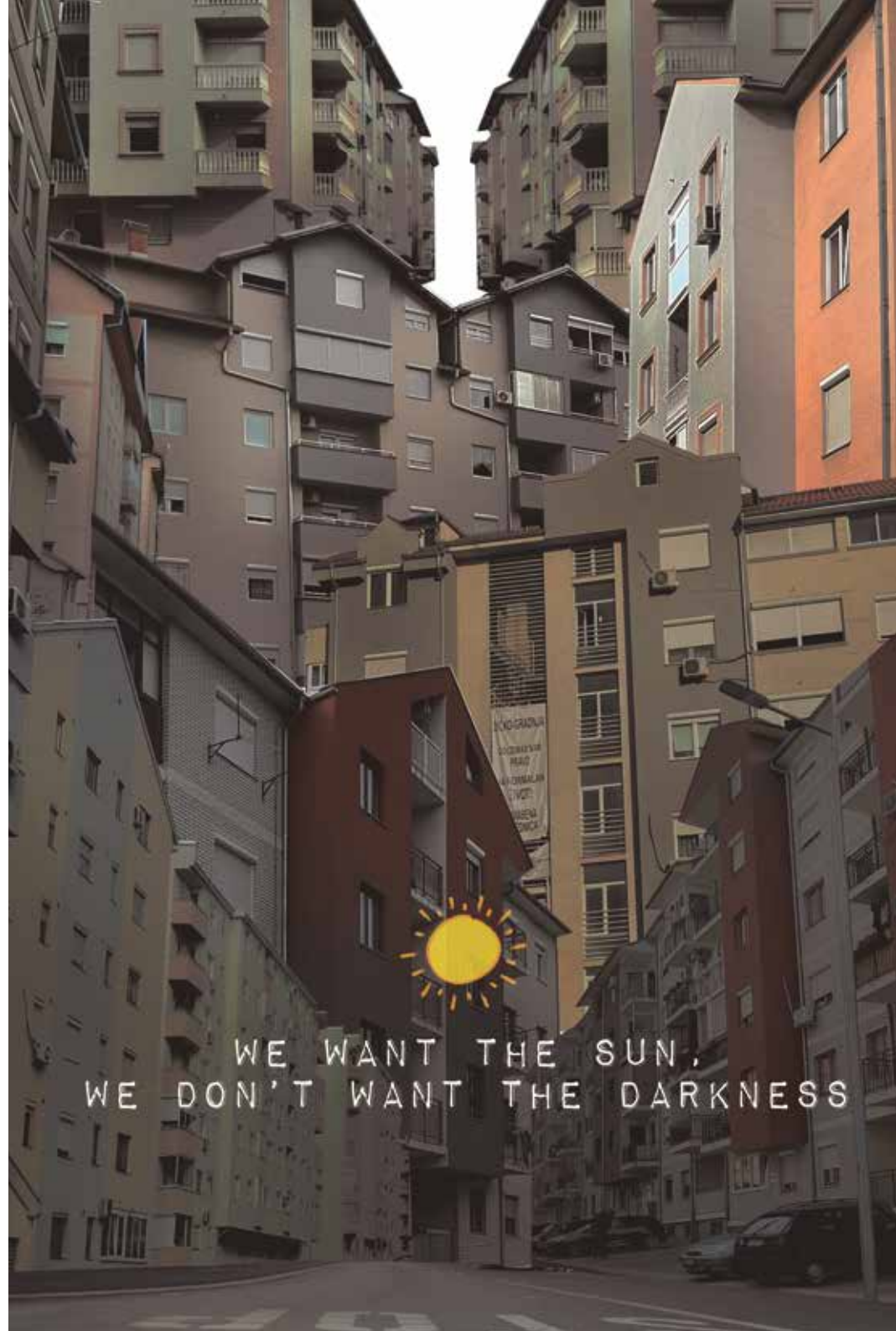
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*EAST-WEST DIALOGUE: UNIVERSITY DIALOGUE
WITH THE WESTERN BALKANS 2019*



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Resource Efficient Planning of Housing Developments:
Hamburg (Post-1990s) and Niš (Post-Socialism) Narratives

Introduction

This publication offers a first glimpse of two different neighbourhoods, built under different cultural, geographic, socio-economic and path dependent conditions, through the visual and oral narratives of residents, workers and visitors. These narratives reflect upon the historical development of each neighbourhood, highlight considerations and/or neglect for resource efficient planning, pinpoint current challenges and opportunities and discuss opportunities for participation. The photos and interviews featured show two characteristically different urban realities which were planned, designed and built (at-least partially) at the turn of the twenty first century.

“Somborska- Studenička” is a neighbourhood in Niš, within the large Somborska housing area on the city outskirts. It can be said that is a prime example of post-socialist urban development and so-called “investor urbanism” which is reflected in the formation of privately-owned individual plots with individual multi-story housing exclusively assigned to the market, without any consideration for the wider context. The built-up area of the neighbourhood consists of medium-sized or small blocks of densely built-up large four to seven story multi-family housing buildings within an unfinished street network and a car-dominated landscape surrounded by a complete lack of quality open and green space. In contrast, the neighborhoods within the Neuallermöhe district, break away from the “Towers in the park” style of development which was prominent during the 1960s and 1970s and is characterized by four story buildings, but also features a high proportion of row and single-family homes, interwoven by canals and ample green space - hence the neighbourhood’s theme “Living on Water.” While Neuallermöhe was once considered a model district from a design perspective, social and economic inclusion within the district remain a challenge. Its development was also marked by the collapse of the Soviet Union, a time when many Russian Germans moved to the district and today, the neighbourhood is still home to a large number of foreigners and their families.

The district of Neuallermöhe was formed in 2011, joining the centuries-old village of Allermöhe with the large neighborhood developments of Allermöhe-East (built in the 1980s) and Allermöhe-West (built in the 1990s). Neuallermöhe is located around 15 km to the south-east of Hamburg’s City Center and is well connected via two train stations, ample bus service and access to the nearby highway. In 2012, Neuallermöhe was chosen to be part of the Framework Program for Integrated Urban District Development (RISE) Program. This program aims to improve the conditions of urban districts with special development needs. As a part of the program a problem and potential analysis was completed from which the four main goals for district and its neighborhoods have been outlined. These goals

include 1) an attractive, family friendly district with a positive image and housing opportunities for families of different incomes household sizes 2) well maintained and attractive public spaces 3) functional sub-centers offering a range of goods and services and 4) a well networked school and public facility system offering diverse opportunities for residents. Since the program began, a broad range of activities and workshops have taken place to help achieve these goals and involve the community in the development of the district. Some improvements which have been made as part of the program include the renewal of public playgrounds, the addition of a street workout facility, new pedestrian pathway connections and a number of different sporting, cultural and neighbourhood clean-up events. Furthermore, thanks to the program, the neighbourhood now has a district advisory council, a community fund, a neighbourhood newspaper and a working group on the environment. The city has taken an active role in making improvements to physical infrastructure and enhancing possibilities for participation in urban development as part of the RISE program and a great deal of work is being done to improve the image of the neighbourhood, with hopes to attract people of all income groups.

The development of the multi-family housing neighbourhood "Somborska-Studenička" started in 2005. It is located at the city outskirts and is part of the existing Somborska housing area which consists of predominantly single-family housing. According to the General Urban Plan from 1995, the new housing area was to be built on the greenfield location as multi-family housing based on the principles of neighborhood units, with all necessary facilities for the neighborhood such as schools, kindergartens, commercial contents, green and recreational spaces. However, due to the political, socio-economic and institutional conditions during the post-socialist period, the area developed in a different manner, shaped by so called "investor urbanism". This situation has led to total space fragmentation and the absence of spatial integrity.

Due to the economic crisis and reduced public finances, the development of public infrastructure lagged behind residential construction, which resulted in the non-existence of basic traffic infrastructure in a completely built neighborhood for over a decade. On the other hand, streets are the only public open space, whereas other forms of public open space are completely ignored. Market-oriented housing development focused on maximum utilization of the individual building plot, without consideration of broader context. This resulted in: 1) low environmental comfort particularly due to the high occupancy level (exceeding the planned and defined norms in some instances), a marginal share of green areas and extremely small distances between buildings in some cases; 2) a low level of safety and accessibility due to: poorly designed pedestrian and vehicle traffic patterns, total absence of pedestrian and vehicle traffic regulations, inadequate materialization of open spaces and noticeable absence of urban equipment such as benches and street lights; 3) low privacy and 4) poor social interaction reduced to necessary activities only.

Though the housing complex is completely built in the post-socialist period (last 15 years), it has also experienced some post-socialist transformations typical for inherited housing estates from the socialist period: extensions of living space through individual interventions (converting balconies into closed spaces), construction of individual balconies, transformation of ground floor living space into commercial space (“garage capitalism”), etc.

“Somborska-Studenička” is an example of post-socialist urban development, marked by intense processes of urban changes where new housing development occurs as a one of the most important type of urban transformation. In the absence of clearly defined national and local housing and urban policies, its characteristics were shaped by market-oriented restructuring, entrepreneurial attitudes and a laissez-faire approach to urban planning, as well as by increasing the role of the private sector/investors. Such as institutional and regulatory environment led to an incremental style of urban and housing policy actions which attempted more to remediate the problems than to strategically intervene, which is also noticeable at the project site.

It can be concluded that characteristics of the “Somborska-Studenička” such as high density, the absence of public open space and greenery, the absence of clear differentiation of pedestrian and motor traffic, as well as the absence of spatial integrity of the area, are direct consequences of post-socialist urban development and planning framework at national and local level. Due to the accumulated problems, in recent years residents have been actively involved in the development of the neighborhood through self-organization. In direct negotiations with local authorities, they are trying to make life more pleasant, primarily by saving existing and introducing new green and open space. It should be noted that “Somborska-Studenička” does not have problems with social and economic inclusion because this mix was present from the beginning of its development.

The visual and oral narratives invite the reader to view these two different neighbourhoods from the perspectives of the people who live in and/or frequent the neighbourhoods themselves. They showcase the different challenges inherent within each neighbourhood, but also hint at opportunities for their sustainable development. Students from Hamburg and Niš came to the conclusion in mutual discussions that, despite the differences, some of the problems or perceptions of residents are similar.



Oberbillw

Allermöher
Wiesen
Landschaftskorridor
Allermöhe

Westensee

Grüne Mitte

Hamburg-Neuller Möhe West

Hamburg-Neuller Möhe West

See hinterm
Horn



Source: openstreetmap.org (23.11.2020). Neuller Möhe, Hamburg, Germany. 53°28'51.2"N 10°09'38.5"E

Reitbrook

Neuallermöhe District

Hamburg, Germany







Hamburg Narratives

Residents, visitors and workers were interviewed about the historical development and resource efficient planning of Neullermöhe and its current challenges and opportunities. The interviews serve as inspiration for their corresponding photographic narratives.



*“It is totally green,
you have many
possibilities to move
yourself.”*

Elisabeth Fischer
68
Pensioner



See p. 12 - 15

Elisabeth used to live in Bergedorf and now is a resident of Neuallermöhe since 1980. She states that even though urbanization is changing the character of the area, it is still full of nature and it is very easy and fast to access the rural areas of Hamburg, even with a bike.

However, she says that when the neighborhood was just partially built, she used to go with her kids on bike tours around the Marshlands, and now it has become more difficult to reach those areas of the city.

What she likes the most is that the neighborhood offers many possibilities to “move yourself” in an absolutely green, open space.

On the other hand, she believes there are enough playgrounds for children, but not many indoor places of reunion where young people can gather and meet, saying, *“they have to organize everything privately or in an open space.”*

Elisabeth also expresses concern about the security in the neighborhood, she says the police are not as aware of the area anymore as they were in the past years.

“Nowadays you are afraid to speak to strange people,” she said. “You are scared someone could attack you, because the people are getting more disrespectful, and not only young but also adults, they think they can do whatever they want.”



Michael K.
61
Pensioner

See p. 16 - 19 

Michael has been living in Neuallermöhe-Ost since 1987 and was one of the first residents to move into the development after construction. Having lived in the area since it was new, Michael has witnessed many changes take place.

He first spoke of demographics. Many of the older residents have moved away over the years, and the newer residents tend to be younger. Also, the neighborhood is home to many lower-income and unemployed individuals. This brought up one of the neighborhood's problems, according to Michael. He mentioned that in the last ten years or so, many shops have closed because there simply aren't enough customers.

“Essentially, we have everything that we need.”

He had several positive things to say about the neighborhood, however. There is abundant green space, and many opportunities to get exercise. He likes the fact that there are multiple playgrounds where he can bring his grandson. When asked about his favorite part of the neighborhood, he mentioned the canals; during nice weather you can take out small paddle boats.

While Michael mentioned that he sometimes travels to Bergedorf for certain amenities, he believes that the neighborhood has a lot to offer, and he enjoys living there. In the words of this long-time Neuallermöhe resident, *“essentially, we have everything that we need.”*



















“It would be good to have a shopping center... That would be a big wish for me.”

Emma
59
Clerk



See p. 22 - 25

Emma, a 59-year-old Kazakhstan woman who moved to Germany in 1969, is a resident of Neuallermöhe neighborhood since 2005. In the beginning, she chose to live there because she found it a nice neighborhood. She heard about the area from her sister who lives nearby. According to Mrs. Emma, the significant change that has been happening in Neuallermöhe is the increasing number of new residential and commercial building constructions in the area, that before used to be green spaces. Despite being a nice neighborhood to live in, Mrs. Emma thinks that there are some things that could be improved in Allermöhe. The first is the availability of a grocery store nearby; she usually goes by bike or by car with her husband, as the closest one is not reachable by walking

distance. She said, “It would be good to have a shopping center... That would be a big wish for me”.

The second aspect that might be improved is the housing price. Although Mrs. Emma and her husband bought their house at a good price back in 2005 when the neighborhood was newly developed, her married son who also lives in the area needs to pay much more for his residential space these days.

Mrs. Emma also mentioned, “My coworkers also complain about the same thing, that the house prices are increasing too much and they are not as affordable as they used to be.”

Apart from that, she concluded that she has all the necessary services in the area, including kindergarten and school for her children when they were young.



Martin
49
System administrator

See p. 26 - 29 

Good transport connections and fair prices are the factors that influenced Mr. Martin to move to Neuallermöhe with his family in 2009. Originally from Berlin, he only had three months to find a place to live in Hamburg. After a few weeks and visiting three flat viewings, he decided to take the apartment in this neighborhood. Mr. Martin was really impressed with the connectivity and local amenities.

When he first arrived in the neighborhood, he was satisfied with the location and how it looked. Back then, it was a well-maintained and less dense neighborhood, according to Mr. Martin. As he continued saying, the tidiness of the streets and buildings was negatively affected by the arrival of these new residents. In particular the hanging of

“It’s not that I find it really bad... but it is uncomfortable.”

clothes on the balcony. Speaking about the situation, he added, “It’s not that I find it really bad... but it is uncomfortable.”

Despite this, he likes the locality and the enclosed space. He is not thinking about moving out of the district, as his two children got used to the neighborhood and go to school here. In addition, the connectivity aspect can be highlighted through the statement from Mr. Martin. He said that to move around he finds it very practical to use his bicycle and public transport.

The interview finished with a final note from Mr. Martin. With contentment on his face, he concluded that he can find all the amenities that he and his family needs, near to his house, and are quite accessible.



















“It’s an area full of children. I moved here because I have three kids myself.”

Angela
60
Secretary



See p. 32 -35

Angela, 60 years old, has been living in Neuallermöhe since 1996. She is working as a secretary and about to retire soon. Angela reported that she moved to Allermöhe back then because it is an area full of children with a good infrastructure and she is a mother of three children. She said that Neuallermöhe has been growing and becoming more diverse and colourful over the years since she moved there. She mentioned many advantages in the neighborhood like the existence of many schools and playgrounds, short distance to the train station, and a good connectivity to city center. Additionally, Angela mentioned two lakes in the area that she really likes where swimming is also possible.

In general, Angela is happy about the building where she lives. Heat is supplied

by central gas, the insulation and the water quality is good. Furthermore, recycling options are mainly satisfying. Another interesting fact is that storm water management seems to work out well. Angela has never seen any flooding issues in the neighborhood. Even after heavy rain events.

There are two things that she is missing in the area: Close by recycling stations for glass and more retail stores and shops. According to Angela, there are some shopping facilities at the Fleetplatz but they are very limited. So she needs to go to a neighboring district (Bergedorf) for a wider variety of shopping options. Generally, Angela is interested in participating in public meetings related to the neighborhood development.



Maureen

43

Supply chain manager (materials)

See p. 36 - 39 

Maureen is another resident of Neuallermöhe. She is 43 years old and works as a Supply Chain Manager. She has been living in this district since 2005 in a single-family home they own. When asked about challenges or discomforts that she experiences in the area, she said that there is not much to tell except from the prejudices some people would have about the district. She continues to declare that these prejudices come from the area being multicultural. However, she feels that maybe those prejudices would drive the people who have them away from coming to the area, which is a positive thing.

Furthermore, she wished that Fleetplatz had more cafés where people can meet and socialize as the district is socially deprived in this context.

“If I wouldn’t like it here I would have moved somewhere else.”

Moving on, Maureen was asked about whether the insulation in her home was good in which she affirmed. She was also asked about the quality of tap water to which she said that they had in fact tested it and it turned out to be very good. For the heating they were using gas. As for waste recycling, they had 4 bins; plastic, paper, organic, and general waste. She also informed that there were recycling stations for various things including bulky waste.

Finally, Maureen was asked if she would like to have a voice in the changes in Neuallermöhe in which she answered, “I already can!” She stated that there are groups of initiative citizens as well as a district office nearby. Additionally, they receive a periodical magazine.



















*“People are
inconsiderate
towards their
neighbours.”*

Johannes Schmidt
73
Retired

 See p. 42 - 45

Johannes Schmidt is an elderly man living in a multi-family house not far away from the Fleet Platz. He explained, “When I moved to Neuallermöhe twenty years ago, the marketplace did not exist.” Since then, many new houses were built. The building he is living in has central heating and solar thermal panels which he estimates to be present in all wings of the neighborhood.

On the weekends, Johannes Schmidt enjoys shopping on the farmer’s market on Fleet Platz. When asked about other opportunities for basic amenities, he replied, “I do not miss anything in the district. Everything is there, from shopping to big parks and the variety is good enough for me.” When he had to overcome a longer distance, he would

take the bus or the S-Bahn at nearby Allermöhe station. However, he says, most people in the district still take their own cars.

Talking about the appearance of the neighborhood, he wishes that the water bodies were kept clean: “People throw garbage in the water without thinking!” With this statement, he also underlines his feeling of people not following the rules and being disrespectful to their neighbors. This is the main complaint Johannes Schmidt has. He believes that the disparity of cultures and nationalities could be the reason behind the disorganization. “When I came, I respected the rules and people living here and I’m still doing so. But nowadays, everyone cares for themselves”.



Susanne Müller
56
Retail assistant

See p. 46 - 49 

Originally from South Germany, Susanne Müller moved to Neuallermöhe 12 years ago. With her family, she resides in their own row house in the Eastern part. She is satisfied with her multinational neighborhood as she believes that the presence of different cultures is an opportunity for exchange, "My youngest kid goes to school here and is one of only two children without a migration background. However, I see this as a gain."

Susanne Müller explains that almost all major amenities are nearby, reachable by foot or by bike. Residents also enjoy public transport with several buses and two S-Bahn stations, making it convenient to commute to Hamburg center and to Bergedorf. However, Susanne Müller finds the regular delays and cancellations

"The international nature brings character to the neighbourhood."

improvable. She concludes, "the neighborhood is designed for families, including multiple schools, playgrounds and kindergartens as well as available shops and public transport. However, more could be done."

When asked about improvement potentials, she reflects that, overall, there is good infrastructure as well as proper waste collection and energy supply. Though, she wishes more entertainment options like a cinema or a theatre. The only choice right now is the KulturA center with activities mainly for children.

"Neuallermöhe is a mixture of cultures and various communities," he said. "This makes it an interesting place to live and share experiences."

















90

Hamburg
BEKENNT FARBE
FÜR DEMOKRATIE, TOLERANZ UND WELFARE!



*“Plenty of playground
but no nightlife in the
neighborhood.”*

Tarek Abdulrazek
35
Software Consultant



See p. 52 - 55

Mr. Tarek Abdulrazek is not a resident in Neuallermohe but his frequent visits to the neighborhood have made him gain quality knowledge of the district. He described the neighborhood as a well-planned district with lots of playgrounds for children, and parks for relaxation. He expressed his pleasure for the uniformity of the buildings and the integration of waterways in the planning of the neighborhood. According to him, the neighborhood has a good road network and public transportation is well connected. Using himself as an example, Mr. Abdulrazek testified that he has never experienced any difficulty in traveling by public transport within the neighborhood, even when connecting to other parts of the City. However, Mr. Abdulrazek identified the

limited number of shops, restaurants, bars, clubs, and gym as the downsides of the neighborhood. He claims that the number of shops in this neighborhood is limited and often in small sizes, making it difficult for the residents to get all their needed groceries. According to him, most of the time people have to travel to Bergedorf, a nearby neighborhood to buy things that cannot be found within the district. He went ahead to say that the neighborhood is a perfect district for families who are still raising kids. Despite the few things Mr. Abdulrazek mentioned as challenges in the neighborhood, he maintained that the neighborhood is full of advantages and expressed his satisfaction with the quality of life there.



Elena Weideltraut
36
Housewife

See p. 56 -59 

Mrs. Elena used to live in Neuallermöhe with her husband and two kids but has recently moved, leaving her place to her mother, though frequently visiting to spend time with her – at least half of her daily life is still spent in this neighborhood. She remembers that there were limited options for supermarkets and shops in the district but reaffirmed that two new supermarkets have been opened recently. This, according to her, was a relief as it provides a possibility to buy a variety of her daily needs. She also expressed her joy in having the Turkish and German small shops which sell vegetables and fruits.

Mrs. Elena described the neighborhood as one which offers a good quality of life, especially for families. She emphasized the easy accessibility of a kindergarten,

“Less options for shops but still happy about the small shops”

primary and secondary schools within a good range radius in the neighborhood, “on the west of Neuallermöhe site and the east side there is a kindergarten too.” To Mrs. Elena, the neighborhood is safe and comfortable. She identified Neuallermöhe as a residential area with no noise pollution and this, to her, is what she likes most about the district.

However, Mrs. Elena expressed some dissatisfaction with the fact that she cannot find any shop to buy clothes. She wishes also to have a swimming pool built in the schools or around the area. She confirmed that the neighborhood already has some sport activity areas for the youths, though far from her block, she fears that older kids might still go to the areas where their parents don’t want them to be.



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Pra

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Matta's Market

Café Granby

ERFINDUNG
BEWEISER









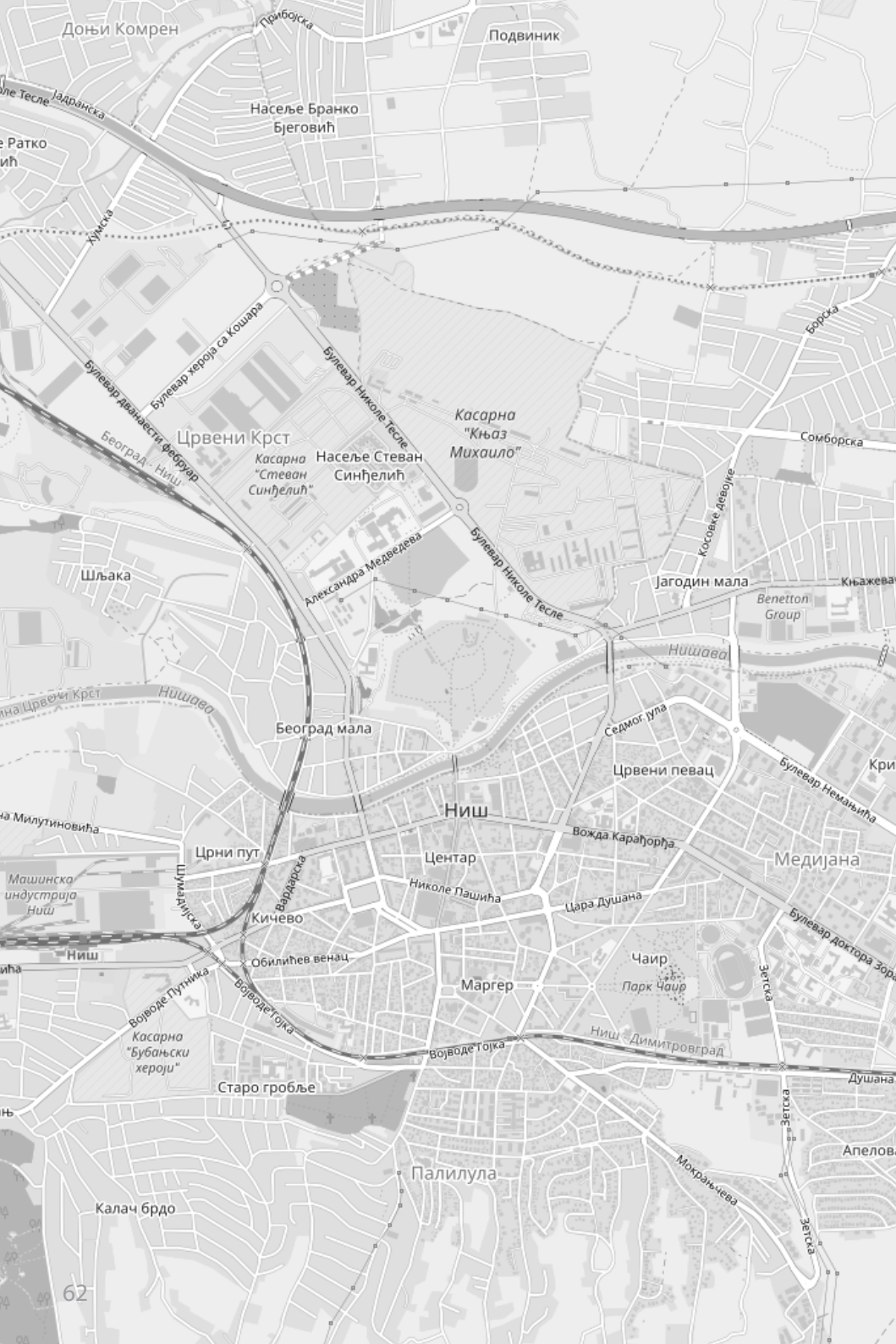
Source: openstreetmap.org (23.11.2020). Nis, Serbia
43°20'14.6"N 21°55'28.6"E



'Somborska-Studenička' Project Site

Niš, Serbia





Доњи Комрен

Подвиник

Насеље Бранко
Бјеговић

Црвени Крст

Касарна
"Књаз
Михаило"

Касарна
"Стеван
Синђелић"

Насеље Стеван
Синђелић

Шљака

Јагодин мала

Benetton
Group

Београд мала

Ниш

Седмог јула

Црвени певац

Црни пут

Центар

Војда Карађорђа

Медијана

Николе Пашића

Цара Душана

Кичево

Маргер

Чаир

Парк Чаир

Касарна
"Бубањски
хероји"

Старо гробље

Палилула

Калач брдо



Niš Narratives

Residents, visitors and workers from “Somborska- Studenička” were also interviewed about the historical development and resource efficient planning of their neighborhood and its current challenges and opportunities. Once again, the interviews serve as inspiration for their corresponding photographic narratives.



“There is not enough space between the buildings.”

Jovana
25
Cosmetician



See p. 66 - 69

Jovana, a 25-year-old cosmetician, lives on this location of Somborska Boulevard with her fiancé for the last 7 months. However, they do not plan to stay there for a long time. The reasons why they have chosen this location are the affordable price and the proximity of the family home.

During their first month of living there, they have seen the shortcomings of the location. The biggest problem was the lack of intimacy caused by insufficient distance between buildings. “We had to set up dark curtains on our windows because that was the only possible solution!” she said. However, the bad side of this solution was the lack of natural light in the apartment. One more deficiency is a soundproofing,

which affects even more their comfort. The building is on the edge of the block, with access from the street of Gornjomatejevacka, so the entry into the facility is safe. The building parking lot is on the north and there are not enough parking spots. Jovana often parks her car across their building, in front of individual houses.

“It is impossible to spend our time in the open green space near our building,” she said, “there is not enough space between the buildings.” In addition, their supply ability has been reduced because there are not enough trade facilities. Jovana and her fiancé do not consider this place as suitable for starting a family due to the lack of educational public buildings as well as health institutions.



Marijana Djordjević
27
Freelancer

See p. 70 - 73 

Marijana has lived in this neighbourhood for four years now. She is not really satisfied with the living conditions that this settlement provides. There are not enough green spaces, buildings are very close to each other and with that their privacy is violated. Although she likes the fact that the city center is not that far away, and that the most important places like markets, cafes and bakeries are very close. She also likes the fact that the stations for public transport are very close and she feels connected with the city. This area is still in the process of construction, therefore, streets within the block are not yet developed, so the main source of noise comes from the main “Somborska” street and the neighbours also. They can hear the neighbors use the restroom, have a fight or just walking,

“I am not really satisfied with the living conditions.”

and that’s because the quality of build is very bad. Ventilation is bad, especially in the bathroom. There is no central heating, in winter everyone is heated separately by electricity. Also, because next to them is an unbuilt area, you can see, if you are coming from that side, how the air quality is getting worse due to overcrowding in a small place. The only thing that she thinks is missing, and is only available to make room for, is parking space. It’s also possible to implement simple solutions in some places like installing more waste bins, maintaining street lamps and street furniture. Lack of green spaces creates a feeling of limited movement. You are located on the street right away. “I would not recommend the settlement to people who would start a family,” she said.







Yeni Nesil Apartmanlar
KİTAPÇI
KİTAPÇI
KİTAPÇI













“The slopes on the buildings are an insult to the disabled.”

Danilo Aksentijević

35

Bachelor of Science with Honours in
Geography (and Tourism)



See p. 76 - 79

After spending some time on the location we had the experience of chatting with a few people who live in the neighborhood. Their opinions were very extreme and different, but we had the luck to meet Mr. Danilo Aksentijević who took us through the struggles of living in that area through a very unbiased lens. After spending five years living on the location of our site, the answer to the question “What is it like to live here?” was just “fine.”


After that simple “fine” we were bombarded by problems that the residents of the area have to live with every day. Whether the problems included the lack of content in the area, inaccessibility for disabled people (as well as a badly developed social model of accessibility), very few green areas

and little to no playgrounds for children, there is certainly no easy way to fix them. Danilo’s biggest wishes at the moment are changes that would impact the quality of life of minors who live in the area.

His focus is also set on the lack of schools, banks, and post offices since he believes that there are enough occupants in the area for at least one of each to exist nearby. A small park, an area where people could go out for a picnic or take their children to play would make a huge impact on the mental health of the people who live there. At the end of the interview we thanked him for explaining his situation to us in so much detail, and even though there are things that could be changed, he doesn’t necessarily hate the area or live a pitiful life there.



Olivera Jović
44
Manager

See p. 80 - 83 

The successful manager Olivera, who lives in Gornjomatejevačka street, also sees how buildings and the arrangement of public spaces can affect the quality of life in a community. She is a daily user of this location.

Her overall opinion of the location is negative. First of all, she is disgruntled with the location due to the position of the buildings themselves, which block the entry of daylight into their apartments by their poor positioning. Also she is not very pleased with the hygiene of the location itself. In her opinion, better landscaping would be reflected in the formation of more areas for recreation of children and youth, content for sitting and resting of the elderly, special and well-organized parking spaces on the

“More areas for the residents of the location, and not for the new buildings”

site and better organization of bins and garbage containers. Olivera expresses great dissatisfaction with this neighborhood. She believes that the area is not safe to use due to the lack of pedestrians paths. Olivera finds discontentment in that the people who live here feel endangered due to the fact that pedestrians can find on their way a lot of holes or completely unpaved surfaces on the road, which makes it very difficult for them to move in bad weather conditions. For her it is unbelievable to experience such difficulties simply by trying to approach content on the site. She thinks that as an individual she cannot influence change of the location, but if the whole neighborhood were united, it would be possible to make some positive change.



















“There is no space for green areas.”

Dušan Gavrić
23 years old
Student of law

 See p. 86 - 89

Dušan is a resident who moved to this neighbourhood 12 years ago. His family deliberately bought an apartment in this new suburban part of Niš because of its good connectivity to the city center and thought that they got good value for their money.

However, the neighbourhood has been rapidly developing ever since. Dušan, who has witnessed these changes, is not very happy about them. He thinks that too many residential buildings have been built on a small plot of land leaving no space for green areas. Thus, there are no playgrounds, sports fields, nor parks around there.

Dušan also complains about the cleanliness of the neighbourhood,

blaming not only residents but also the city officials for not providing more garbage bins. He is not satisfied with street lighting either.

Dušan also stresses that the air quality is better here than in other parts of Niš because of the constant breeze from the nearby Vinik hill.

Regarding civil activism, Dušan says that the residents have recently saved a small patch of green area from being used as a plot for another residential building by protesting against the city officials. It was a small victory for their community but it has shown that united citizens can change things in their neighbourhood for the better.



Marija Stefanović
23
Psychologist

See p. 90 - 93 

Marija (23) is a visitor on Somborski Blvd. Even though socialist architecture is bleak in her opinion, recalling “TV buildings,” she believes residential building regulations were more respected at the time – older high-rise buildings still stand, while newer ones are regularly torn down. Her issue with post-socialist growth is lack of quality in favor of appearances, all in the wake of the economy’s failure – insufficient usage of economic and smart materials. Marija notes that the location has excellent exposure to sunlight, sunrise to sunset, and yet, not a single solar panel in sight. She believes available resources should be used, construction should be thought through, for places where people live because it’s worth living in – as long as they settle for less, they won’t get more.

*“A euro saved on area
is a euro spent on
unforeseen repairs
later on.”*

The location is convenient, connected to downtown Niš, with separated lines for pedestrians and cyclists, and a regular bus line; yet it’s still peaceful and not urbanized to the point of bleakness.

However, investors abuse the attention these advantages attract, squeezing in buildings haphazardly wherever there is any space whatsoever, while disregarding important things, such as the people’s right to sunlight, greenery, and privacy.

“As a psychologist, I know these things are of critical importance. If they won’t let people have sunlight, why bother with windows in the first place?” The greatest flaw is the lack of liveliness, because life itself is not enabled. One has their apartment and a store nearby, but no relaxation, no leisure – no life.



















“I’m very happy living here as it is very well connected to the city center.”

Milica Mirković
68
Retired



See p. 96 - 99

In the settlement between Gornjomatevacka Street and Somborska Boulevard, we are introduced to Milica Mirkovic, who is 68 years old and has been retired for 4 years.

Living with her husband who is also retired, Milica gives us impressions about the way of life and conditions, as well as the problems she encounters in everyday life at the location.

Mrs. Milica has been a resident of this settlement for 10 years. She points out that the biggest problem at the current location is that there are more investors who build on a small area, so it is just an environment with very different solutions, different visions of the investors themselves.

She also points out that the big problem is the insufficient distance between individual buildings, as well as the lack of green areas and space for children to play around the buildings.

Mrs. Milica gives us the impression that the settlement is one of the quietest parts of the city, as well as the position of the settlement itself, a large number of roads connect the settlement. There are also a large number of markets and bakeries that improve the standard of living of the location.

“I’m very happy living here as it is very well connected to the city center,” she said.



Jelena Pantić

48

Professor of French language

See p. 100 - 103 

"I've been living in this location for 12 years and from what I can tell the standard of living is nowhere near perfect," she said, "I would say it's somewhere in the range from low to medium level." There have been quite a few changes in this area: an unusual number of buildings have been built, a few streets paved, two cafes opened, one pool and a hotel that has been built at the end of the street. Some changes she considers bad are the lack of space, playgrounds and greenery. The number of playgrounds and green spaces is close to none, the only green space that there is goes along the Somborski Boulevard. One of the more concerning obstacles in everyday life is the lack of connection between this and other parts of the city such as the boulevard, or some important buildings such as the city

"The number of playgrounds and green spaces is close to none."

hospital or community health center. As for public transport we have one bus that rarely passes through and most of the times it's full. She is certain this area has a lot of potential for improvement with how much empty space there is, where some essential buildings could be built, such as a new school, a clinic or a kindergarten which would be very helpful considering the large number of kids that are in this area. One more concern she has is safety since there are barely any sidewalks on busier streets, and even if there are they are filled with parked cars. Every building has more apartments than parking spaces. As for our building I don't think it uses natural energy resources since the one side that is supposed to be under sunlight the whole day is in the shadow that other building casts.



















“The problems may be dust and parking space.”

Olivera Stanković
44
Teacher

 See p. 106 - 109

Olivera Stanković is a 44-year-old teacher in the Art School in Niš. She has been living in this neighborhood for 7 years, and the reason for that is compensation with the investor. She said, “basically, we gave the land for the apartments we got in that value, and moved in after.”

When we asked her about the problems that she’s been facing all this time, she answered, “the problems may be dust and parking space, and what we lack is space for recreation and children’s play.” She also added, “I think that the neighborhood is aesthetically looking good, but also that it was not thought out before the construction of all the buildings.”

She has the opinion that the biggest

mistakes are that everything was built unplanned from the beginning, without any clear idea.

Some of the highlighted problems are lack of recreational space, space for children, and greenery above all. As she said, “I think the neighborhood is quite gray and without greenery and trees.”

When questioned about the safety of the neighborhood, she told us, “the neighborhood is safe. However, any arrangement of traffic, both streets and sidewalks is what would make the neighborhood even safer.” Considering that the public facilities are far away from this neighborhood, she told us that most of the time she uses a car as a transport, and sometimes bus lines.



Marjan Stevanović
25
Commercialist

*“We want a symbiosis
of nature and society.”*

See p. 110 - 113 

Marjan Stevanović is 25 years old and has been living in this part of the city for 7 months. Although he says that he likes the fact that the city is growing and new facilities are being built, he still thinks that certain elements are missing that would add quality of life in the settlement.

The main thing that Marjan singled out as a key problem of life in his settlement, is the general lack of greenery and ecological aspects on the surface of the entire settlement. As he says, due to the large number of buildings and the small distance between them, every free space was used for parking cars. Under the parking in spaces between the buildings, there are also underground garages, so it is impossible to have any vegetation that would cool ground during the summer. Since, as Marjan says, a certain area of

the block that was originally intended only for greenery has been removed and replaced with new space for construction, many residents of the settlement are dissatisfied. Banners on their balconies under the slogan “Give us the Sun back” indicates the urban problem of the settlement, which leads to the fact that in addition to unfavorable environmental aspects, some apartments do not have sunlight during the day.

Marjan, like most residents of this residential area, is dissatisfied with the actions of the city of Niš and says that if the city plans to follow in the footsteps of urban metropolises, it should primarily meet basic urban standards in design, such as to care about living conditions or residence housing estates cannot survive.



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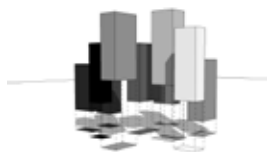




Trigger Exhibition

A trigger, is that which sets something off. In this case, the direction of the project. The Hamburg and Niš Groups were asked to create an image that represented a 'Trigger' that conveyed the results and impressions of the presentation inputs and virtual-site analysis of the Somborska Boulevard Neighborhood. The images on the following pages (116-119), as well as the front and back cover, were voted on by the members of this workshop and the winning images were printed in this publication.







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LET THE SUNSHINE IN.MP3

GAF NIŠ 2020

Tamara Marković
Đorđe Novokmet
Dejan Nikolić
Mihajlo Martinović
Nada Mijalković

Who **needs** a parking spot?



Iva Stefani
Dipanjan Bhattacharya
Santiago Alarcon
Matawee Li
Jacob Yanachek

Helena Stošić
Andreja Milojković
Mladen Mlačić
Viktorija Marković





Top: Ada Dauti
Anica Bauer
Raj Singh Bais
Joaquin Guerra Ayala
Worod Al-Shaibawi
Nikola Jovanović

Bottom: Abdul Alyousef
Charles Nnanna
Daniel Tesfamichael



Closing

The oral and visual narratives provide insight into two different neighborhoods from the perspectives of those who frequent and/or live in them. The students will utilize these findings for their further project work to develop innovative contextually appropriate concepts to support the resource efficient planning of “Somborska-Studenička”. Furthermore, we hope these narratives reach the planners and decision makers who are involved with their current and future development.

A screenshot of a Zoom meeting grid showing 16 participants in a 4x4 layout. The participants are:

- Row 1: Sofija Ickovski, Jonathan Young, 849 3423 1145, Rajesh Kuma
- Row 2: Maria Jimenez Arr..., Charles Nnarina, Helena Stošić, Milica
- Row 3: Nevena Stevanovic, Ljiljana Vasilevska, Nevena, Nikolija Dim
- Row 4: Nikola, Veronika Rancic, Nadja, Emilija Simic
- Row 5: Marijana Minic, Ivana Vušković, **Kristina Petrovic**, Raj Singh Ba
- Row 6: Shefali Nayak, Daniel Testfamichael, Martin Stojančov, Nikola Steva
- Row 7: Iva Stefani, Dipanjan Bhattach..., Milica Mancic, Nikola Sceki

The control bar at the bottom includes icons for Unmute, Start Video, Security, and Participants (67).



