THE LIVEABILITY OF HISTORIC CITIES: CURRENT STATE AND PROSPECTS FOR HABITATION

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Major causes of urban shrinkage in Europe

- economic decline and job-related out-migration
- suburbanization and a change in the settlement system
- demographic change (natural decrease in population and ageing)
Population change in Latvia 2001-2011
Number of population in the downtown of Riga and in the City of Riga

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downtown of Riga</td>
<td>90 000</td>
<td>30 728</td>
<td>-52145</td>
<td>-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Riga</td>
<td>910 000</td>
<td>658 640</td>
<td>-25181</td>
<td>-28</td>
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</table>
Many internationally recognized historical and cultural cities are at the forefront of the fastest shrinking cities in Europe. This highlights a fundamental problem in the current planning and management of historical cities: the physical preservation of historical residential buildings has practically been ensured, but this has not ensured their further use for habitation.
Conceptual framework of the research

The loss of liveability is mentioned as the most dangerous risk in the preservation of residential function in historical residential districts and the most common reason for the formation of historical residential brownfields (unoccupied, protected historical estates in physically bad condition, usually with a low ratio of building rights).
Dimensions of liveability

In liveability studies in European cities, liveability is usually made operational by means of the perception of four dimensions:

• The quality of the dwelling/building;
• The quality of the physical environment, including the level of services and facilities;
• The quality of the social environment;
• The safety of the neighbourhood.

Liveability problems in residential areas are a complex phenomenon, which differ according to the locality.
Methodology of the research

The aim of the research is to get a better understanding of liveability problems in the historic housing areas of Riga.

The research questions are following:
- What liveability problems exist in historic housing areas in Riga?
- What factors influence these problems?
Historical Centre of Riga

UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site (1997);

1.43 % of the area of the City of Riga,

40% of all employees and

20% of all the population of the City of Riga.
Selection of case study

- Renovation of heritage buildings;
- construction of new housing;
- areas adjacent which are still abandoned;
- a steep increase in housing prices and
- changes in the population structure.
Redevelopment challenges in HCR

Building depreciation in selected area of HCR. Source: www.kadastras.lv

Listed buildings in selected area of the HCR. Source: HCR GIS.
New construction in HCR
Planning strategy in the HCR

Riga Historical Centre Preservation and Development Plan (2013)
11 neighbourhoods in Riga was carried out in 2014; survey results of neighbourhood Centrs is used (374 respondents).

The survey confirmed the hypothesis about population change in the HCR - 47% of the population have lived in their current housing for less than 10 years, of which 35% have for less than 5 years.

22% of the respondents had considered moving outside the HCR. The main reasons for wanting to move are: to enjoy a cheaper life (20%), as well as a desire for silence (13%) and a better residence (13%).
The majority of the population - 70% tend to agree with the statement that they know their neighbours and greet them.

Like most of the population (54%), they believe that people in their neighbourhood are willing to help their neighbours.

Still 57% of the neighbourhood residents do not feel a sense of community with the people in their neighbourhood.
Quality of the physical environment

- most people are satisfied with possibility
to do shopping (87%),
to visit the family doctor (51%),
and to attend cultural events (48%).

In assessing the types of venues with which people are most satisfied: cafes, the fact that there are plenty of restaurants (92%), the number of cultural institutions (89%), and the large number of shopping centres (89%).

Almost half of the population (49%) indicate that they would like more cycle paths, while 47% want more sports and playgrounds.
Quality of dwellings/ buildings

- 85% of the population are very satisfied or rather satisfied with their housing.

- People believe that vast improvements are needed in the quality of courtyard utilities (82%), the appearance of residences (84%), residential services provided (83%), and the energy efficiency of residential buildings (84%).

- The majority of the residents (38%) live in dwellings with an area of more than 61 m², while about 6% live in accommodation with an area of less than 30 m².
Safety of the environment

Most residents expressed satisfaction

- with the street lighting at the front of the house (93%)
- and the safety of homes in the neighbourhood during the day (91%) and night (73%).
Findings of survey

- Population turnover in the neighbourhood is high, there is weak sense of community.

- Since the housing in different quality and standard is available in neighbourhood, there is also diverse social composition of the population.

- Residents are mostly satisfied with services provided and unsatisfied with outdated dwellings.
Conclusions

- Wide diversity in regard to the nature and possible causes of liveability problems;
- The liveability issue is a complex phenomenon and that the problems are specific for each housing area;
- In the HCR, many unused or less-occupied historical buildings are under risk of not being preserved or occupied;
- Currently the mechanisms for value capture of architectural heritage in the HCR and its PZ do exist, but they are not fully implemented due to insufficient funding (e.g. a lack of state budget funding for the restoration of historical buildings and the slow implementation of housing policy).
Conclusions

- The development tendencies - the renovation process of historic building with the aim to convert it to higher standard of dwellings, as well as the construction of new buildings for exclusive housing market indicate the process of gentrification.

- Since the municipality has not defined the instruments to promote social diversity HRC takes place in the population with lower income exclusion from HRC.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!