From Art-Creator towards Moderator: Roles of Lithuanian Architects

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Abstract

The article deals with the self-reflection of Lithuanian architects on their professional roles and their transformations since the mid-20th century, encompassing the Soviet system until 1990 and the neoliberal environment afterward. The role of an architect is defined as a value system-based professional's motives, aspirations, and modes of praxis. The identification of the roles is based on semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted in 2015-2021 with 33 prominent Lithuanian architects who graduated from architectural studies in 1950-2009 and were/are active in practice or academia. The interviews were analysed according to the method of thematic analysis. Six professional roles of Lithuanian architects in polarised pairs were identified and characterized like the roles of 'art-creator' and 'craftsman', the roles of 'leader' and 'service provider', and the roles of 'moderator' and 'businessman'. The first roles in pairs have positive emotional and evaluative connotations, while the second ones are devalued. In the personal self-determination of an architect, the roles appear not in their pure form, but in combination. The evolution of roles was determined by the modernist ideology and the transformations following the change of political regimes in 1990. While Soviet modernist architects emphasized the roles of art-creator and leader in construction, young architects critically revised these roles and focus on the role of moderator. Disclosure of professional roles explains the clashes of values and reactions in the professional ideology and practice.

Del creador de arte al moderador: el papel de los arquitectos lituanos

Resumen

El artículo aborda la autorreflexión de los arquitectos lituanos sobre sus roles profesionales y sus transformaciones desde mediados del siglo XX, abarcando el sistema soviético hasta 1990 y el entorno neoliberal posterior. El papel de un arquitecto se define como los motivos, aspiraciones y modos de praxis de un profesional basado en un sistema de valores. La identificación de los roles se sustenta en entrevistas semiestructuradas en profundidad, realizadas entre 2015 y 2021, a 33 destacados arquitectos lituanos que se graduaron en estudios de arquitectura entre 1950 y 2009 y estuvieron/están activos en la práctica profesional o en el mundo académico. Éstas fueron analizadas con el método de análisis temático. Se identificaron y caracterizaron seis roles profesionales de los arquitectos lituanos en pares polarizados: los roles de "creador de arte" y "artesano", de "líder" y "proveedor de servicios", y de "moderador" y "hombre de negocios". Los primeros roles en pareja tienen connotaciones emocionales y valorativas positivas, mientras que los segundos están devaluados. En la autodeterminación personal de un arquitecto, los roles no aparecen en forma pura, sino combinados. La evolución de los roles estuvo determinada por la ideología modernista y las transformaciones que siguieron al cambio de regímenes políticos en 1990. Mientras que los arquitectos modernistas soviéticos enfatizaron los roles de creador de arte y líder en la construcción, los arquitectos jóvenes revisaron críticamente estos roles y se centraron en el papel de moderador. La divulgación de los roles profesionales explica los choques de valores y reacciones en la ideología y la práctica profesionales.

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1. Introduction

The evolution of political and economic circumstances, societal needs, cultural background, and technological innovation, as well as the legal environment and procedural arrangements for architectural design and power relations among players in the construction processes, are influencing the roles assumed by Lithuanian architects, which at first sight may appear stable. Within the scope of this study, the role of an architect is defined as motives, aspirations, and modes of praxis based on a personal value system. It is important to note that roles are not, by their concept, referring to job titles or positions, nor are they related to areas of activity or specializations. Therefore, the architectural design practice and its outcomes are beyond the scope of this article. The political, legal, economic, social, and cultural context for architectural praxis in Lithuania, the nature of commissions and the parties involved, and the regulatory environment are considered as circumstances influencing and modifying the professional culture of the architects' community and value systems of its members.

The article aims to reveal how Lithuanian architects' self-reflection on their professional roles has evolved from the mid-twentieth century to the present. The identification of the roles is based on semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted between 2015 and 2021 by the author and her colleagues E. Riaubienė and D. Dijokienė with thirty-three prominent Lithuanian architects who graduated from architectural studies between 1950 and 2009 and were/are active in practice or academia. The respondents represent three generations based on the years of graduating professional studies: the eldest generation (1950–1969), the senior generation (1970–1989), and the younger generation (1990–2009). The research includes relevant statements from prominent Lithuanian architects found in literature and media.

Understanding professional culture in Lithuania is enhanced by identifying the nature of Lithuanian architects' roles, their emotional and evaluative connotations, and the frequency of mentions considering generational differences in attitudes. It enables uncover broader issues, such as architects' adaptability to changes in professional tasks, prioritized work modes that may not reflect market realities, and strained relationships within design and building processes. The research results clarify contradictions in professionals' self-positioning, motives, expectations, and reactions. Furthermore, they reveal how changes in statehood due to the Soviet Union occupation in 1940 and regaining Independence in 1990, along with subsequent economic, cultural, and social transformations, have influenced and reshaped the professional culture, roles of Lithuanian architects, and associated evaluative and emotional connotations. Comparing these findings with similar studies in the relevant international literature reveals the specificity of the Lithuanian architects' approach, which was determined not only by socio-cultural and occupational factors but also by the turbulent history of twentieth-century.

2. Methods

The research is based on a thematic analysis of semi-structured in-depth interviews with 33 architects. The participants were selected according to three criteria: architects who were professionally educated in Lithuania between 1950 and 2009; prominent professionals, recognized by the professional or academic community; and those available between 2015 and 2021 when the interviews were conducted.

The respondents were categorized into three generations based on their graduation from Lithuanian higher education institutions in architecture: (I) nine representatives of the eldest generation of architects, who graduated in 1950-1969; (II) twelve representatives of the senior generation of architects, who graduated in 1970-1989; (III) twelve representatives of the younger generation of architects, who graduated in 1990-2009. According to the nature of their activities, the architects interviewed are proportionally represented in three groups: (P) practitioners who design urban and architectural objects, and objects of landscape architecture, (PA) academicians who teach in higher education institutions and actively engage in design practice, and (RA) academicians who teach in

higher education institutions and engage in research, or architectural activists. In this article, the code of a respondent referred to defines their generation, activity type, and sequence number in each category. For example, the code II-RA-3 indicates a senior generation architect, who is an academician - teaches in higher education institutions and engages in research, and holds the third sequence number in this category. As graduates and academics, the respondents represent the main Lithuanian higher education institutions where architectural studies were conducted at the time. The respondents, active in architectural design practice, have designed outstanding architectural objects in various places in Lithuania. The gender balance among the informants was equitably managed as much as possible according to their availability at the time of the interviews.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews with the 33 selected architects were carried out according to a list of questions that included issues such as the aim of and motives for architects' work, their role and status, professional skills and knowledge. Qualitative data – transcripts of 33 interviews – were investigated using the method of thematic analysis. The thematic analysis, focusing on the meanings, allowed the author to identify and highlight the shared meanings and experiences that are important when talking about the roles of Lithuanian architects as they have constructed them themselves. The author made active, interpretative choices in generating codes and in constructing themes that derive from the content of the interviews and that guide to identification of the main roles of architects (Braun, & Clarke, 2012).

3. Theoretic background

3.1 Conditions that shaped the professional culture of Lithuanian architects

After World War II, Lithuania endured the second Soviet occupation from 1944 to 1990. The totalitarian Soviet regime brought radical changes in Lithuania, replacing private ownership with state control and transitioning from a market economy to central planning. The architecture system was restructured, with the state and its agencies becoming the clients, the construction industry controlled by the nomenclature apparatus, and architects assembled into specialized state design institutes. Architectural bureaucracy replaced democratic architectural processes, and artistic freedom was restricted by the Communist Party's ideology. Following Khrushchev's reforms in Soviet construction and architecture in 1955, architectural design was regulated by strict directives, instructions, norms, and standardization rules, seeking the most economical solutions (Drėmaitė 2017). With the growth of the urban population, residential construction underwent industrialization in the mid-1950s and full typification a decade later, leading to accompanying bureaucratic and stagnant economic problems. Among mostly inexpressive residential and industrial buildings of mass construction built according to typical designs, from the 1960s to the 1980s an increasing number of individually designed representative public buildings and complexes began to appear (Reklaitė, Leitanaitė, 2011). To practice, architects needed to adapt, to cope with the challenges of the imposed Soviet system, and to turn the processes to their own advantage. The most prominent architects became a cultural elite with social and economic privileges (Maciuika, Drėmaitė, 2020).

The severe economic and social decline in the Soviet Union during the 1980s pushed the Soviet empire towards its collapse. Liberation movements in Lithuania during that period brought the country's independence in 1990. In Lithuania's initial post-Soviet decade, neoliberal ideology led to the transformation of the economy into a free market economy, a transition to Western-style governance, and the privatization of state-owned property. Architects, like other specialists, faced the tough challenge of adapting to new realities (Zilinskiene, Ilic, 2022). The centralized system of large design institutes disintegrated leading architects to disperse into small private design practices. Architectural practice became a business, struggling in the early post-Soviet years due to a lack of commissions. The construction industry underwent restructuring, with state commissions replaced by private investments from local or foreign capital. This change led to an increase in the number of players with complex, controversial relationships of performance, superiority, and control

(Veličkaitė, 2019). Client demands and the new legal environment fundamentally transformed the professional culture - the architect found himself in the position of a public servant. Due to economic and social challenges, there were fewer realizations in the first post-Soviet decade. The desire to get closer to Western standards, easy access to global architectural trends, and the availability of advanced building materials and technologies resulted in a pretentious and cacophonous architecture (Grunskis, Reklaitė, 2012; Drėmaitė, n.d.)

Since the early 21st century, the socio-economic situation has been improving, along with European Union membership and its support. Architectural practice has evolved from post-Soviet chaos to more organized processes, diversity, and improved quality. Increased attention to formulating and promoting architectural policy resulted in the long-awaited adoption of the Law on Architecture in 2017. Lithuanian architecture has become more European by returning to its fundamental values. Regrettably, under neoliberal circumstances, business priorities and commercial interests often overshadow the cultural grounds of architecture, impacting both the construction of new structures and the demolition of valuable Soviet buildings (Grunskis, Reklaitė, 2012). As public interest and demand for the quality of the built environment grow, the quality of Lithuanian architecture is increasing.

3.2   Value system-based roles

Architecture researchers have variously identified the value system-based roles that architects assume in their work, with variations in categorization scope and identification criteria. The scope may include architects active in the broad field of architecture, or only architects who design, or the sample may be limited to specific activities, timeframes, or viewpoints. The criteria for identifying an architect's role focus on the professional's value-based approach, including their motives, expectations, professional knowledge, and decisions, which affect their professional performance and results.

The broadest view categorizes architects active in the complex field of architecture. By investigating the cultural value generated by architecture and how this value is created through the architect's skillsets, actions, and contributions, Samuel and her colleagues have identified three types of architects: cultural, social, and commercial. In a subsequent study, Samuel replaced the commercial architect category with the one of knowledge architects, which focuses on research-based and innovative architectural activities (Samuel, 2018). Saint identified four types of architects in the evolution of the architectural profession over the last two centuries: the egoistic hero and genius, passionate about creating great works of art, the businessman who is keen on profitable contracts, the gentleman who writes about architecture, and the entrepreneur as a developer providing multidisciplinary service package (Saint, 1983).

Focusing on practitioners who design projects, Carmona identifies three traditions of architectural practice - creative, market-driven, and regulatory - according to their motivations, modes of working, and associated professional knowledge fields. He calls them tyrannies because, in extreme cases, they encapsulate a single-minded pursuit of one's goals in a manner that undermines the aspirations of others. The creative tyranny treasures creative freedom above all else, placing form and image above economic, social, and environmental values. Market-dictated tyranny is based on an argument that the market knows best and that what sells counts. The regulatory tyranny unquestioningly accepts restrictive state regulatory powers and regimes (Carmona, 2009). Cohen and co-authors identify "three dominant discourses: architecture as creative endeavour, architecture as business activity and architecture as public service" (Cohen *et al.*, 2005, p. 782), which can be seen as a privileging of expertise, business constraints, and social values in professional work (Cohen *et al.*, 2005).

If architects' roles are identified with a narrow focus on a particular aspect or in a particular context, their nature relates to the above. Drawing on theories of contract and conflict, Spector examines the architect's priorities through the choices he/she makes between ethical obligations to society and aesthetic aspirations when designing spaces or objects. According to the balance between

moral and aesthetic values, he identifies three strategies for the architect's roles: the aesthete, its opposite, the strict moralist, and the intermediate role, the pluralist (Spector, 2001). According to the effects of the built environment on individual or public health, Seidel and co-authors distinguish the roles of the architect as the fashionista, the life improver, and the object-service packager (Seidel *et al.*, 2012). Charlesworth deepens into the roles of architects in the reconstruction of post-war cities, identifying them with metaphors such as pathologists, heroes, historicists, colonialists, social reformers, and educators (Charlesworth, 2006). The pathologists view the reconstruction of the post-war city as a radical urban 'surgery'. Heroes, like messiahs, focus on architectural monuments and utopias. Historians nostalgically rebuild the city as it was before the destruction, while colonialists, on the contrary, implant foreign visions. Social reformers consult the public to address social integration and physical rehabilitation problems, while educators raise architectural awareness for the next generations (Charlesworth, 2006).

Summarising the categories of architects' value system-based roles, the first and most frequently mentioned, and therefore the main role, is that of the art-creator. With the addition of positive or negative connotations, the complex role of the art-creator includes the generator of cultural values, the neutral aesthete, and the critically acclaimed heroic genius and fashionista. Two other roles of architects often mentioned are the market-active, financially-oriented commercial architect, and the moral life-improving social reformer.

4. Results

As already mentioned, the notion of role is defined as the motives, aspirations, and modes of praxis of a professional based on his/her value system. It was vividly described by respondent II-PA-1: "Architecture is like a pantheon, where there are gods, many gods, and you choose the chief god - one serves the god of creativity the most, another serves the god of public relations, or the god of fame, or the god of financial benefit, and another maybe serves Bacchus […]. And we are often certain that the other one believes in the wrong way. For example, you are certain that the chief architect does not believe in architecture the way he should and does it the wrong way. But they all believe in the same pantheon of gods, only the main gods are different from yours."

The way the interviewed architects describe professional priorities, modes of practice, aspirations, and expectations, reveals the spectrum of roles of architects in Lithuania. The criteria used to identify roles differ. The roles identified as 'art-creator' and 'craftsman' describe the importance and level of the expected artistic quality of architectural design outcomes. The roles of 'leader' and 'service provider' refer to the extreme positions of the architect's power and significance concerning other players in the design and construction process. The roles 'moderator' and 'businessman' describe the motives, nature, and objectives of professional activities. Due to the different basis for role identification, the roles do not appear in the pure, polarised form of a single role, but in an interwoven and nuanced combination of a few of them – an architect takes on roles in a specific proportion and finds his/her position in the role system. When talking about the roles, respondents assign a certain judgment and attribute a different emotional load to each of them. The first of the opposed roles has positive emotional and evaluative connotations, while the second role is condemned and devalued. Respondents from senior and younger generations focused on the development of professional culture under neoliberal conditions during the years of independence, and only occasionally compared it with a time-distant Soviet period. The respondents of the elder generation raised Soviet practice out of memories, often idealizing their professional heyday, and discussed contemporary processes by contrasting them with the Soviet period.

4.1   Art-creator

In the interviews taken, the role of the art-creator dominates. Deconstructed, the words 'creator' and 'artist' have different meanings. The former refers to the creation of something new in general, something that has not yet existed, while the latter is concretized into the creation of art. For the architect, the intentions and aspirations of the creator and the artist are intertwined and

complementary. Being a creator indicates the meaning and purpose of professional practice while being an artist points to the artistic nature and particularity of the occupation. The role of the art-creator manifests in the field of cultural expression.

All the architects interviewed despite their experience and predominating activities, paid more attention to the role of the creator than to its artistic dimension. They unequivocally state that the architect is the creator, and they list the characteristics of this role. He/she is a strong, searching, thoughtful, universal, multidisciplinary, problem-solving creator. He/she has a passion, and an intrinsic desire to create (I-PA-3, III-RA-3). He/she has a sense of responsibility and would not sell out for money (I-RA-1), he/she is ambitious and proactive (III-PA-4, III-RA-1). The creator can look beyond the details and combine them into a coherent whole (III-P-P-2). He/she creates lasting value and gives meaning to architecture (III-P-4). The creator of the built environment becomes like an engineer of the human surroundings (III-PA-1). However, it is emphasized that the creator should not be limited to this role alone. Successful creator is a craftsman and a thinker at the same time, and "these things are not in conflict or contradiction with each other" (III-PA-4). The creator is an exceptional if not slightly eccentric personality. Professor of the eldest generation I-RA-2 recounted that the true creators he knew, whose sketches and works were remarkably brilliant in their boldness, drive, and lightness of hand, were neither disciplined academic prodigies as students nor pioneers in the design process. A strong creator is a loner, as great architecture is the authorship of one man (I-P-3), and "if two equally strong creators meet, they will either fight or fall apart" (II-RA-4). A caution is given that the creator should be prudent and not put the pursuit of pretentious forms above systematic understanding (I-PA-3). The photographer Aleksandravičius draws attention to the uncritical self-importance of the professional creator: "The creator is one, he is the Supreme. We are no more than the ones who create" (Zemkauskas, 2022).

The artistic nature is an essential feature of the creator: "I would like to be, and think I am, an artist" (III-PA-1). Because of the complexity of architecture as an artistic discipline, a full-fledged architect needs to be skilled in the arts. Respondents indicate that they must have the artistic ability to draw, paint, and express himself/herself in artistic disciplines (II-P-3), as well as a broad artistic outlook (II-P-2), a well-developed artistic taste (I-PA-2), an understanding of aesthetics (III-P-3) and a well-developed receptor for the sense of beauty and the sense of art (I-PA-3). Academic architect II-PA-2 is categorical: "If an architect does not feel himself to be an artist (and an artist, first of all, must be able to draw), he is unlikely to be an architect".

Although all generations place the role of the art-creator above all other roles and consider it to be the most important in a personally balanced combination of roles, the transformation of the role of the art-creator is obvious. Whilst the generations articulate and enhance the artistic dimension in similar ways, artistic nature was of greater concern to the senior generation, and especially for the eldest generation – the ones whose strong artistic passion and proficiency in a variety of artistic disciplines was supported by modernist ideology and strong positions in Soviet state. It was easier for them to realize their artistic ambitions by carrying out state commissions under the totalitarian regime. The respondents of the senior generation, who have experienced both the Soviet and the independence periods, regret that artists are no longer respected as much as they used to be (II-PA-1) and do not survive on art alone (II-P-3). Under current capitalist conditions real estate developers do not welcome expressive artistic intentions. They curse non-standard artistic solutions and their authors are "not invited to competitions and thrown out of everything, because, as the developers say, artists, go and work wherever you want, but not with us" (III-PA-1). There is a generational evolution of the attitudes towards a creator with an excessive obsession with this role in his/her personal combination of roles, too. The more senior the architects, the more they emphasize the strength, power, individualism, single-mindedness, and ambition of the art-creator. Being critical of the modernist ideology, especially in opposing it to the present-day processes of integrated design of the built environment, the younger generation no longer supports the cult of the solitary genius of art-creator. The younger the architects are, the less they emphasize these qualities of the art-creator, recognizing that the architect is "not at all an artist with some ingenious ideas in his head" (III-RA-3), but instead highlights his/her flexibility, sociability, proactivity and

versatility under neoliberal conditions. Moreover, they believe that being art-creator is not the prerogative of architects. There are many creators in other professions (III-PA-4), and an architect today does not have to be a creator as he/she can also engage in other activities within the architectural profession (III-P-3). The success of the result depends not only on the architect's contribution, but also on the compromises that have been made (III-P-2), on the relationship between the society and the architect, and on the degree of awareness of both (III-PA-3). It is mentioned with disappointment that there is a drift towards the need for an architectural professional, who is less and less expected to be creative and whose opinion is less and less relevant.

4.2   Craftsman

The definition of an architect as a craftsman refers to craftsmanship as a traditional activity (such as carpentry or masonry), in which products are made by hand or using simple tools, and knowledge and skills are passed on from one generation to the next, or from master to apprentice. The role of the craftsman is paradoxical in that the architects interviewed often refer to craft and craftspeople, and have a certain attitude towards them, but the meanings of these terms vary regardless of the generations or the type of activity represented by the respondents.

The architects interviewed agree that being a craftsman is a minimal but mandatory component in a personal combination of roles as a foundation for higher ambition roles like art-creator. There is a consensus that a thorough knowledge and mastery of the craft is essential (I-PA-3, II-PA-4). At the same time, it is stressed that one cannot limit oneself to the very basics of the craft (II-PA-1, III-RA-1). Even if it is acknowledged that "craft is purely narrow professional matters" (II-PA-2), there are divergent views on what kind of knowledge, skills, and competencies are involved in mastering craft. Few respondents say it covers the knowledge of the alphabet (III-PA-4), the ability to make drawings (III-RA-1); skills in using the tools of design (III-RA-3); and competence in technical subjects (III-P-1). Few respondents include the knowledge of architectural design, that is, the ability to present and communicate their ideas (II-PA-2) or to construct architectural or urban objects (II-PA-3). Moreover, respondent I-PA-1 indicates the ability to think as a craftsman, although the majority of respondents believe that a craftsman is not a thinker. The architects interviewed also attribute specific skills and knowledge to the craftsman. Respondent III-P-2 emphasizes the ability to experiment with materials, to construct, and manufacture parts to be assembled by hand. Respondent III-PA-3 points to the intergenerational transmission of craftsmanship as a way of learning how to handle subtle issues of sensibility, ethics, and aesthetics in practice.

Craftsmanship is most often mentioned in opposition to artistic creation. The answers imply that the craftsman does not have something that art-creator has. And what the craftsman does not have varies. The missing elements are passion (I-PA-3); creative vision (I-P-2); idea and spirit (II-P-3); leadership (II-P-2); desire to seek answers (II-PA-4); ability to add long-term value (III-P-4); and the capability to think, create, understand the cultural context and responsibilities (III-RA-3). Some respondents are categorical that a good architect is not a craftsman (I-P-1, III-RA-2), and that craftsmen are not the ones who create a beautiful high-quality built environment (II-P-2). Professor III-RA-3 notices that, by compensating deficiencies, it is possible to grow out of the role of the craftsman (the maker of architecture, not the creator): "The craftsman evolves to the level of the creator and the thinker, and this is a normal evolution of the craftsman, the result of his long progression."

The professional evaluation of the craftsman and his/her works is quite critical but not unanimous as a consequence of differences in perceptions of the role. As an underlying professional's role, it is not significantly impacted by the political and socio-economic situation or the performance, superiority, and control of players in design and construction processes. It is interesting to observe the subtle but noticeable generational differences in attached evaluative and emotional connotations. The modernists, the eldest generation with a stronger artist *versus* craftsman polarisation, emphasize the antagonism and add more negative connotations to this role. The

younger generation of architects does not underestimate the knowledge and skills of the craftsman, and is respectful of his mastery of the craft: "The more the craftsman is aware of these fields, the more successful he/she is as an artist" (III-PA-3); and "I have a very good opinion of craftspeople. [...] And first of all he must be a good specialist, I very much agree with that, otherwise he/she will not be an architect" (III-PA-4).

4.3   Leader

The role of the architect as a leader having an elite reputation has been shaped over the centuries by the association with privileged individuals or social classes. The formerly established position of a specialist of exceptional authority and impact was reinforced by the ambitions of the modernist architect emerging from the Bauhaus - a hero of society, culture, and art. During the Soviet times, the authoritarian regime, state ownership, and mass construction enabled and reinforced the self-definition of modernist architect as a powerful, universal, and significant one, with the appropriate values, ideals, and attitudes. Leadership - having the power and authority within oneself to influence, motivate, and organize - is mentioned by the respondents as an identity feature of the architectural profession, although manifested in different ways across generations. The most frequently discussed is authority in organizing design and construction processes, with less mention of leadership in culture and art.

During the large-scale construction boom, the eldest generation – Soviet modernists – took on the role of visionary leaders of construction. They had no doubt that "the architect must lead the construction" (I-P-2). The absence of private property and the private client was more favourable to the architect's leadership in the design and construction processes: 'it was not so much the client who dictated, but the architect himself' (I-PA-2). For the eldest generation, it is important to note that the directors of the main design institutes in soviet Lithuania (Pramprojektas, Komprojektas) were architects (I-P-2). It is proudly explained how their generation changed the projects for standardized soviet block buildings: "Slowly, our people started to correct the standard projects. And gradually we made our own. And finally, we coordinated with eels and sausages to get them approved in Moscow" (I-P-1). The Lithuanian block building series I-464-LI, designed in 1961 after a modification of the existing Soviet ones, is a great achievement, keeping in mind that the series for all Soviet Union was then produced only in Moscow and Leningrad (Maciuika, Drėmaitė, 2020). The architects who designed during the Soviet period – the eldest and senior generations – are unanimous in calling the architect a conductor of the orchestra, a sensitive and responsive one. From their point of view, a conductor listens to others, gets solutions, combines them, presents the result and convinces (II-P-2), and transmits the spirit to the orchestra (II-PA-4). The role of the leader as a conductor is most clearly exposed in the case of those who worked as chief architects of a city during the Soviet era. This position is unanimously named as the conductor. The chief architect of a city is the driving force behind the city's sound development; he conducts the orchestra, which has to play according to the musical scores - the master plan (I-P-1, I-P-2).

The younger generation, firstly, has not practiced in the Soviet period with state property and 'ideal client' – the anonymous and uncontested masses (Crawford, 1991), they work with private clients under capitalist conditions instead; secondly, they critically reviewed modernist ideology. As the younger generation had different backgrounds and experiences, they no longer see the architect-leader as the dominating and unquestioned authority over other professionals. They reject the archetype of the genius – the image of Le Corbusier and other great masters, describing an omniscient, all-controlling, deified, self-important figure (III-RA-3). They point out that at present many architects of the Soviet period do not adequately see the significance of their own persona (III-P-2, III-PA-2, III-PA-4). Although this attitude still occurs among today's entrants to architecture studies, who believe that they are entering "a specialty that guarantees the position of a director, a director in the broad sense" (III-PA-2), this role is more of an expectation than a present-day position in relation to other players in design and construction process. The younger generation admits that the architect's power to set the tone in design and construction processes puts him/her somewhat ahead of others (III-P-2), and the architect is likely to have the last word in the debate

(III-PA-1). But in this process, the architect is far from being the most important (III-PA-4), his/her weight has been diminished (III-RA-4), and the other forces involved may push him/her aside, ignoring his/her opinion (III-P-2). When designing large-scale projects for real estate developers, the younger architects are feeling the power struggle. In every project, with every client, with every contractor, the architect has to gain a position, to get "the most important place, because this will directly affect the quality of architecture" (III-PA-4).

For Lithuanian architects, professional authority in the wider cultural and social spheres is also important, such as, in the example given by respondent III-PA-1, BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group) being considered a national Danish product. The architect has the potential to become a cultural leader: "who he was in that culture. Did the culture and the epoch pull him along, or did he pull the epoch along" (II-PA-4). Opportunities for leadership in the arts are opened up by the belief that architecture is the mother of all the arts (I-P-2), as evidenced by the awarding of two architects with the Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Art for their painting (II-PA-4). As Algimantas Nasvytis, one of the most prominent architects of the eldest generation, stated, "An architect is not only a designer, not only a specialist but also one of the leaders of modern society" (Maciuika, Drėmaitė, 2020, p. 85).

4.4 Service provider

The role of the service provider is seen as opposed to the role of the leader in terms of the relation to the other participants in the design and construction process; although the opposition of these two roles is contradictory. The role of a service provider partly replaced the one of a leader during the political transition. In the Soviet totalitarian regime, architects were commissioned by the state to design objects for what Crawford called the 'ideal client' (Crawford, 1991), had creative freedom, powerful positions, and privileges. After post-soviet transformations, the increasingly regulated practice, a demanding private client, and the balancing of public and private interests required legal responsibility and managerial skills, pushing creativity to the background. Under market conditions, architectural firms are *de jure* service providers, and architects provide design services as any other player in the real estate development process. In spite of that, architects resist the position in which they find themselves.

Architects, who reached the zenith of their career during the Soviet period, feel the strongest sense of contradiction between the fading role of leader and the assigned role of service provider. "Everything has become driven by money; we have become servants, service providers rather than those who dictate" (I-PA-2). According to Domereckas, "it has now turned into a service. Some people work with a company and serve that company's needs because when delivering a project, they have to give a potentially lower estimate. […] Now they reconcile to avoid damaging the relationship" (Kelmickaitė, 2022). For the eldest generation, and the senior generation inertly following it, it is even harder to accept that society has started to regard the architect in a very pragmatic way, as a government-imposed obstacle to life (II-RA-1), and that the architect is only needed to get a building permit and to arrange the necessary paperwork (I-RA-1). Professor II-RA-2 equates the bureaucratization of the architect's work with the loss of creativity. This situation hurts the eldest and senior generations. The contradictory transformation is illustrated by the position and responsibilities of the chief architect of a city, whose role has shifted from a leader as a visionary conductor to a service provider as an administrator. Respondent I-P-1 is frustrated that the chief architect of a city keeps silent when important urban issues are discussed, because "there is a city council that counts the money". During the conference "Architect - executor or responsible creator?" Pakalnis, the chief architect of Vilnius, summarised that there is very little creation and a lot of administration in his work: "By law, I am administrator. We are creators as much as we are able to influence the work of our colleagues with our authority, our knowledge, our influence" (Lithuanian Chamber of Architects, 2017).

For the younger generation of architects who did not practice during the Soviet period, or the senior architects, whose practice was mainly under the conditions of liberal capitalism, it is also difficult to

provide services. Some accept this role through an internal conflict: "It's frustrating for me, for my whole ego. I am not determined to provide a service" (III-PA-1), while for others it takes many years to accept the idea that architects are "just like any other employees providing a service" (III-P-2). However, once one has accepted the position of public servant, consideration is given to the awareness of the service provider (III-P-1), his/her professionalism, knowledge and skills (II-PA-1), and the quality of the service (III-RA-3), since "even while providing a service, the architect can be a strong art-creator" (II-P-1).

4.5   Moderator

The role of the architect as a moderator is relatively new with its growing relevance. It can be understood in two ways. Firstly, it can be seen as a transformed role of a leader adapted to the neoliberal environment. A moderator is the facilitator of a discussion among a team of professionals, stakeholders, or a community who come together to resolve an issue or implement a task. Secondly, a moderator is the initiator of discussion topics and problem-solving, which points to new societal assignments for an architectural professional - to achieve social and environmental quality through an inclusive process of design of the built environment. The role of the moderator is not focused on the realization of buildings and other objects, but on the management of processes and collaboration, and on the actualization of social problems. Rekevičius, the former head of the Architects' Chamber of Lithuania, generalizes that the architect in the social moderator's role creates spaces rather than buildings (Vilkiškienė, 2019), which points to a fundamental difference between the productivist and processual approach to activities. The moderator can also take on the role of a communicator, enabling the exchange of information, or as a mediator in disputes. The role of the moderator is not a statement of the *status quo*, but rather a vector of how the profession is transforming and where it is heading. Hence, it was mainly the younger generation who spoke about this role.

Respondents consider the architect as an intermediary between the two parties: the client (the developer), who has the financial capacity to invest, and the contractor (builders, specialists, managers), and this balance secures the basis for good architecture (II-P-1). The architect as the moderator-communicator is the connecting axis in collaborative processes (III-P-1). If the significance and context of an object bring in more interested groups such as politicians, the community, and the opposing groups (II-P-1, III-P-1), then the architect's task as moderator-communicator is to balance the needs of all of them.

As architects from all generations mention, one of the architect's goals is to identify and formulate a problem, solve it, and present it to the public, but they apply different approaches. Lately, it has taken the shape of mediation, which is mostly relevant for visionaries of the younger generation. Professor III-RA-3 outlines how this role will evolve in the coming years. He sees the architect of the future as a manager (agent) of the interdisciplinary art of spatial design, who can identify and manage problems, collaborate, and find the best possible outcomes that meet the public's expectations. This role not only sets up the conditions, principles, and models for the emergency of a social high-quality architecture but also addresses societal issues beyond design. According to the activist III-RA-4, the architect with a broad vision, as a moderator of processes, combines the interests of the client and the public with his creative ambition and finds a way out of a limiting situation. He/she searches, explores boundaries, raises questions, and encourages to reason. According to the architects interviewed, most of them representing the younger generation, a moderator is a sensitive architect who is skilled in listening, attentive to people, and careful with detail. The moderator's role requires a cohesive team, an interdisciplinary and inclusive approach, as well as his/her authority, insight, and expertise in managerial and communicative issues (II-P-1, III-P-4, III-PA-2, III-RA-2, III-RA-3).

Navickiene, E.

4.6   Commercial architect

In the development of the built environment, the liberal background has introduced a sharper conflict between the developer's interests and the priorities of the public good. The architect is therefore forced to make choices driven by his/her value priorities. During the Architecture [Discussion] Fund's series "Money" in 2016, a discussion was held on whether there is an architect who is not dependent on money, who is not involved in power games, and at the same time successful. The curators of the series, Biekša and Šiupšinskas, reflect on the fact that the current capitalist system is shifting towards satisfying the needs of capital and generating profits. Despite the fact that the power of finance is materialized in construction, the architect has always been presented as an art-creator, as if he had little to do with money. In reality, money power and architecture have always gone hand in hand. As a mediator between business and the interests of society, the architect should represent the human dimension of architecture (Karaliūtė, 2017). However, in pursuit of personal benefit, the architect could choose to serve the profit-seeking or even illegal demands of clients instead. The role of the commercial architect and architects' choices between the priorities for business or public interest, is little discussed by the respondents. It seems that they feel uncomfortable talking about this topic, and keep it hidden, as it concerns the value-based choices they make in their own professional life.

Comments on the commercial architect are few and do not vary much depending on the generation represented. Professor III-RA-3 proposes a clear distinction between categories of architects regarding the cultural significance and economic success of their practice. The latter category is not appreciated by society, and the authorities of these two extremes are opposed. One respondent condemns commercial architects, who serve the glittering Mammon, the god of profit and the pursuit of wealth because they are driven by mercantilism, competition, and selfishness. Such architects are at the mercy of their clients because they have no ideals, no moral foundations, and sell their talents to mercantilist interests (I-RA-1). They are considered dishonest and are called legionnaires - mercenaries who fight and do whatever the client says for money (II-RA-4). The priorities for financial gain are deeply rooted among architects themselves. As a senior respondent regrets, in the Soviet era, architects collaborated not only within their workplaces - the large design institutes - but also with colleagues outside of them; these days architectural design has become a small-scale business, with architects competing against each other rather than collaborating (I-P-1).

Two directions of commercial architect's behaviour are revealed. According to the first model of behaviour, commercial architects engage in 'building graphomania' - by putting quantity before quality, they develop many buildings that are devoid of architecture (III-RA-3). One of the respondents cautiously confesses that to keep people in his company busy, he has to take on the design of disreputable objects such as shopping centres or warehouses. For him, commerce is the black side of architecture, which has to be developed, because it opens up the freedom for the other objects that require more creative energy (II-P-3). According to the second behavioural model, the commercial architect is "the one who knows how to push through what is wrong to push through" (I-P-3). Upon receiving a controversial commission, the architect's moral compass becomes apparent. Some architects promptly choose to avoid socially irresponsible actions, while others begin thinking of strategies to circumvent legal constraints and act against regulations, as "greed is a universal problem, a common human problem, which determines decisions in many cases" (III-RA-3).

5. Discussion

The self-awareness of the Lithuanian architectural community is reflected in the range and relevance of roles it takes on. This evolution, starting from the mid-20th century, was determined by two main reasons: the trajectory of the influence of modernist ideology and the transformation of the socio-economic and cultural context for architectural practice due to the radical political regime change in 1990. The first factor is of international scope, while the second is specific to

Central and Eastern Europe where system changes occurred. Both factors resulted in long-lasting effects. The authoritarian regime allowed to flourish and implement the great ideas of Modernism, such as industrialization, urbanization, social change, and technological progress. Architects assumed the title of flag-bearer of this ideology as a powerful hero, manifested in the roles of construction leader and art-creator. The impact of these roles claiming authority and significance on the environment and society underwent profound changes due to the regime change. This transformation affected professional duties, responsibilities, relationships between clients, architects, and contractors, and the regulation of public and private interests. Consequently, the focus on the quality of the built environment and well-being is overwhelmed by a commitment to managerial and administrative procedures (Maciuika, Drėmaitė, 2020; Grunskis, Reklaitė, 2012). Sociologists investigating generational shifts explain that "in periods of significant social change, previously accumulated cultural knowledge and values are not necessary applied to the new social conditions. Rapid and fundamental change can lead to tension or conflict between generations" (Zilinskiene, Ilic, 2022, p. 7). The political events in 1990 initiated gradual transformations and tensions in professional community of architects. Some active architects adapted and continued to work successfully, while others degraded after failing to adapt to the changed conditions (Grunskis, Reklaitė, 2012). Many of the eldest generation architects continued to position themselves as modernists, much as they did during the Soviet times, and found it challenging to accept the changed reality. In contrast, the younger generation adequately accepts the contemporary neoliberal environment and critically reconsiders the priorities of Soviet architects. Meanwhile, the architects from senior generation, with their values and attitudes, occupy an intermediate position, aligning themselves with either the eldest or the younger generation. While modernists tend to be more categorical, viewing roles in a highly polarized manner and celebrating personalities, young architects tend to be more pluralistic, liberal, and adopt a heterogeneous, balanced combination of roles.

In the Soviet period, modernist ideas resonated in a unique way and gave rise to the prominence of the roles of creator, artist, and leader. These roles carried positive evaluative and emotional connotations for the interviewed architects. It is rather paradoxical that the eldest generation of architects does not represent themselves as specialists working within state design institutes, restricted by standardization and Soviet bureaucracy. Instead, they present themselves as unconstrained creators, considering this their principal preoccupation and prestige. They also see themselves as important figures and leaders who, within the context of Sovietisation, tried to uphold a high level of professional culture (Maciuika, Drėmaitė, 2020). With the collapse of the Soviet system, architects from the eldest generation lost their venerable titles of master craftsmen, their influence, and the privileges they once held. This loss makes them long for their former strong positions and powers (Drėmaitė 2017).

Comparing Lithuanian architects' approaches with the ones discussed in the relevant literature, they distinguish between the roles of art-creator and leader and even separate the creator from the artist. This differs from the common integral understanding of an architect as a culturally active creator who generates artistic value. The notion of an architect as an art-creator and leader has a firm historical foundation, starting with the Paris Beaux-Arts, gaining strength during the modernist era, and gradually diminishing in recent decades (Saint, 2005).

The dominance of the art-creator role, in both Lithuanian and international architectural communities, stems from the profession's belief that architecture is a field of art. Saint argues that the cult of art-creator is supported by the priorities in architectural education, the impact of modernism, and the pretexts of awards (Saint, 1983, Saint, 2005). According to Spector, architects consider themselves either famous or pre-famous art-creators, "encouraged to self-identify with the elites, regardless of whether any realistic possibility of achieving that exalted status exists or not" (Spector, 2005, p. 101). Belief in the power of creativity and art remains strong, even in the face of tensions associated with the art-creator's individualism, egoism, ambitions, focus on aesthetics and form, or personal reputation over needs of society, or other fundamental factors affecting environmental change (Carmona, 2009; Harriss *et al.*, 2021, Samuel, 2018). Nonetheless, ethical

Navickiene, E.

imperatives may impose undesirable constraints on the art-creator (Spector, 2001). On these grounds, Wolf D. Prix, a co-founder of Coop Himmelb(l)au, observes that in the past, an architect was proud to be an artist, and an artist was proud to be an architect; nowadays it is different, even the opposite, architect-artist has become almost a curse word (Frick, 2017). However, Lithuanian architects from the eldest generation, influenced by the ideas of modernism, tend to romanticize and idealize the role of the art-creator (Dijokienė *et al.*, 2022), while discussions about the potentially anti-social nature of architecture as an artwork are more prevalent among the younger generation.

The role of a leader is closely linked to that of an art-creator, through imagined powers and an embedded leadership mission. As outlined in current scientific literature, the charismatic leader role is driven by the reputation of heroes, the fame of star-architects in the media, and the illusion of elitism. Architects who assume leadership positions often project themselves as professionals who refuse "to sully his or her profession in any act of artistic compromise and has clear superiority over the rest of the construction team" (Charlesworth, 2006, p. 40). They also distance themselves from "the little people who occupy their buildings" (Harriss *et al.*, 2021, p. 8) and "they are not generally known for ethical sensitivity" (Samuel, 2018, p. 142). As star-architect Gehry states, "The best thing is to have a benevolent dictator - who has taste!" (de Graaf, 2017, p. 324). Although star-architects make up a small proportion of the architectural community, it is because of their visibility that the public associates all architects with them (Samuel, 2018). De Graaf, one of OMA's partners, admits that he, like others of his age, if not younger, has "been in search of a heroic dimension ever since" (de Graaf, 2017, p. 286). In Lithuania, leadership takes on a slightly different character. Lithuanian architects often view themselves as visionary leaders in construction and leaders in culture and art within society, and hardly talk about the pretentious glory of star-architects. Lithuanian architects' attitudes towards leadership are directly tied to their age and the period in which they practiced as professionals. The younger Lithuanian architects are and the more distant they are from the Soviet period and the radical ideology of modernism, the more critical they are towards the architect's authority and superiority, and the more they tend to prefer collaboration. The role of the leader as a hero is fading and transforming towards more collaborative and socially oriented forms of leadership.

The analysis of the roles of architects reveals a fundamental contradiction between the way architects perceive themselves, as portrayed in the professional narrative, and their actual practices. As Harriss and her colleagues pointed out, "The idea that architecture is about form rather than use, about the individual rather than the collective, about perfection rather than constructive compromise, and about artistry rather than social purpose [...] could not be further from reality" (Harriss *et al.*, 2021, p. 9). Architects declare that architecture is a field of art and a creative activity, viewing themselves as art-creators and leaders. However, in practice, a significant portion of their time is spent on managing the design process and administrative tasks (Samuel, 2018; Symes *et al.*, 1995). A survey of 450 Lithuanian architects active in practice, conducted by the author with her colleagues D. Dijokienė and E. Riaubienė in December 2021, revealed how architects allocate their professional time in their daily routines. Slightly more than half of Lithuanian architects (52.6 %) spend the majority of their time on project management and administration, and only one in three architects (32.3 %) spend most of their time on design. The mismatch between professional self-perception and actual practice, between expectations and reality, leads to frustration and disappointment among the architects.

The respondents give less attention to roles with negative evaluative and emotional connotations. Notably, the role of the craftsman, which has received a lot of attention from the interviewed Lithuanian architects, lacks a clear counterpart in other professional cultures. In broader contexts, the role of the service provider has been more relevant, since the 19th century characterized by "the ability to cope with paperwork and to negotiate between client, contractor and the new building bureaucracy" (Saint, 1983, p. 67). For Lithuanian architects, the role of the service provider presents unique challenges because it was introduced suddenly, following the change from a Soviet to a neoliberal system. When "the state is the client [...], concerns related to legality, public-private

interests, and similar issues are minimized" (Veličkaitė, 2019, p. 123). However, in a liberal environment, an increase in paperwork becomes the cost of professional rights and equality. In the changed daily practice of architects, legal responsibility has increased, managerial skills are required, and creativity has been pushed into the background. "Architecture has become more personalized, oriented to client, and reflecting his perspective rather than the designer's one" (Grunskis, Reklaitė, 2012, p. 31). The idea that technology should assume much of the procedural work, allowing architects to focus on more pressing challenges, is a recurring theme among Lithuanian architects (III-P-1) and in the relevant literature (Samuel, 2018). Some argue that managerial and artistic approaches to architecture should not be opposed as architectural companies function as business organizations providing services to the market, and artistic powers significantly contribute to the prosperity of architectural businesses (Saint, 1983; Symes *et al.*, 1995). De Graaf is even more categorical about the understanding of money circulation as a key competitive advantage: "This is a world that has reinvented architecture as real estate. Not composition or ideology but profit is the main driver" (de Graaf, 2017, p. 335). As a result, the public perceives architects as selfish professionals primarily interested in serving the economic interests of building owners and developers, indirectly benefiting themselves (Gutman, 1988). In the literature, various commercial roles are discussed, such as entrepreneur, businessman, manager, and more. However, the Lithuanian architects interviewed tend to avoid openly acknowledging architectural design as a business. The juxtaposition of the roles of the art-creator and the businessman, a recurrent theme in the relevant literature, is overshadowed by the juxtaposition of the art-creator and the craftsman among the Lithuanian architects interviewed. While the former is based on divergent values, priorities, and ethical attitudes, the latter highlights differences in artistic quality, ambition, and dedication.

Established roles are replaced by new ones when architectural design as the product-oriented monument making is taking a vector towards process-oriented and collaborative activities. The moderator emerges as a sensitive figure who identifies and critically evaluates the processes involved. "Architect is recast as a creative mediator, bridging between different forms of knowledge, seeking clarity amongst complexity, bringing together disparate communities, building and combining emotional power with pragmatic potential" (Harriss *et al.*, 2021, p. 9). What's labelled as moderation in Lithuania, aligns with the broader concept of social architecture in other contexts, with the bolder profile of a social reformer, an initiator of change, with a broader range of concerns, including vulnerable social groups, the challenges of climate change, and others. Yet, both roles of a social architect and a moderator are struggling to find their way into the architect's everyday practices and are changing the concept of the artist-hero. Architects are not keen on social activities, as their education does not emphasize the public good, and there is a lag in the revision of values towards innovation, technical precision, moral rigour, and social justice (Charlesworth, 2006). Other reasons include the required degree of self-effacement and humility for socially motivated architects as "their activities are less visible" (Samuel, 2018, p. 119), and preference to avoid undesirable constraints and indulge in unbridled artistry while "society has only a minimal expectation of the architect as a protector of the public weal" (Spector, 2001, p. 30). The inertia of values and the complexity of transformation become evident, as only the younger generation of respondents among Lithuanian architects interviewed discussed the role of the moderator.

New roles emerge as the scope of architects' activities expands. Samuel (2018) has identified the influential yet not so-noticeable role of the knowledge architect, which evolved not from a master builder but from a humanist's background (Kavanaugt, 2010). Regrettably, the roles identified by Lithuanian architects are understood narrowly and still largely limited to those involved in design. Alternative as well as emerging roles that challenge established standards remain in the margins of the profession. Narrow scope of the roles of Lithuanian architects can be explained by Sutton's statement – "research and specialisation have not become part of architects' psyche" (Sutton, 2001, p. 189). As Harriss and her colleagues advocate the specializations outside design should "be seen as a vital extension of the professional landscape, rather than positioned as a 'typical' or 'alternative'" (Harriss *et al.*, 2021, p. 56).

6. Conclusions

The complex practice of an architect balances artistic leadership, community service, and business goals. In other words, it is motivated and driven towards the product-oriented artistic creation of buildings and spaces, the management of communication and collaboration processes, and the generation of financial gain in different proportions. When architects choose their predominant role in a personal combination of roles, conflict situations, mostly on a value basis, occur. These conflicts may manifest as indifference to the needs of society for the sake of 'high art', lack of interdisciplinary cooperation with other design and development players due to elitist self-positioning or overestimated creative ego, a lack of effort to achieve excellence in artistic quality, and unfavourable or even illegal decisions that prioritize profit over the public interest. The coexistence of divergent values expressed through polarized roles would contribute to balancing artistic endeavour with managerial obligations, to achieve effective collaboration with experts and non-professionals, as well as compatibility between public and commercial interests.

Ever-changing social and cultural realities are reshaping the balance of priorities and values of architectural professionals towards more sustainable approaches to creating built environments. The increasing focus on an inclusive design process and the well-being, health, and safety of people are confronting an inert professional ideology ambitiously oriented towards elitism, bold aesthetics, and recognition. Professionals are willing to remain concerned with the nuances of artistic expression in the built environment, rather than dedicating their efforts to enhancing the relationship between people and the environment. Innovative approaches that emphasize social well-being, inclusiveness, collaboration, sustainability, and pluralistically expand the architect's field of activity from building design to the culture of life have a significant impact on a part of Lithuanian architects, particularly younger ones. These forward-looking architects are setting a course toward a more socially efficient kind of architectural activism in the future, as a mediator, initiator for change, and social reformer.

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