

THE THIRD SECTOR

The morphology of Moscow prevents the typical or expected process of land division and privatization. Many areas are thus abandoned both by the public sector, usually because it does not have enough resources to intervene, and by the private sector, because it is not profitable for developers or companies to invest in those areas. As a result, there is enormous potential for a Third Sector in Moscow: somewhere between public and private, this sector could provide a way for civic society to utilize the unclaimed land as a catalyst for a massive and widespread regeneration of Moscow's public realm. A possible model for this could build on certain characteristics of the open source movement in order to generate a spontaneous and local set of proposals for the use of land in certain districts of Moscow.

This research will first outline the background and evidentiary analysis of the lands which could be claimed by the Third Sector of Moscow. Focusing on few aspects of the state of Moscow (from the highly centralized planning practices to the rise of activism) and on general issues (such as network theories and open source movements) will suggest how the re-programming could be conducted. A design proposal for a single square kilometer identified will show a possible scenario for the unclaimed lands, in order to understand and quantify the potential behind those areas. The unclaimed lands could become the ideal locations to implement a center within the districts that can serve as the manifestation of the regeneration of public space, while at the same time facilitating local design practices.

Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, Moscow grew according to an extensive top-down planning practice, possible due to the presence of an authoritarian system and to the availability of a vast amount of publicly-owned land. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequent opening to capitalism and privatization introduced separation and fragmentation, while a vast amount of responsibilities started to be transferred to a system that could never be equally as totalizing as the previous one. Many believe that in the new scenario the most beneficial segments of the former system were claimed by the private sector, while those elements seen as a burden were left behind in the hands of a public sector (which was increasingly in decline...)

The growth of the Megacity usually coincides with a public sector in retreat; an escalation of responsibilities and tasks claimed by companies or developers who rarely face a public sector that is able to provide a credible kind of

counterweight: instead of a system of checks and balances, ever growing companies and organizations "kindly" offer to satiate the needs of ever-growing cities, and are able to do so with fewer and fewer barriers. In Moscow the unbalance between the two sectors is brought to the extreme, since the public sector is still de facto responsible for all residual areas and goods that are not profitable from a business point of view.

While it is generally understood that the transition from a socialist to a market economy was completed at the beginning of this century in Russia, it is clear that in the land and the housing sectors this process is still ongoing. The municipality thus control a vast amount of small/medium size plots of lands in a state of abandonment, right in those residential areas that suffer from the lack of public spaces and services. The lack of investments (both public and private) is the result of the lack of ideas for these areas.

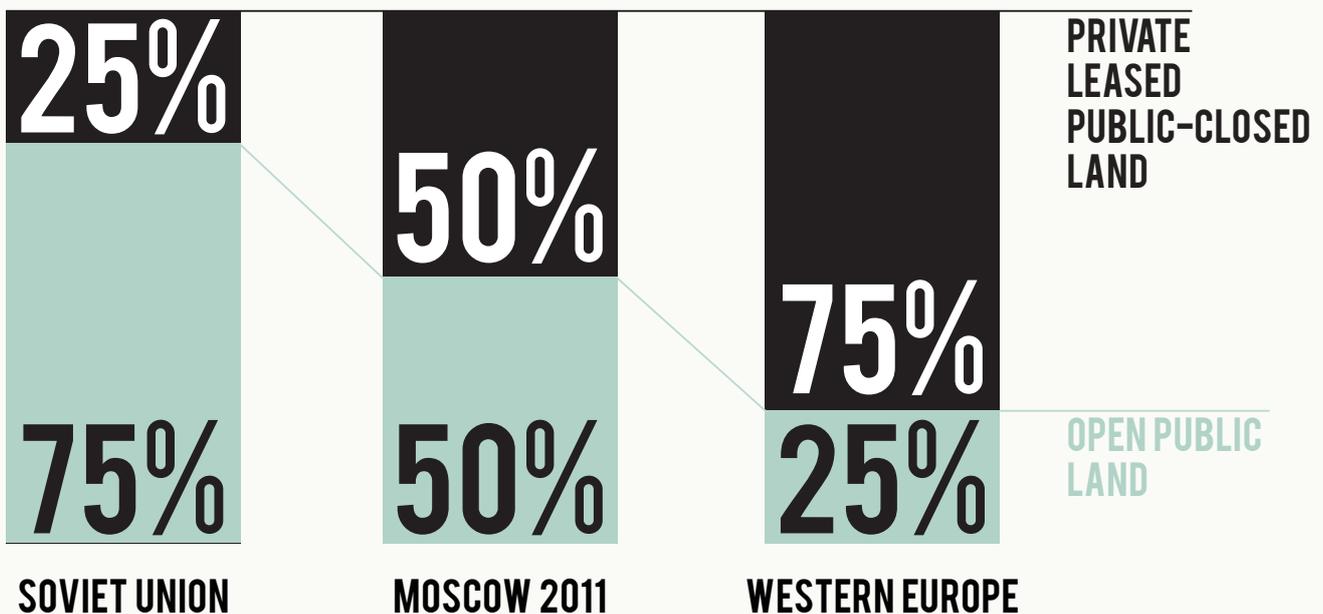
The residents are not fully able to visualize or suggest a possible usage for these areas, and their relationship with the municipal institutions manifests through a series of complaints rather than the exchange of constructive ideas. This results in a challenged system which suffers further from a lack of imagination.

In this context, designers, architects, planners and activists should intervene, and create new perspectives on these areas, in order to give to the residents and to the municipality new projects capable of starting a constructive dialogue.

In the case of a vast availability of ideas and projects, residents could be involved in their improvement and modification, in an iterative process with designers and amongst themselves. Once there exists a critical mass of feasible projects agreed upon with the resident population, the municipality will be more inclined to take care and invest in areas where it effectively has ownership and responsibility.

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Percentage of public and private land.



UNCLAIMED LAND IN MOSCOW

There is drastically more publicly-owned land in Moscow than in other post-Soviet or European cities. The city is nowadays split in two halves: 50% of the land has been privatized, leased, or is simply closed to the public, while the other 50% is fully accessible to the public and publicly owned¹.

This percentage shows a dimension of the public realm right in between two opposite models: the Soviet one, where 75% of the area of Moscow was public and fully accessible, and the western European one, where private ownership has historically more solid roots and cities have an average of 25% public land (including squares, streets, sidewalks, parks²).

Moscow also has 25% of its land devoted to infrastructures, squares and parks, which reflects another 25% of publicly-owned land has a totally different function compared to the composition of public land in many Western cities. These areas are generally the green areas within residential districts, the yards, and all those parts that in microrayons are certain open and permeable to the public but do not fully have the characteristics of a proper public space.

The aggregate size of these areas has to be stressed and highlighted. It is an area bigger than the municipality of Milan, or than the Garda lake, or three times the amount of tulip-growing agricultural land in the Netherlands. We can argue that there is a lot of hidden potential in those areas, a potential that for several reasons has not yet been realized.

One of the reasons is that most of the time, the land plots have highly fragmented geometries, and therefore are practically often difficult to plan. However, the issue of these lands is also related to a wider context of the transfer of responsibilities to the public sphere: once fully in the hands of the central government, these lands are now controlled by decentralized entities like local authorities and ultimately to private figures. We can make a parallel between these lands and two other elements that have been privatized (partially and with much effort) in the last two decades: the residences and the common areas within residential buildings.

The housing field was the first testing ground for privatization in Russia. At the end of the 1980s, the government realized that a large percentage of the housing stock was going to need massive repairs in the coming years, and there were insufficient resources for the projected expense. Dwellings switched from being a central human right in the Soviet system, to a state burden that could not be afforded anymore. For this reason, the discussion on privatization options began in 1987³. In March 1988, a resolution from the Council of Ministers granted the right of private ownership to members of housing cooperatives, while at the end of the same year another resolution of the

Council allowed tenants to purchase their units by paying the house's value⁴.

These first attempts brought very unsuccessful results, and between the 1990 and the 1991 a new discussion began at the Federal level. Four main options were discussed: (a) free transfer to resident, while floor space in excess of fixed quotas would be sold at low prices, (b) buying out, in which residents must pay the apartment's value with minimal discount, (c) socially just transfer, in which an amount of free space was fixed and the square meters in excess sold at high or prohibitive prices and (d) compensatory justice, in which each family would receive a voucher for a certain number of square meters to be freely traded on the market⁵.

In July 1991 the housing privatization law passed, outlining the details of the compensatory justice model⁶. But, some local municipalities (and especially Moscow) had the right to choose alternative options. Moscow chose the most generous option in order to maximize the number of privatized dwellings, opting for privatization free-of-charge for each tenant: after paying a fee of 320 rubles, each tenant could receive the title to their flat for free.

The process began very slowly in the first couple of years, with only a few requests. However, Moscow privatization at the end turned out to be very efficient, partially due to the advertising campaign in the press, as well as the speedy implementation procedures (the average processing time for an application was two weeks⁷). In spite of this, today, even though free privatization is still possible, 25% of the total housing stock has not yet been privatized⁸. The rights of tenants are so strong and well-established in Russia, that a quarter of the residents prefer not to own a house in order

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Land division in Moscow.

Source: Shoshin, 2011.



MOSCOW LAND

not to have all the burdens and responsibilities related to property taxes and maintenance.

There was a paradox created by the privatization of the 1990s: there was the possibility to privatize a single residence, but there was no way to privatize the land under the building. According to the Land Code, the land of the condominium could be owned by the homeowners, but there were no specifications about the implementation of this mechanism. Moreover, there was a considerable share of units still belonging to the municipality. The common areas' maintenance has to be done by the municipality, and there are limited funds for that. Homeowners, on the other side, were not willing to pay for something that did not belong to them, so they ended up living in degraded buildings (maybe with a fully renewed interior!). A brief report of the United Nations, written in 2004 (more than a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union) states:

There is no proper institutional structure for the flat owners and there is a lack of information sources for them in particular in multi-unit buildings. In most cases, they do not have the opportunities and capacity to take decisions on their property...Although individual flats are privatized, the common areas, structures and infrastructure of buildings are not formally privatized. Home ownership is understood to cover only the dwelling... nobody clearly owns the partly privatized apartment blocks and nobody is clearly responsible for them⁹.

So the formal responsibility of the building was municipal, and the owners did not have incentives to take the municipality's place. With the passing of the 2005 Housing Code, however, the households became de facto collective owners of the common areas. Three different methods of maintenance by owners were suggested by the law: (1) direct management, without any form of association, (2) hiring a manager to administer the housing complex or (3) creating a homeowners' association called ТСЖ (товарищество собственников жилья)¹⁰. Finally, this Code not only implied, but actively encouraged the direct involvement of households in their immediate surroundings.

With this brief overview, we see how the transferal of a public good was difficult even if given for free (in the case of dwellings) and became effective only through a specific law (in the case of public areas in residential complexes). The unclaimed lands described above represent the next scale for the privatization process. First the dwellings, then the common areas in the multi-unit buildings, and finally the common areas within the neighborhood.

Looking at the cadastral maps we recognize a consistent pattern: in the last two decades, parcels have been delineated without general coordination. A defined amount of land has been assigned to some of the buildings, without care taken in the integration of these plots with the adjacent ones. Instead, in order to reduce conflicts, the definition of the land should have been done at once and at the district scale. The result is a series of scattered islands with clear boundaries, floating in a highly fragmented public realm.

The cadastral surveys are conducted very slowly, and many areas do not have clear borders or definition. This situation increases the degree of property's uncertainty, and consequently decreases the responsibility and care of the residents. At the same time, the complexity of the executive and bureaucratic structure does not allow a clear understanding of which actions citizens have to undertake in order to change, update or manage the land more productively. However, it would be too simplistic to reduce the problem to the negligence of the survey process. The fact is, in many microrayons it is very difficult to define what is public and what is private. There are some areas with a clear typology of houses, such as a yard closed by a series of buildings: in these cases, it is easy to determine the ownership of that land. But in many other cases, where free standing building slabs are located in an open space common all residents and visitors, it is almost impossible to define what land could belong to one building rather than to another.

In a way, the morphology of the city's urban substance is resilient to the land fragmentation and privatization, generating abandoned lands and often tracts of effectively "no-man's land" between parcels.

Other post-Soviet cities have undergone a more complete and efficient redistribution of land in parcels. Examples of this can be found in former Soviet countries, including Riga in Latvia, as well as in the Russian Federation, for example, in Yekaterinburg.

There were some specific factors that influenced Moscow's condition -- above all the decision taken by Luzhkov to delay the privatization of land. He was not

convinced of the correctness of the privatization process in the early 1990s, so he obtained the right to stop this process within Moscow's administrative boundaries¹¹.

But, this situation is also somehow related to the condition of Moscow as Megacity. Moscow is, in fact, the city that has by far the biggest amount of inhabitants compared with the other cities of the post-Soviet bloc. In Moscow the process of urbanization was so quick and massive that the current institutions are not capable of dealing with such extant built environment or of proposing a coherent methodology to reconfigure the structure of the city.

The municipality has the formal ownership and responsibility for the areas that in Moscow are not parceled, but in practice it has insufficient financial resources to deal with such an amount of space. Furthermore, a clear vision and will to reconfigure them is lacking.

Again due to their lack of consolidation and often unclear borders, very few private developers found these areas profitable to invest in. This ultimately has resulted in their increasing degradation, left in a state of semi-abandon, covered carelessly with wild greenery in order not to maintain them, no-one using them for any purpose. The image below shows Troparevo-Nikulino, an administrative district chosen as a case study. In red are highlighted the above mentioned areas: publicly owned, but without adequate investments from the administration. The dimension and the diffusion of these areas, combined with the lack of intervention from the private and the public sector, lead to a general underdevelopment of the district. The lack of urban quality is evident and diffuse, the overgrown greenery demonstrates an obvious lack of attention to the 'public space'.

A more detailed analysis on a single square kilometer of this land has been conducted, in order to verify at micro-scale the percentage of

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top: Yekaterinburg
cadastral map.

bottom: Moscow
cadastral map.

source: Rosreestr.
State registration,
cadastre and
cartography.





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Plan of the Raion Troparevo-Nikulino. The yellow square represent the area selected as case study.

land that is effectively used or left abandoned. The chosen area is located in the northern part of Troparevo-Nikulino and it mainly consists of residential buildings developed through different decades, from housing developments of the 1970s to the latest residential towers built at the beginning of the century. A recently renovated linear park crosses the heart of the area, dividing two parts with very different layouts, but quite similar in terms of architecture and service provision.

Starting from a rough and out-of-date map of the area, I updated the drawing of the infrastructure, buildings, and public spaces with information coming from different available cartography sources¹² and regular site visits. Even if not highly detailed, the map has a quite satisfactory approximation that allowed me to evaluate and quantify the different usages of the area. It turned out that 39% of the territory is gated, occupied by buildings or belonging to some person or company; 28% is devoted to infrastructure, sidewalks, parking lots, public functions such as schools or sport centers, proper parks, and public spaces; while 33% is open publicly owned land composed of some residential yards, a few playgrounds, but mostly land that is underdeveloped or unused.

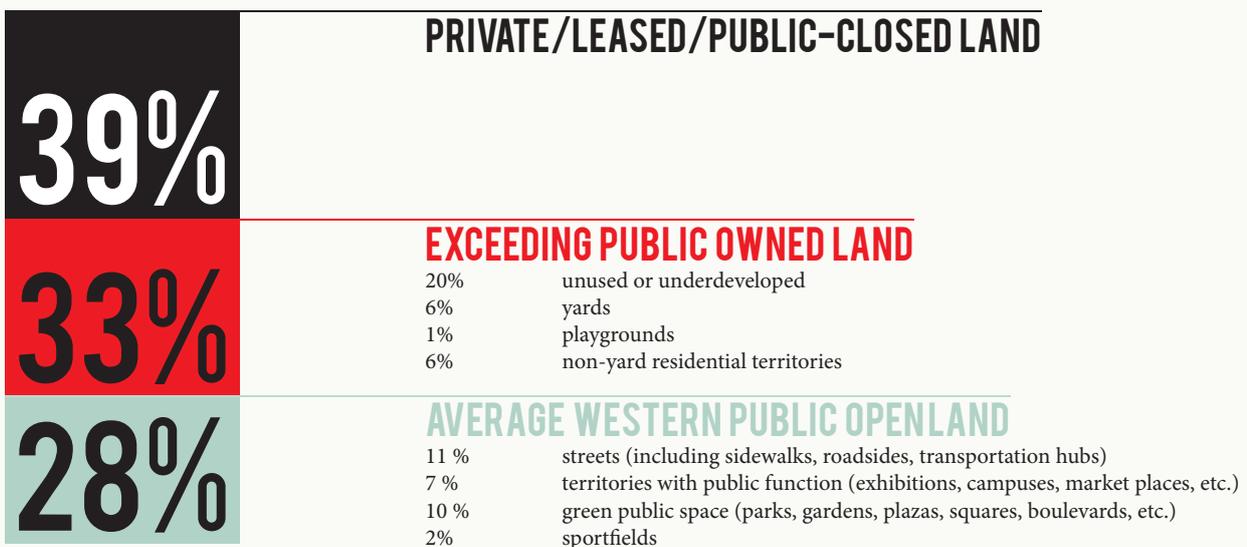
This rough estimation shows percentages quite similar to the data available for the whole city, and it confirms how the districts that compose Moscow are quite homogenous in terms of their built environments.

As a matter of fact, most of the residential districts outside the Garden Ring lack a number of public services, as well as sufficient jobs to employ local residents. A study conducted in 2006 highlights several statistics: schools

providing general education are at 89% of the required quantity, 50% of the pre-school institutions that are needed actually exist, and only 22% of the local cultural institutions and 13% of the covered sports facilities are built, while around 90% of the required consumer market and services facilities are available to residents¹³. Even these amenities only cover the very basic provision for a resident population, not taking into consideration activities such as leisure. The result of this – citizens feeling as though services are under-provided and likely over-used – is clearly visible in the centripetal force that attracts daily millions of citizens to the center of Moscow.

We witness a paradox that has to be overcome: on the one hand there is a vast amount of space and land that is not properly used, while on the other hand there is a shortage of many services for the residents of this land. From this perspective the re-programming of those areas is not just desirable, it is necessary. It is the key factor for the improvement of residential districts.

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Land division in one square kilometre selected as case study.



CASE STUDY

LOCAL ACTIVISM

Local groups of activists in most of the cases were born from housing issues.

Usually, such associations start with the smallest problems of their living environment such as cleaning dirty, dark, and unsafe staircases and entrance halls, or repairing a leaking roof. Later, they become involved in real social problems of the wider community. Sometimes, a staircase group gives rise to a housing committee, a housing committee joins its efforts with other housing committees, and collectively, they merge to form a neighborhood committee²⁰.

As described above, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, housing issues became very central in residents' lives, and today it is still by far the focal issue for contemporary civic activism. The character of this participation comes directly from the necessity to overcome some common problems, acting in place of the former political structure, as stressed by Vihavainen in 2009, "the volume of civic activity shows that there are clear problems in housing and that people are willing to take action to improve the situation²¹".

In order to have the legal status to act as a group, homeowners can constitute a 'Homeowners' association', called TSZh (товарищество собственников жилья - ТСЖ). In the last years Moscow saw a booming number of these associations, following the Housing Code of the 2005 in which the government obliged homeowners to take direct responsibility for the common areas in their buildings. The TSZh was one of the proposed forms through which homeowners could carry out this obligation.

A homeowners' association is a spontaneous, non-profit organization, in which any household can participate through direct involvement and common meetings to take shared decisions. It is legally registered and it has the status of legal entity. The main activity and responsibility of the homeowners' association is the organization and maintenance of buildings.

This kind of associations are not new in Russia: from the 1920's there was an apartment supervisor (kvartupolnomochennyi) in communal apartments who had the duty to report needs, complaints and suspicious behaviours to the Housing Committee (domkom)²². Housing Cooperatives were another example of success in residential self-organization.

However, the contemporary Russian TSZh has a particularly distinctive characteristic when compared to similar entities in other countries: participation is not mandatory. "Russia is therefore the only country in the world in which membership of a homeowners' association is voluntary²³". This differs, for example, from the majority of cases where it is not mandatory to constitute an organization, but from the moment of its creation everyone should take part at the meetings and decisions. We can somehow judge this aspect as positive: being a voluntary association increases its social character. Moreover TSZh are located where people live so that geographically they are the closest organization to citizens' everyday lives.

The TSZh has a simple structure: more than 50% of the households must participate in order to actually form a TSZh. There is a board of elected members that takes care of the administration and the everyday management

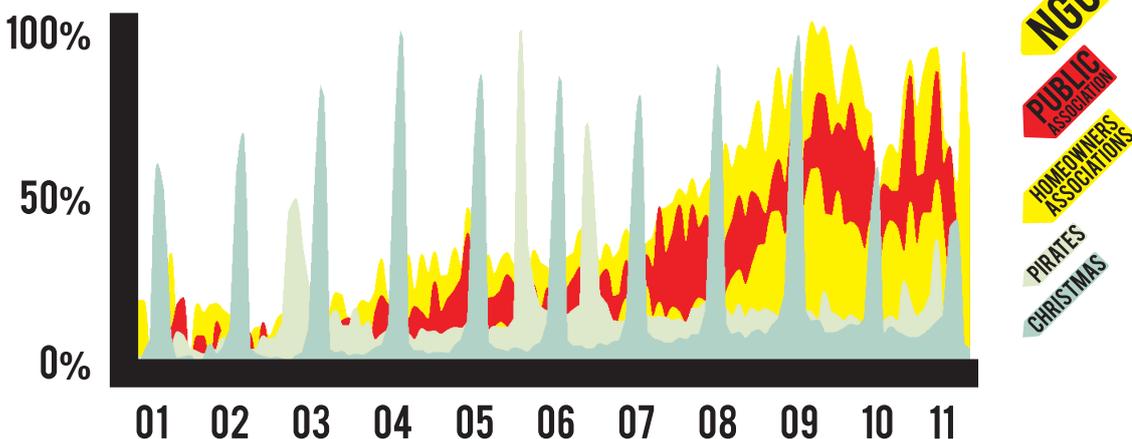
decisions, like deciding which company to hire (in many cases corruption, also plays a role in this...) The elected chairperson cannot stay in this position for more than two years.

Although there tends to be low participation of homeowners in these organizations, at the same time, social involvement in housing is very popular in Russia, and the level of participation is therefore higher than in other fields or activist activities. "In Moscow the number of housing committees has increased fivefold in only a few years, reaching 5350 in October 2005²⁴".

Some critiques can be made of the way these organizations are organized: first of all they refer only to households, excluding potentially some residents. Moreover, there are many recorded cases of 'marionette' TSZh, initiated by the government and often infiltrated by certain representatives with the aim of obtaining funds and power to decide how to invest the residents' money in, for example, a management company related to the municipality²⁵.

While the system is not perfect, the associations do seem to encourage certain behavior and practices that need to be fully developed by Moscow's residents anyway: they "...encourage people to be effective actors in the market. Homeowners' associations are the embodiment of this task, the decision-making channel for residents, a sort of experiment in democracy and an early step towards civic activity on a grassroots level²⁶". "Homeowners' associations may therefore serve as the first step for civic activity, as a 'school of democracy'²⁷". In the raion Troparevo-Nikulino, different TSZh meet regularly every month to discuss topics of general interest, not only issues related to their shared responsibility for property management or repairs, but also to talk about the desired developments within the raion, such as more children's hospitals, the reconstruction of the park, and so on. These organizations represents thousands of people in the districts, and it is reasonable to assume that as they become more prominent or unified, the local political power will take their needs more and more into consideration.

The relationship with local administrations is a crucial component for the success of local groups, since the uprava is the administrative level to which they have to refer in order to promote their goals.



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Rise of interest in activism. Queries in Yandex search engine. Source: Yandex pulse.

Currently, the vertical administrative structure of Moscow does not allow a real decentralization of power, and local institutions play more a role of façade of the central government rather than functioning as promoters of local interests. As described above, for the planning structure of Moscow, the officials that are responsible for the uprava and okrug do not have to report to citizens, but to the upper authority. This is a result of the fact that the officials themselves are placed in their position from the top, rather than elected from the bottom. Citizens nowadays vote only for the Russian President (the farthest and most inaccessible political figure from their everyday life) and deputies for the municipality. Even if deputies have voices and motivations, these deputies have very limited power, relating mostly to sport and youth issues. All the decisions taken at the local level have to be approved by the head of the uprava, appointed by the okrug. Within this system officials do not have many incentives to satisfy people's requests, and the effectiveness in responding to local needs is strongly depending on the attitude of the person in charge of the uprava. These problematic relations increase the distrust of residents and groups of residents towards these institutions, and as a result, the relationship is, most of the time, only reactive (or sometimes silent) toward complaints, rather than one of active participation. Local groups end up unified mainly by what Aleksey Levinson described as negative solidarity, the protection of their own interest against an higher power²⁸.

This imposition of power is reflected at the micro-scale, even within local movements. One characteristic of most of the self-organized movements is a strong dependency on the figure of the leader. Ironically, in some ways, movements recreate the same dynamics of power-dependency of which they are victims; as suggested by Clement, some leaders are afraid of talented new entry in the group who can take their leadership²⁹. Therefore, in most of the cases the success of the groups depends on the capabilities of their leader. If he or she is capable of attracting enough attention from the media, and/or creating the right network of trusted people within the raion and within the local institution, the movement will be more likely to reach its goals. Otherwise, the group turns out to be ineffective, often because it will be caught between a local authority that does not offer enough support and groups of criminals that try to promote their interests. In the context of this research, I received an email from another Strelka student that was helping contact with the head of a particular TSZh:

Just as I was about to contact him, I learned that he was beaten to half death by criminal businessmen his TSZh was fighting against. These people wanted to privatize the attic in the house where they live. From what I know, they may have faked TSZh meeting protocols, as if the majority of inhabitants agreed to that. We're talking about a beautiful old house very close to Kremlin, in the old part of the city. Misha Shulman is the head of TSZh. And now he's in life support. It happened yesterday. There's a lot in the Russian web on it, not much in English³⁰.

Evidence above suggests that participation in Moscow requires another level of commitment (and often complicitness) than the commitment required

in Western cities such as Milan. It is not only enlarging consensus and taking decisions based on this larger group of people's preferences and concerns in order to jointly address certain problems that are considered relevant. Instead, it means to put yourself in a wild territory, where rules and procedures lack to guaranteeing your physical protection, even before the inclusion of your efforts.

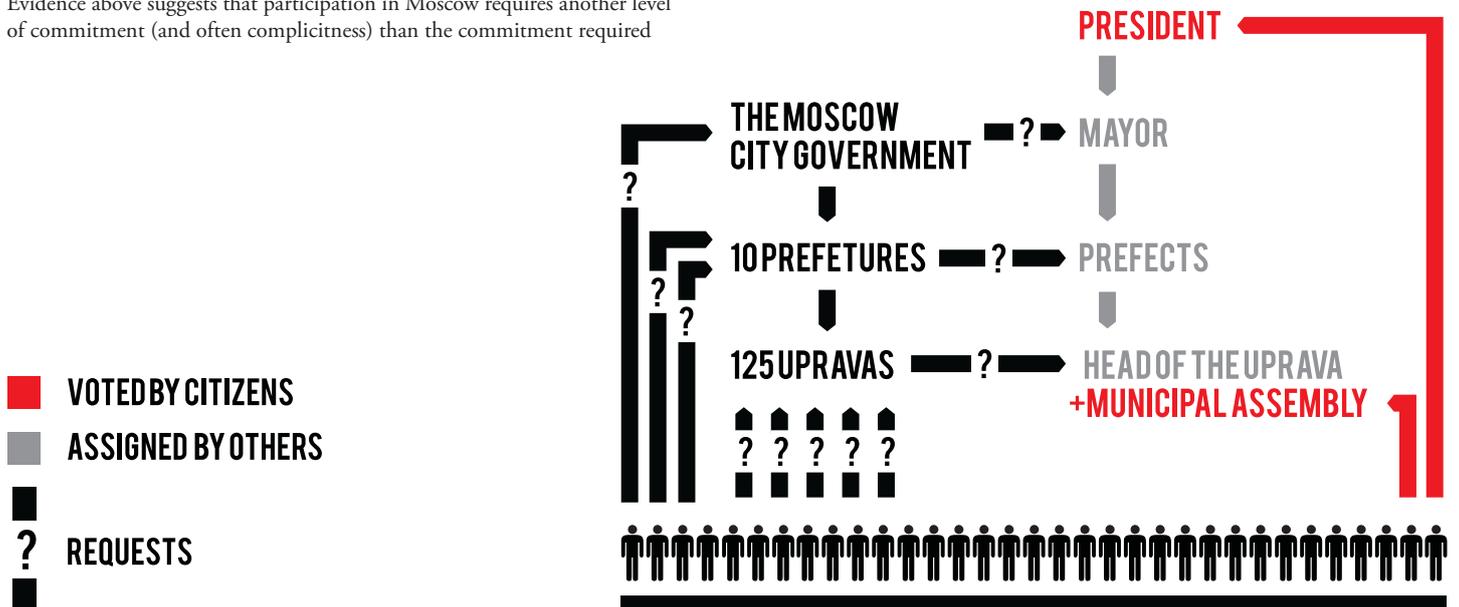
Comparing the activities and effectiveness of local groups with those of city-scale activists, some differences have to be highlighted. Local groups are generally moved by necessities rather than interests, and people involved are not necessarily prepared on the topic. They are mainly amateur, and they spend a lot of time looking for information that is not always accessible.

The relationship with local authorities is necessary but not designed to be favorable for both parties and turns out to be extremely influenced by the personality of the specific figure of the head of the administration or of the group leader. The relationship within the groups are mainly vis-à-vis, due to geographical proximity and considering the fact that online social media are not accessible to most of the retirees who constitute a consistent percentage of the participants.

In 2008 an ambitious project was launched by the team Mustview.ru. With their effort, an independent blog was created for every district in Moscow, in order to give to residents an alternative place for discussion and gathering.

However, in Troparevo-Nikulino it seems that this type of media does not function. In more or less 5 years only 54 posts were submitted, and mainly with contents related to: (1) meeting other people, (2) proposing activities (volleyball, etc.), (3) posting basic information for those who just moved in (passport, baths, fitness, etc.), (4) making suggestions for basic needs (broken pc, etc.), (5) sharing some news or asking about them (gunfights, etc.), (6) making suggestion for housing issues (how to install new staircases, how to deal with water problems, etc.), (7) giving info about ongoing constructions in the area and (8) airing very general complaints³¹.

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Moscow administrative structure.



OPEN SOURCE AND THE CITY

Open source communities represent the latest online evolution of groups where people make and share information or products. These communities follows principles that ground them both in the practical and in the ideological sphere. Before starting the analysis it is necessary to give space to the endless discussion of the concepts of open source and free software. The first one is concentrated on the process that create the software, while the second on the ethical values of freedom of the users. One of the main founders and promoters of the free software movement, Richard Stallman, better describes the difference between the two terms. “Nearly all open source software is free software. The two terms describe almost the same category of software, but they stand for views based on fundamentally different values. Open source is a development methodology; free software is a social movement. For the free software movement, free software is an ethical imperative, because only free software respects the users’ freedom. By contrast, the philosophy of open source considers issues in terms of how to make software “better”—in a practical sense only. It says that non-free software is an inferior solution to the practical problem at hand. For the free software movement, however, non-free software is a social problem, and the solution is to stop using it and move to free software.” (Stallman). In this framework, the term free hardware would be more appropriate for my research, but I prefer to use open source hardware in order to avoid all the confusion and misunderstanding related to the term free.

Open source is a way to collaborate (normally on software) giving free access to all to information about the product. It works because people “sacrifice” their intellectual rights in order to release a product that everyone can use and improve. It is a collaborative movement the results of which are highly efficient (e.g. Linux menaces giants like Microsoft). It helps to generate very impressive results in a very short period of time, because the efforts of the users-developers are based on the work that someone else did before and gave to the community freely.

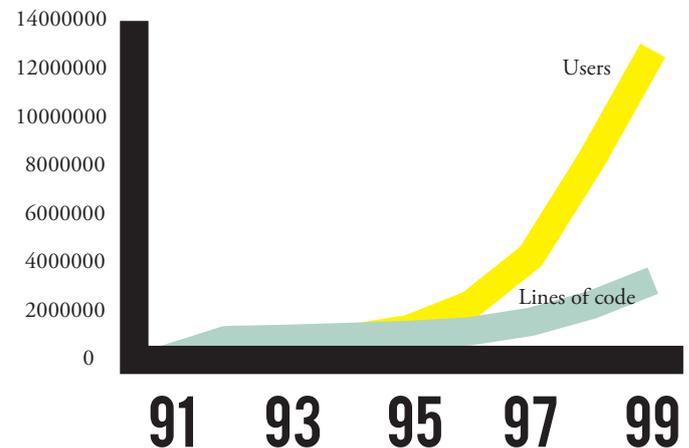
The Open Source movement, in order to find a practical and legal way to operate, had to set up an innovative license. Here the ten points of the license are listed: “(1) Free Redistribution - the license shall not restrict any party from selling or giving away the software, (2) Source Code - the program must include source code, (3) Derived Works - the license must allow modifications and derived works, and must allow them to be distributed under the same terms as the license of the original software, (4) Integrity of The Author’s Source Code - the license may require derived works to carry a different name or version number from the original software, (5) No Discrimination Against Persons or Groups, (6) No Discrimination Against Fields of Endeavor, (7) Distribution of License - the rights attached to the program must apply to all to whom the program is redistributed, (8) License Must Not Be Specific to a Product - the rights attached to the program must not depend on the program’s being part of a particular software distribution, (9) License Must Not Restrict Other Software - the license must not place restrictions on other software that is distributed along with the licensed software and (10) License Must Be Technology-Neutral - no provision of the license may be predicated on any individual technology or style of interface.”³²

The license of the open source movement is mainly based on a previous one, created by the Free Software Foundation: the GNU General Public License (GPL). More or less it contains the same articles, but with a stronger accent on the ethical reasons for this kind of license. It is at the same time a legal document and a manifesto, as easily understandable in the license’s introduction: “The licenses for most software and other practical works are designed to take away your freedom to share and change the works. By contrast, the GNU General Public License is intended to guarantee your freedom to share and change all versions of a program—to make sure it remains free software for all its users. We, the Free Software Foundation, use the GNU General Public License for most of our software; it applies also to any other work released this way by its authors. You can apply it to your programs, too.”³³

These rules and practices may seem far from the physical reality of the built environment. However, their nature is very close to the way groups of urban activists face urban transformations. If we focus particularly on those groups that operate and promote DIY interventions the similarities are very evident. The action itself is quite simple and easy to reproduce, usually through the

reuse of recycled materials. These groups encourage and promote the reproduction of the same projects in other context; one example is “Park(ing) Day”, born in San Francisco, replicated in New York and then spread worldwide through Europe to Moscow: the same action, invented, made better, and then implemented in a variety of different context.

Linux represents one (if not the) most successful product of the collaboration of part-time



volunteers scattered around the globe. Its success has been brilliantly described by one of the first contributors of the GNU project, Eric Raymond, in his book “The cathedral and the bazaar”. It is the comparison of two distinct models: the cathedral, a top-down centralized model that represents the interests of some groups of power, and the bazaar, a more open environment where interaction is more horizontal.

Apart from the capabilities of its developers, Linux’s strength lays in the methodology by which it keeps expanding, a methodology that does not fear mistakes and errors. “Linus Torvalds’s style of development—release early and often, delegate everything you can, be open to the point of promiscuity—came as a surprise. [...] the Linux community seemed to resemble a great babbling bazaar of differing agendas and approaches [...] out of which a coherent and stable system could seemingly emerge only by a succession of miracles. The fact that this bazaar style seemed to work, and work well, came as a distinct shock³⁴”.

Obviously, in the Open Source movement, cooperation is the main means in which progress and innovation happen; Linus Torvalds, the Linux kernel’s programmer, set up a very powerful network of co-operators. “Users are wonderful things to have, [...] properly cultivated, they can become co-developers. [...] Given a bit of encouragement, your users will diagnose problems, suggest fixes, and help improve the code far more quickly than you could unaided. [...] The power of this effect is easy to underestimate. In fact, pretty well all of us in the open-source world drastically underestimated how well it would scale up with number of users and against system complexity, until Linus Torvalds showed us differently. In fact, I think Linus’s cleverest and most consequential hack was not the construction of the Linux kernel itself, but rather his invention

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The rise of Linux. Number of users and lines of code between 1900 and 1999. Source: Forbes Magazine.

of the Linux development model³⁵. And more specifically: “In those early times (around 1991) it wasn’t unknown for him to release a new kernel more than once a day! Because he cultivated his base of co-developers and leveraged the Internet for collaboration harder than anyone else, this worked³⁶”.

The system created by Torvalds was demonstrated to be extremely efficient in enlarging the number of people able to find and fix problem. It is a sort of daily challenge for the one who feels involved. And this methodology is obviously very different from the cathedral one, where the product can go on the market only when it has no (or very few) bugs. It takes months (or year) to come out with a stable product, and users that pay have obviously higher expectations from that product.

Let us for a second make a parallel to similar problems in the urban environment. Let’s think about the unclaimed land. That could be that segment of the market that no one wants. A mass of volunteers can actually cooperate to design and realize many different solutions for Moscow public spaces, and share these solutions with others. The solutions can be taken or modified by other people. Very often it is not necessary (as usually happens in normal planning) to design something for months and then build it. Now we just need to identify where the initial kernel (or rules, or conditions) is into which these urban hackers could actually plug their projects.

Moving in an open source environment means to break the division between users (citizens) and programmers (planners): “...mismatch between the tester’s and the developer’s mental models of the program; the tester, on the outside looking in, and the developer on the inside looking out. In closed-source development they’re both stuck in these roles, and tend to talk past each other and find each other deeply frustrating. Open source development breaks this bind, making it far easier for tester and developer to develop a shared representation grounded in the actual source code and to communicate effectively about it³⁷”. In other words, the open platform accessible to everyone allows for a common ground for discussion. In the same way, a permanently ongoing urban plan (complete and available to the most detailed element) would be the proper starting point for a constructive discussion between citizens, government and investors.

Raymond concludes his book by describing the necessary preconditions to start a “bazaar-style” model of participation. Particularly, he states that is almost impossible to start from scratch with this model: “Your nascent developer community needs to have something runnable and testable to play with. When you start community-building, what you need to be able to present is a plausible promise. Your program does not have to work particularly well. It can be crude, buggy, incomplete, and poorly documented. What it must not fail to do is (a) run, and (b) convince potential co-developers that it can be evolved into something really neat in the foreseeable future³⁸”.

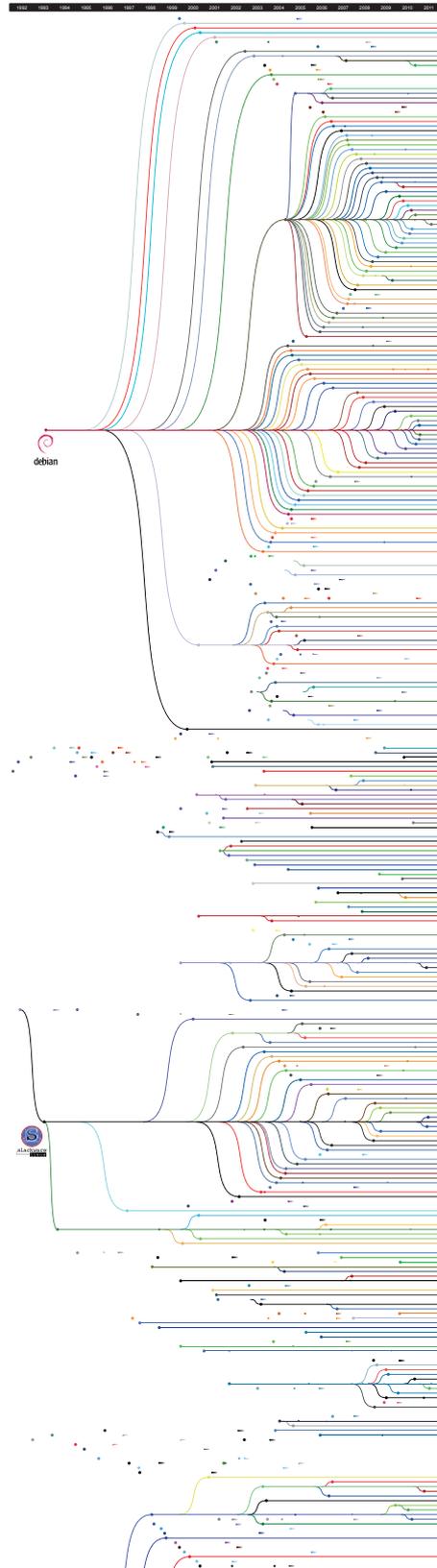
What motivate the hackers? What motivates people involved in making Linux better? This is a very crucial question. There are two main reasons: the necessity to develop something that does not exist, and the satisfaction of the ego of the hacker by recognition among other hackers. How can this be transported to the urban environment?

The need for alternative solutions for the unclaimed land is evident, the issues is now how to satisfy the ego of the participants. “One of the best-known folk theorems of software engineering is that 60% to 75% of conventional software projects either are never completed or are rejected by their intended users³⁹”. What about the amount of unrealized projects of architects, designers and activists? All the design proposals that are discarded along the design process? What about the hundreds and thousands of project that did not win a competition? Where does their potential go? Can it be somehow stored and entrapped in a more ambitious project?

As the case of Wikipedia and Linux show, users are willing to contribute to a project if they clearly understand and realize the potential of the very central ideas, no matter how visionary it sounds, like making the largest encyclopedia in the world or creating a new operating system able to compete with Windows. The intention of reprogramming the vast amount of underdeveloped land in Moscow could represent for the designer community a challenge equally visionary and feasible.

Projects of so-called “Open Architecture” are currently being tested in a few online communities, OpenSimSim above all. However, these experiments cannot attract a critical amount of users since they are more focused on the process itself rather than the application of the proposed projects. It is no

wonder that the highest amount of participants in the OpenSimSim project was recorded when there was a specific project that collected and developed ideas in response to the Japanese tragedy in 2011. Moscow has therefore the opportunity to become again a center of experimentation and avant-gardism if it will be able to attract the attention and the efforts of architects, planners and designers as a response to the issue of unclaimed land.



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Linux distribution timeline.
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COLLABORATIVE REPROGRAMMING AND THE ROLE OF DESIGNERS

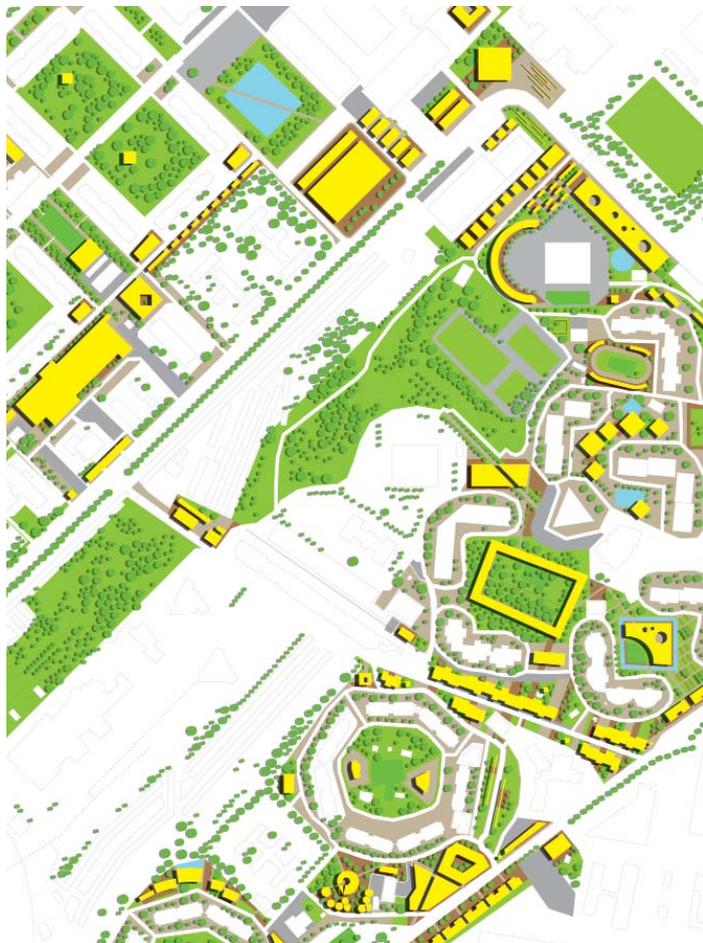
The issue of the unclaimed land in Moscow has both spatial and functional qualities. The interaction of residents and the network of urban activists is crucial to address properly the range of interventions, but a model for this land requires the inclusion of architecture and design as the means of transformation. A territory of this scale can hardly be managed coherently through spontaneous interactions.

The model that I propose as a pilot project for Moscow sees architects, planners and designers as activators of local processes in which the resident population will contribute with further feedbacks, ideas and improvement. Participation has now gained a positive meaning, but at the same time participation in the micro-urban environment is so complex in that is very difficult to understand all the forces at play in that field.

Marcus Miessen proposes an interesting scenario where decisions in the urban environment are not necessarily taken through the involvement of the majority, but where plans are promoted by “an outsider who – instead of trying to set up or sustain common denominators of consensus – enters existing situations or projects by deliberately instigating conflicts as a micro-political form of critical engagement with the environment that one is operating in⁴⁰”.

The author does not describe a specific model, but he argues that “instead of breeding the next generation of facilitators and mediators, we should try to encourage the “disinterested outsider”, the one that is unaware of prerequisites and existing protocols, entering the arena with nothing but creative intellect. [...] Given the increasing fragmentation of identities and the complexities of the contemporary city, we are now facing a situation in which it is crucial to think about a form of commonality that allows conflict as a form of productive engagement: a model of bohemian participation in the sense of a point of entry for outsiders who access existing debates and discourses, untroubled by disapproval⁴¹”.

The role of architects in Moscow, in relation to the unclaimed land, should escape the traditional dynamics of the profession in order to contribute new



proposals and solutions for those lands. An open and volunteer contribution to the project would create a wide set of ready-made rough solutions for certain areas. The image on the facing page shows a hypothetical scenario of reprogramming the unclaimed land, filled and transformed by a mix of heterogeneous proposals made by professionals or other people interested in the design of those areas. It would constitute the unofficial development plan for the district and it will be always discussed, updated and transformed through the activity of the center.

Moscow residential districts are often similar in terms of built environment and its problems; some projects proposed for some areas could be easily re-adapted and modified by the residents in other areas. The proposed projects will be generic solutions capable of being changed and adapted easily since the drawings and guidelines will be open and shared.

Without a set of proposals for the reuse of the areas, the interaction between citizens and the authorities will rarely reach a productive discussion. On the contrary, if a set of projects is already in place, residents would visualize different solutions to shape their environment, and discuss them with the designers, to change and improve them, and with the municipality, to find a way to realize them. It is a wide reprogramming effort that counts on the infinite potentiality of the unbuilt.

The outcome of the design process that I proposed here is purely speculative, but it helps to better understand and quantify what is behind the unclaimed lands. The yellow proposals suggest realistic interventions, and show how it is possible to reuse those lands in order to create new public spaces, functions of collective interests that are nowadays missing in the area, but also new dwellings and offices. If we take this square kilometer as representative of most of the areas outside the Garden Ring, the aggregate potential of this proposal increase significantly. Reproducing exactly this kind of interventions and functional mix on a large scale would create low rise housing for 500,000 people and offices and workshops where 800,000 people could find an occupation close to their houses, decreasing therefore traffic-related problems. 14,000 hectares of agricultural land, more than half of the city center, will be available for urban farming and produce profit that could be reinvested locally. Moreover, it will be possible to build a retail area 130 times the size of GUM, and new 390 hectares of market's area, 1.7 times bigger the Cherkizovsky Market, the biggest market in Russia, shut down in 2009 with an income of 300 million dollars per year. The city will have new libraries for an area 92 times bigger the Lenin's Library and new exhibition centers 27 times the size of the Pushkin museum. Finally, the number of bars, restaurants, post offices, banks, theaters, cinemas and clubs could almost double in Moscow, fulfilling more adequately residents' needs.

The estimation is rough, but it identifies a clear scenario that has to be taken into consideration by the authorities and by those in charge to shape the growth of Moscow.

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Possible reuse of the underdeveloped lands in the case study area.

CENTER FOR DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT

In order to open the process to the majority of residents the interactions between citizens, designers and authorities should take place in a physical space in the residential areas. In this space, a limited number of people will contribute with their work in order to keep this process continuous in time, rather than a one-shot design proposal. This space will work as a center for the development of the district.

The description of the main activities of the center follows.

(1) Mapping of available land. There is no official map or understanding of the quantity of the publicly owned land that is available for redesign. Or at least there are no studies that systematically show it. This is the first action that has to be undertaken and will require at least one topographer and an architect. In St. Petersburg a pilot project succeeded in the mapping of green spaces in the yards by the residents. The result was quite positive and encouraging, since the survey had a decent level of accuracy.

(2) District analysis. Architects or planners (including students) will survey the physical condition of the district, producing and making available a variety of set of maps showing functions, spaces, areas, public services, etc. . Professional from social science fields will indeed map the intangible reality of the district, through interviews, questionnaire, surveys and all other methodology they find appropriate to describe the problems and the potential of the place. The outcome will be a series of reports and researches that can be transcribed and made accessible together with the maps.

(3) Promoting the creation of proposals. Based on the analysis conducted on the district and the cartography of unclaimed land, the center will constantly search for architects, planners, designers, activists and residents, to ask them to come forward with proposals for the areas. This can be done in a variety of ways, from an open competition, to social networks, to direct contacts, and the proposals will be collected and archived in what will be the open atlas of Moscow, in the sense that will show ideas for that district, but the solutions can be taken also from other centers or people in Moscow. The projects will have an open source license, and therefore it will be possible to build them directly, or to contribute with further modifications and improvements.

(4) In order to transfer the real needs of the residents into the proposals, a variety of meetings will be held with the resident population where it will be possible to discuss the solutions, select the most preferred and spend time together with designer to make the necessary improvements. It will serve also as a moment of education of the residents to urban theme, being in tight cooperation with a professional of that field. Moreover the center will be open most of the time, giving the opportunity to residents to contribute and interact

with their proposals at any time, without waiting for the official or scheduled meeting, or to come to the center looking for counseling on urban or design issues. It will be therefore possible to create a local entity to which to refer in order to fill the knowledge gap of the resident population or other groups of people interested in the topics.

(5) Once there is a critical mass of projects and residents participating in their development, other stakeholders like the municipality and possible developers will be slowly included in the meetings to become an active part of the discussion. The outcome of the discussions is unknown, but it will create an open and purposeful discussion within the district that likely will lead to the improvement of the public realm through the provision of ready-designed solutions for problems that the municipality has to address in the coming years.

(6) If agreement can be reached between all the parts, the center can take part in the construction process of the projects itself. With a series of workshops, activists and residents can participate together in phases of the construction, acquiring knowledge that will be reused in other parts of Moscow, or in followings projects.

I propose to test the implementation of this center in one of the raion of Moscow. Through this test it will be possible to understand strength and weakness of the model, before implementing it in other raions. Ideally each raion should implement this kind of center to create local alternatives to the planning practices of Moscow, and the delimitation at the raion scale seems necessary and fundamental since the authorities to interact with are already in place in Moscow's administrative structure.

Residents will approach this place as the center where to find information and consultancy on urban, architecture and design issues, while the center itself will be therefore the place where ideas are created, discussed, modified and implemented locally.

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Diagram of functioning of the Center for district development.

