

# The profile of Lithuanian architects in relation to the professional generations active today

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**Abstract.** The research focuses on the professional profile of architects by analyzing their identity and creative principles. The aim is to explore the professional community of Lithuanian architects who are currently shaping the built environment, to identify their heterogeneity in terms of professional generations.

The problem of the research is shaped by the current controversies in the field of architecture concerning the changing status, activities, and responsibilities of the architect. The relevance of the study lies in several aspects: the lack of in-depth sociological research on the professional community of Lithuanian architects; the attempt to verify and clarify the results of the semi-structured interview study *Lithuanian Architects on Architecture*, and the reflection on the global architectural situation and the new agenda for architectural design towards a high quality built environment.

The study adopted a mixed methods research design. This involved the collection, analysis, and interpretation of both quantitative and qualitative data. This methodology is chosen because the research requires a complex and multifaceted approach to the phenomenon of architecture and the problems of architectural practice. It also allowed a larger group of research participants to be reached (450 respondents).

The questionnaire contains 13 questions, each is structured in a multiple-choice format, with one option being an open-ended question. The questions are grouped under several themes: 1) the nature and fields of architectural practice and the concept of architecture; 2) the scope of practice and the allocation of professional time; 3) self-determination and professional loyalty; and 4) creative principles. Descriptive statistical methods were used to process the survey data. Content analysis and, to some extent, thematic analysis were used to analyze quantitative data from open-ended questions.

The study highlights that the professional generations of architects analyzed follow the general trend of architecture, refuting the hypothesis that the approach of each generation is significantly different. However, it has been observed that the representatives of each generation show a particular attitude in a specific area, which indicates the dynamics of an attitude or predicts a change in the architectural community as a whole. The youngest generation of architects is an indicator of change. It is characterized by seeing a great diversity of aspects in architecture and architectural practice.

**Keywords:** architects' community, sociological survey, questionnaire, architectural practice

## Introduction

The problem and relevance of the study arise from a range of causes and backgrounds.

The study is driven by the lack of thorough sociological research on the professional community of Lithuanian architects. To date, no comprehensive quantitative surveys have been completed to determine the attitudes, expectations, and satisfaction of members of the professional community of Lithuanian architects. The professional organizations of Lithuanian architects – the Union of Architects, and the Architects' Chamber – conduct only episodic targeted questionnaires to find out the reactions of their members to practical concerns of the time. The *Architects' Council of Europe* is carrying out the *ACE Sector Study* – a survey that collects and analyses statistical, sociological, and economic data on European architects, the architectural market, and architectural practices on a biennial basis, but regrettably, Lithuanian architects are scarcely represented in it [3]. Based on interviews with selected architects, the professional community of

Lithuanian architects at certain historical stages is reviewed in J. V. Maciuika and M. Drėmaitė's book *Lithuanian architects assess the Soviet era: the 1992 oral history tapes* [24], and in the book by T. Grunskis and J. Reklaitė *The Architecture of Freedom* [19]. The interviews presented in the latter were also used by other researchers to review the attitudes of Lithuanian architects in specific aspects [8; 18]. The above-mentioned studies are fragmented, focused on a specific historical period or issue. In the field of investigative journalism, interviews with people from the architectural community are becoming more popular, but this is more a consequence of the interest in environmental quality than a scholarly investigation of the approach of those who are shaping the environment. Initiatives are also emerging among architects themselves, but these are only sporadic cases when architects themselves are looking for the answers to the Hamletian question: who is an architect [34]? In the absence of substantial qualitative and quantitative studies of the wider professional

community, the authors of this article have taken this initiative.

This study also aims to verify and clarify the results and insights of the semi-structured interview-based study *Lithuanian Architects on Architecture*, as well as the hypotheses formulated based on these findings. The qualitative research highlighted that Lithuanian architects of different ages and experiences have an uneven perception of architecture and the role of the architect. The attitudes of more distant professional generations (older and younger) in some cases are much more controversial, even contradictory [12; 13].

Another strand of the relevance of this article stems from global developments. Over the last 20 years, both internationally and in the European Union, there has been an increasing focus on the quality of the built environment. Several recent international documents and initiatives like Davos Baukultur Quality System (2021) [10]; Towards a Shared Culture of Architecture – Investing in a High-Quality Living Environment for Everyone (2021) [16]; New European Bauhaus (2020) [17] and The New Leipzig Charter (2020) [29] have been dedicated to this subject, and have identified the criteria that should guide towards a high-quality built environment. The study also aims to find out what is the situation in Lithuania in light of this transition, how Lithuanian architects are ready and motivated to act in the direction outlined in the doctrinal documents, and how this leads to quality architecture. To get a complete picture of the architect of today, the study includes questions that help to understand what an architect considers to be a quality architectural result and what design principles guide their work.

The problem of the research is shaped by the current controversies in the field of architecture about the changes in the professional status, activities, responsibilities, and powers of the architect. Therefore, to reveal the reasons for such a situation, it would be useful to study the professional profile of architects, analyzing the identity and creative principles of the professional generations of architects currently working in Lithuania. The subject of the study is the contemporary Lithuanian architectural community. It is not homogeneous in its approach to the profession and its attitudes to practice. The aim is to explore the professional community of Lithuanian architects currently shaping the built environment, and its heterogeneity in terms of generations, and to determine their professional identity and the principles of their creative work.

The tasks of the study are: 1) to determine the nature of architects' activities, fields of practice, and the concept of architecture; 2) to determine the scope of architects' practice and allocation of their

professional time; 3) to clarify architects' self-determination, professional loyalty and attitudes towards their status change; 4) to identify the attitudes of architects towards the architectural quality criteria and the creative principles.

Mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) research strategy is used to test the insights and hypotheses derived from the study of interviews. The survey population, which includes currently active Lithuanian architects, and its large sample (450 respondents) enable the verification of the qualitative research results.

## Methods and Data

Combining a positivist and interpretive approach, the study adopted a mixed methods research design [22]. It involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data [20; 30]. The approach assumes that qualitative and quantitative data are closely linked: all quantitative data are based on qualitative judgments and all qualitative data can be described in numerical terms [32]. The mixed methods perspective is appropriate because the research requires a complex and multifaceted approach to the phenomenon of architecture and the problems in architectural practice. It enables clarification and strengthens already existing qualitative results with quantitative ones and allows to reach wider groups of research participants [2].

The aim is to survey as large a part of the Lithuanian architects' population as possible and to identify commonalities and differences in the attitudes and characteristics of professional generations of architects. For this purpose, an online method of questionnaire data collection was used, with respondents being reached by e-mail and online information.

As the architectural community as a social phenomenon is not widely studied and there is a lack of sufficiently standardized, purified, and sound knowledge for a statistical study, mixed data collection was carried out. The questionnaire is structured in a multiple-choice format (a series of alternative answers) and provides quantitative data. One of the response options is the possibility to provide an individual answer to an open-ended question. The qualitative data obtained in such a way allows for the refinement and adjustment of the results obtained from the choices of alternative answers.

The questionnaire contains 13 questions. The classification information is derived from the question on professional generations, which are identified by the time when the respondents graduated from architecture studies. The other questions relate to obtaining the main information for the survey and are grouped under several themes:

1) the nature of the architect's activities, fields of practice, and the concept of architecture; 2) the scope of practice and the allocation of professional time; 3) self-determination and professional loyalty; and 4) the creative principles. This grouping corresponds to the objectives of the study.

The size of the population of architects working in Lithuania is not precisely known and its determination is problematic. Therefore, to determine the sample for the study, the population of the study was defined as the members of the *Lithuanian Association of Architects (LAS)* and the *Lithuanian Chamber of Architects (LAR)*, the academic community of architectural schools, and other active architects reached through the above-mentioned dissemination channels. Within the defined population, the sample was drawn using a non-probability sampling technique based on the principle of chance. 450 respondents participated in the survey. It was conducted in December 2021.

Several descriptive statistical methods [31] were used to process the survey data. The univariate analysis included clustering, classification, distribution, calculation of central tendency, and interpretation of results. Data from open-ended questions were analyzed using content analysis [21] and to some extent thematic analysis [5].

## Results

### *The architectural community and the professional generations*

The four generations were formally distinguished from the sample of 450 respondents according to the period of graduating professional studies: the eldest generation (1950–1969), the senior generation (1970–1989), the younger generation (1990–2009), and the youngest generation (2010–2021).

Only 4 responses were received from the eldest generation (1950–1969), so they have been merged with the data from the adjacent generation (1970–1989). In this way, three professional generations of architects of different sizes were formed in the research sample: more than half of the sample consists of representatives of the younger generation (52%), and the other half is shared by the senior generation (29%) and the youngest generation (19%). This confirms that the post-war Lithuanian architects, who gained their profession in 1950–1969 and created modernist architecture, are not in practice anymore.

The research sample adequately represents the Lithuanian community of architects and the division by professional generations becomes a reference to the structure of the currently active group of Lithuanian architects in terms of age and experience. The most active and the largest is the 'younger' generation that graduated from architecture studies

in 1990–2009 (52 %). The 'senior' generation of 1970–1989 (29 %) has already matured and reached the peak of its activity and fame, and the 'youngest' generation of architects (2010–2021) just starting their careers (19 %).

The sample is dominated by male architects (56 %), while female architects make up 44 %. This ratio of the number of men and women in the field of architecture is a direct reference for the description of the Lithuanian architectural community as a whole in this respect. The tendency of the increasing number of female architects (39 %, 42 %, 55 %) is visible in different professional generations.

### *The nature and fields of architect's activity and their concept of architecture*

In collecting the main data for the study, the first aim was to find out what architects do, what fields they work in, and what their perception of architecture is. The first question reveals what and how architects practice, while the second question highlights the breadth of their activities and the nature or scope of the problems they solve. The third question aims to define the attitude of shapers of the built environment towards the object of their activity – architecture.

The study has shown that the professional nature of the architect is exclusively associated with the 'designer' (89%), while 8% of designing architects also act as teachers (designer-teacher), i.e. contribute to architectural education. Only 3% of the architects surveyed have a profile other than that of a designer and act as administrators, experts, researchers, etc. It should be noted that activities are often described under the combined headings of 'designer and expert', 'designer and manager', and 'designer and researcher', reflecting the inevitably complex nature of architects' activities.

Across generations of architects, 'designer' remains the dominant occupation, but older generations have more architects working as more than designers. This could be logically explained by a higher level of professional experience. The greater experience allows the architect to act in a variety of roles (teaching, expertise, management, administration). It is interesting to note that 'designers and teachers' are present in all generations, but more so in the older generation (11%, 7%, 3%). The study identified a very clear and dominant type of activity of Lithuanian architects – design, which shapers of built environment tend to combine with other activities and to implement a more complex and diverse performance. A similar structure of activity persists across professional generations, but the older architects are, the more multidisciplinary they tend to be and act as universally as possible.

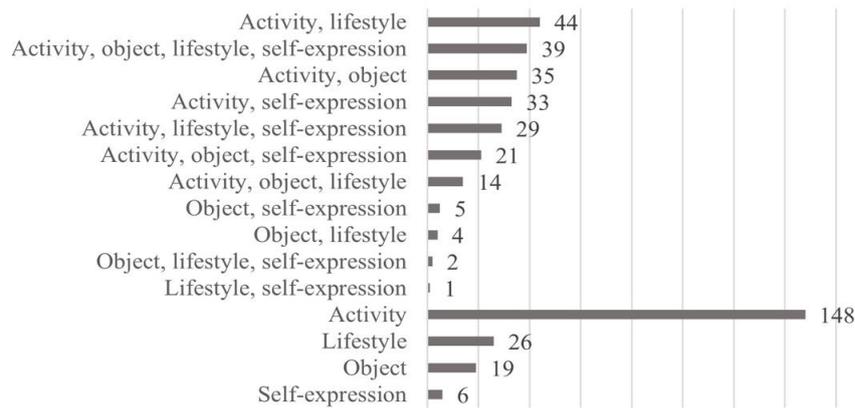


Fig. 1. The concept of architecture. Combinations of answers selected by respondents [created by authors]

Of the four fields of activity in the questionnaire, 'building design' (74%) is by far the dominant one, while 'urban planning' (8%) and 'interior design' (4%) could be considered as the architect's minor areas of activity. The 'landscape design' does not seem to be a field of activity for the architect. The alternative answers showed that just over one-tenth of architects (11%) carry out other activities in addition to the design of buildings. The category 'other' covers a variety of activities and combinations of activities not mentioned so far (e.g. heritage, spatial planning, administration, training, social activities...) and represents only 3% of the sample. The open-ended responses highlighted the tendency for architects to work in a wide variety of fields, often described as "everything". This clearly shows the architect's self-understanding as a versatile professional.

The structure of the activities of the different generations of professionals is quite similar, with one field dominating: building design (72%; 82%; 76%). Differences can be observed in the positioning of the smaller fields of activity: the younger the architects, the more they work in interior design, while urban planning is more common among the senior generation. 'Other' activities are rarely carried out by architects, only slightly more so by the senior generation (5%) than by the younger generations (2%, 3%).

Respondents describe architecture in terms of the four categories given, with a clear preference for 'activity' (45%) and a fairly even distribution of importance for the other categories: architecture is perceived as 'object' (18%), 'lifestyle' (20%), and 'self-expression' (17%). It is important to note that just under half (45%) of the respondents from the architectural community describe architecture in terms of only one of the possible categories. The concept of architecture as an 'activity' is predominant (74%), while the other categories were quite varied in choice: lifestyle (13%), object (10%), and self-expression (3%) (Figure 1).

More than half of the respondents (55%) defined architecture in terms of a diverse set of categories. The majority includes 'activity', and there is a wide range of other categories. All four categories proposed were covered by 9% of respondents, with one-tenth of respondents selecting the set 'activity, lifestyle' (10%), 8% – 'activity, object', and 7% – 'activity, self-expression' (Figure 1). The open-ended question was answered by 5% of all respondents and described architecture from several perspectives: pragmatic (work, livelihood), negative or controversial metaphorical expressions (dinner of woe, splendor and poverty), and principled descriptions close to the definition of architecture (service to society and the environment; perceiving the world, way of thinking; the art of shaping the environment in a social context; expression of ideas in forms; helping people to shape and understand their environment).

All generations of architects agree that architecture is above all an 'activity'. This conviction becomes stronger as the generations get younger (77%, 88%, 92%). Architecture is increasingly perceived as a multifaceted process. The generations are very similar in their identification of the three categories of architecture (object, lifestyle, and self-expression). However, it can be noted that the senior generation (1970–1989) puts a little more emphasis on architecture as a 'lifestyle'.

#### *The scope of the architect's activity and the distribution of professional time*

By asking for opinions on the scope of an architect's activity, we aim to find out how the architectural community perceives the breadth and limits of its activity. The question "What do you have to spend most of your time on in your professional life?" aims to find out how the architect's professional powers and competencies are implemented in reality and in what field of control he or she operates.

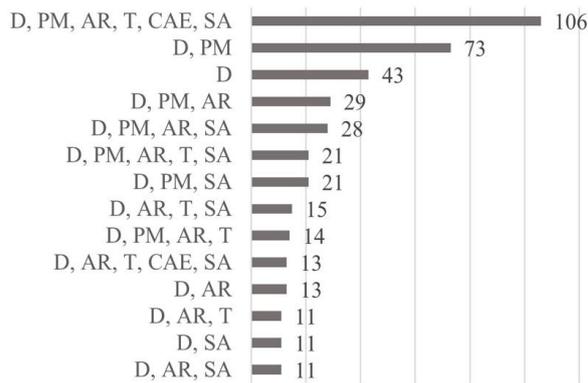


Fig. 2. Scope of architect's activity. Combinations of answers selected by respondents [created by authors]

Of the six areas of the architect's professional activity presented, the research highlighted 'design' (D, 27%) as the essence of the architect's activity. 'Curating architectural exhibitions and events' (CAE, 9%) was only a peripheral activity, or simply not an architect's business. In addition to 'design', 'project management' (PM, 20%), 'architectural research' (AR, 17%), and 'social activities in the field of architecture' (SA, 16%) are inextricably linked to the architect's activity. 'Teaching architecture students' (T, 12%) seems to be an important, but still autonomous activity for architects.

One-tenth of the total sample thinks that architects are only involved in design (D). However, the field of architectural practice is complex, heterogeneous, and involves more than design, as the vast majority of respondents agree. A quarter of the respondents (24%) see the activity of the architect as a combination of all six categories. A very similar view is shared by 5% of respondents who exclude 'curating architectural exhibitions and events'. The activities of architects are often (16%) associated with design and project management. A wide range of architectural activities was reported by the remaining respondents (45%) (Figure 2). The perception of architects is quite diverse. It can be assumed that this diversity arises from the different sectors and types of practice in which the surveyed architects work, or perhaps from experience and age. There is a common view that design is at the heart of what an architect does, although there is no complete agreement on the scope of architectural practice.

While only 10 percent of respondents limit the work of the architect to 'design', others see it as much broader, more varied, and more complex. A quarter of respondents have the most complex view of the architect's professional activities, while more than 60% indicate various combinations of activities. However, a certain pattern of architectural activity emerges, with 'design' at the center, 'project management' (PM), 'architectural research' (AR), and 'social activities in the field of architecture' (SA) at the core.

The architect's professional activities (D, PM, AR, T, CAE, SA) can be supplemented with data from open-ended responses (5%). It is suggested that the architect's horizon of activity should include politics, law, psychology, sociology, economics, real estate analysis, education, public relations, communication (social sciences); engineering, environmental protection (technological sciences); health, and social welfare (medical sciences).

The definition of the profession of architect is quite similar across the generations. The activities are fairly evenly distributed in descending order: D, PM, AR, SA, T, CAE. In all generations, the primacy of 'design' is unquestioned, with 'project management' and 'architectural research' being the second most important and the second most frequent, and in the youngest generation, 'social activities in the field of architecture' are included in this group. It should be noted that the youngest generation's perception of architectural activities is most evenly a combination of all 6 categories. 'Curating architectural exhibitions and events' is considered by all to be the least characteristic of an architect. However, older architects are much more likely to ignore this activity. There is a small but equal amount of attention (12–14%) for 'teaching architecture students' across the generations. This stability and low percentage may indicate that education is perceived as a peripheral activity of the architect or as an autonomous, highly specific activity of the architect.

Architects identified their situation by choosing from four positions in response to the question "Where do you spend most of your professional time?": 1) creating and designing; 2) management, administration, and bureaucracy; 3) communicating with clients, contractors, and communities; 4) other activities. Half of the architects (53%) are mainly involved in managing, one-third are most focused and involved in creating and designing (32%), and one-tenth spend most of their professional time communicating (11%). This suggests that architects are more managers than creators, and still a bit of a communicator.

The individual responses only confirm and explain the information given in the structured question that more than half of architects spend most of their professional time on management. The open-ended responses reflect a regret that architects would like to devote more time, attention, and energy to creating and designing. They feel frustrated and disappointed by the pervasiveness of management activities in architecture and the pointless legal and bureaucratic interference.

The allocation of time in the architects' professional routine is organized somewhat differently in the different generations. While all generations spend most of their professional time on

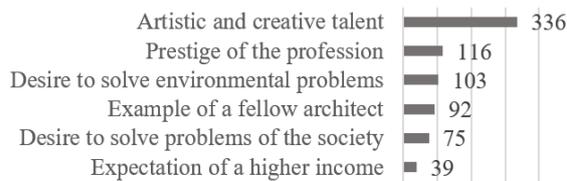


Fig. 3. Motives for choosing the profession.  
Mentions by respondents [created by authors]

two types of activities – 'creative' and 'managerial' – the senior and younger generations allocate almost the same amount of time to 'creative' and 'managerial' (41 % and 47 %; 38 % and 40 %), while the younger generation allocates most of their professional time to 'managerial' (61 %), leaving only 24 % for 'creative'.

All professional generations spend the least time on 'communication' and 'other' activities, but it should be noted that the youngest generation is the most evenly distributed in terms of professional time, concentrating more on 'communication' than the others.

*The career path: commitment, satisfaction, and loyalty*

Satisfaction with the career path: expectations and their fulfillment, public recognition, and professional loyalty were measured by another set of questions. Firstly, the reasons for choosing architecture as a career are explored as a basis for professional expectations and personal aspirations. Among the motives offered in the structured questionnaire for choosing architecture, the vast majority of respondents (82 %) mentioned 'artistic and creative talent', which is almost three times more important than the second most important incentive. This was followed by 'prestige of the profession' (28 %), 'desire to solve environmental problems' (25 %), 'example of a fellow architect' (22 %), 'desire to solve problems of the society' (19 %) and 'expectation of a higher income' (10 %) (Figure 3). As multiple choices were available, the most frequently mentioned was 'artistic and creative talent' alone (26 %), followed by combinations of this incentive with 'prestige of the profession' (9 %), 'example of a fellow architect' (8 %) and 'desire to solve environmental problems' (7 %). Almost every fifth architect (18 %) stated that they had no artistic or creative talent, but that they had chosen the architectural career because of the 'example of a fellow architect' (5 %), the 'prestige of the profession' (4 %), or the responsibility to solve problems of the environment and/or the society (4 %). A purely pragmatic intention, such as 'prestige of the profession' and/or 'expectation of a higher income', is a rare motivator (5 %). In open-ended answers, some respondents elaborated on the reasons or circumstances that led them to the profession. Two-thirds of those who did highlight an

inner drive for architecture (desire to create, to fulfill oneself, to pursue a dream) or relevant experience gained already. Some of them were encouraged by people close to them who saw their interests and inner drives. Every sixth respondent justified their choice logically, being attracted by an interesting and prestigious profession with a combination of artistic and technical characteristics. One-eighth got into the field by chance due to circumstances.

Comparing the professional generations, the younger the generation, the more incentives to choose a profession they indicate. The younger the entrants, the more complex they see the profession, not only as an art field, and therefore the more important other aspirations and expectations become. With younger generations, the prestige of the profession (24 %, 29 %, 33 %) and the expectation of a higher income (3 %, 11 %, 16 %) are becoming more and more important. The youngest generation distinguishes itself by having slightly less artistic and creative talent (81 %, 84 %, 77 %) and being less inspired by the example of a fellow architect (21 %, 25 %, 16 %). However, it is more open to taking responsibility, declaring its commitment to solving problems in the environment (24 %, 24 %, 30 %) and society (19 %, 16 %, 24 %).

How much satisfaction does public recognition bring as a reward and fulfillment of expectation is explored in the question: "How the professional status of an architect changed during the course of your career?" There is no unanimous answer from the surveyed architectural community about changes in the professional status of architects. More architects think that their status has declined (43 %) than that it has increased (24 %). One-third of architects do not support either of these views, stating that their status has remained almost stable (31 %) or changed in both directions (2 %). The majority of respondents who commented in the open-ended answers were disappointed to witness a drastic decline in professional status, attributing this either to the attitude of the authorities (state institutions or regional administration) or to the existing bureaucracy, where decision-making power has been taken over by project managers, who are more appreciated by the public. The other part of the respondents sees contradictory processes in the professional status dynamics: the rising respect for the creative professional and social capital, and at the same time the disrespect of the society and business people, and the impact of the economic crisis. Some respondents argue that professional status should not be generalized to the professional community as a whole, as it is individual to each professional.

It is observed that the longer the career path of a generation, the more it shapes the prevailing opinion. The senior generation is an experienced one, having worked both in the Soviet times and in independent Lithuania. Being able to compare different socio-cultural contexts, they are most

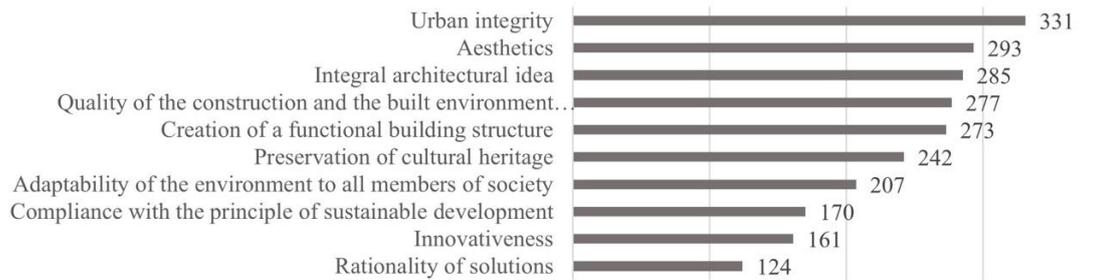


Fig. 4. Importance of architectural quality criteria. Mentions by respondents [created by authors]

affected by the decline in their professional status (52 %). However, 16% of this generation also feel that their status has increased and 30 % feel that their status has remained stable. The younger generation, who have been active only in independent Lithuania, feel that status in society has declined (39 %) rather than increased (26 %); 32 % feel that it has remained the same. In the youngest generation, which has been active briefly and has not yet experienced longer-term dynamics, opinions are almost evenly divided (36 %, 31 %, 31 %).

Satisfaction with the chosen career path, the adequacy of expectations and professional practice, and loyalty to the profession are revealed by the answer to the question: "If you had the opportunity, would you choose the profession of architect again?" It showed that the majority of architects were satisfied with their choice of profession and would repeat it without hesitation (70 %) or with some hesitation or a condition (75 %). One-fifth of respondents are not satisfied with their decision and would not choose the profession of architect (18 %), or would not / might not choose it (19 %). Only a small proportion (7 %) are undecided or not sure.

In response to the open-ended question of why they would or would not choose a profession again, they mainly wanted to explain hesitation or mixed feelings. The thematic analysis of the open-ended responses revealed the advantages of the architectural profession as its universal nature, an engaging creative process, and the enjoyable study period; at the same time, the respondents regret that they are missing the joy of creativity and the time they spend on it, as it is overshadowed by the pragmatic, practical matters. The disadvantages of the architectural profession include the vastly increased amount of paperwork, the increased need for management and marketing, the lowering of design prices due to competition, the excessive stress, and the devaluation of the architect. The hope is expressed that studying and/or working abroad will be more successful. There is a slight difference in attitude between professional generations. The senior generation, with the greatest professional experience, including that during the Soviet times, is the most determined to be architects: 83 % would choose the same profession again, 14 % would not

choose it, and 4 % are undecided. The younger generation is the least positive and the most doubtful: 64 % would choose to be an architect, 20 % would not, and even 16 % have reservations and doubts. The youngest generation is slightly more positive: 70 % would choose the same profession again, 21 % would not choose it, and 9 % have doubts.

#### Towards quality architecture

To evaluate how the political agreements are implemented in the actual practice of Lithuanian architects, the survey includes three questions on the design of quality architecture. Following the European Union regulations at the time [15], the *Law on Architecture of the Republic of Lithuania* [23] was adopted in 2017, which established 10 criteria for the quality of architecture. The first question asks, which of the criteria listed in the *Law* is the most important for architects to create quality architecture? The second question asked for the specification of which context issues are most important in design. The third question asked what creative principles architects use most in their architectural practice.

All the architectural quality criteria listed received the attention of architects participating in the survey. The most significant criterion was 'urban integrity', which was mentioned by 74 % of respondents. Another 5 criteria were considered by more than half of the respondents: 'aesthetics' (65 %), 'integral architectural idea' (64 %), 'quality of the construction and the built environment (ergonomics), durability' (62 %), 'creation of a functional building structure' (61 %), 'preservation of cultural heritage' (54 %). Fewer architects identified the other 3 criteria as important: 'adaptability of the environment to all members of society' (46 %), 'compliance with the principle of sustainable development' (38 %), and 'innovativeness' (36 %). The least important was "rationality of solutions" (28 %) (Figure 4). In an open-ended question, several architects were annoyed by the establishment of quality criteria by law, describing the situation as the addition of unnecessary constraints.

Considering the generational attitudes, it is evident that 'urban integrity' dominates the responses of all generations, and that the importance of this criterion increases as the architects get younger (71 %, 76 %, 82 %). Professional generations are more divided on the relevance of the other 5 criteria. 'Aesthetics' is significant for the younger (70 %) and youngest (69 %) generations and less significant for the senior one (58 %). The second most important criterion for the senior generation is 'integral architectural idea' (68 %), which is the fifth or fourth most important criterion for the two younger generations (63 % and 65 %). 'Quality of the construction and the built environment (ergonomics), durability' is the more important for the youngest generation (53 %, 65 %, 73 %), while 'creation of a functional building structure' is the more important for the youngest one (52 %, 68 %, 62 %). It is perhaps logical that 'preservation of cultural heritage' is most important to the senior generation (60 %), while the others are less concerned (54 % and 51 %). Several tendencies also emerge in the identification of the importance of criteria that have received less attention. For the younger generations, the criteria of 'making the environment suitable for all members of society' (35 %, 48 %, 62 %) and 'rationality of decisions' (22 %, 29 %, 33 %) are becoming increasingly important. There is an inexplicable decline in the 'compliance with the principle of sustainable development' criterion, with more respondents in the senior and youngest generations and fewer in the younger generation (40 %, 36 %, 45 %). The criterion of 'innovativeness' is perceived similarly across generations (35 %, 37 %, 38 %) and there is no change of attitude in this respect.

Among the quality criteria established at present, 'urban integrity' is one that incorporates contextual aspects the most. When asked "Which contextual issues are most important to you when you design?", 5 possible answers were offered to the respondents: nature, urban environment, architecture, history, and society. 'Urban environment' was the dominant answer (92 %), with the importance of this aspect increasing throughout the professional generations (91 %, 94 %, 95 %). The second most important aspect is 'architecture' (70 %) and the third is 'nature' (65 %). The professional generations are divided, and the older the architects, the more they care about 'architecture' as an attribute of context (74 %, 72 %, 64 %). On the contrary, the younger the architects, the more importance they give to 'nature' in context (62 %, 64 %, 75 %). A little less than half of the respondents (46 %) identified 'history' as an important aspect in understanding the context of the project. The professional generations share a similar concern for historical context (51 %, 41 %, 53 %), with the younger generation being less concerned

about it. The most controversial aspect of the context was 'society'. It was the least significant (30 %), but its change in attitudes across professional generations was the strongest (23 %, 28 %, 47 %). Several architects, in open-ended responses to the question about context, mentioned that all of the issues listed were of equal importance, but some believed that none of the aspects suggested were relevant to the design.

The third question asked what creative principles architects mostly apply in their architectural practice, and gave the following options: to express an artistic idea, to listen and respond to the client's needs, to understand and take into account the context, and to consider the public interest. As in the previous questions, the answer 'to understand and take into account the context' received the greatest support (88 %). The senior and younger generations voted equally (87 %), while the youngest one emphasized the importance of this creative principle (94 %). 'To listen and respond to the client's needs' was the second most important principle (74 %). Although there is a slight generational dynamics, no significant difference in attitudes is recorded (71 %, 77 %, 73 %). More than half of the respondents selected the principle 'to express an artistic idea' (58%), but in terms of generational change, it seems to be gradually losing its relevance (67 %, 59 %, 48 %). The principle of considering the public interest not only received the least support (26%) but also provoked irritation among several architects, who said it was not clear what the public interest was and how it should be represented. However, it is noticeable that in the youngest generation, there is an increasing number of those who believe that this principle is also important in design (34 %).

## Discussions and Conclusions

The study highlighted that the Lithuanian architect is a designer who combines his main activity with other activities. The proportion of architects who do not 'design' is very small and this is rather an exception.

Architects are most often and predominantly active in the field of building design, with interior design and urban design as minor fields of activity. An important part of the architect's identity is that one-tenth of building designers work in other fields, fulfilling the mission of the universal architect. Burr and Jones, in their study of the role of the architect, noted: "The successful architect of the future may be one who strives to reclaim lost responsibilities of developer and builder, explores new alternative services, and promotes a higher level of collaboration with the building team" [6].

Architects who describe architecture have placed an unquestionable emphasis on the category of 'activity'. This choice could be explained by the

complex and comprehensive nature of this concept. It encompasses creative, artistic, scientific, social, technical, political, etc. activities. For architects, architecture is undoubtedly the most interconnected of all processes. The architects surveyed also paid the same amount of attention to the other three categories (approximately 20% each). Those who have a perception of architecture as an object have a more traditional view of architecture as a product. Those who identified architecture as a lifestyle were more self-identified and fully in touch with the phenomenon of architecture. Saint describes this as a belief system, a quasi-religion [27, p. 8]. Those who assign the category of self-expression to architecture see it as a field for expressing and realizing the architect's skills, ideas, and aspirations. Half of those interviewed could not describe the essence of architecture using just one category, but used various combinations of them. This is an indication that for most architects, architecture is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon. The diversity of ideas about architecture also suggests that each member of the community has a unique view of architecture, perhaps even a unique understanding of the profession. One might even think of a diversified concept of architecture. There are no major differences between the professional generations of architects, but some differences or trends have emerged. The senior generation tends to be more versatile than the youngest. Urban planning is more popular with the senior generation, while the youngest architects tend to be more involved in interior design.

In their perceptions of architecture, the professional generations of architects are fairly consistent. Older architects describe architecture in one of the given categories more often than younger ones. This may be an indication that older architects have a clearer, more defined, more categorical approach to architecture. The younger the architects are, the less categorical and the more complex the approach is. Younger architects are less likely to see architecture as a lifestyle or as an object. In contrast, the category 'self-expression' is chosen to describe architecture to a small but stable extent across generations. This suggests that architects' need for self-expression is constant and unchanging. It can be observed that the senior generation emphasizes lifestyle slightly more than object or self-expression, which could be interpreted as a kind of legacy or a reflection of the previous generation (1950–1969), which very strongly identified itself as creators of the world, designers of life, decision-makers and politicians [24].

One-tenth of the architectural community restricts the activity of the architect to 'design', while the others have a surprisingly diverse perception of the scope and structure of the

architect's activity. However, a certain picture of architectural activity emerges: design is the axis, with project management, architectural research, and social activities at the core. Teaching is a very specific, autonomous activity. Curating exhibitions and events is considered to be outside the scope of an architect.

In recognition of the complexity and multifaceted nature of architecture, design is prioritized as a creative activity [35, p. 107–108], with project management in the second place. Meanwhile, in actual practice, the distribution of professional time is in reverse order, with project management and administration far outweighing creative activity and communication with stakeholders. The discrepancy between the image of the architect as an artist, which has been in place since the *Ecole Beaux Arts*, and actual practice explains architects' dissatisfaction with changes in the field and direction of the profession, and their disillusionment with the profession itself. The change in the profession is confirmed by respondents' open-ended questions, suggesting that the architect's professional activity should be complemented and extended by a wide range of social science interests. The broadening of the activities shows the need for knowledge and expertise that have so far been unusual for architects. The discussion of the architect as a "social designer", where he or she takes on the responsibilities of a sociologist, anthropologist, psychologist, manager, or another social professional, raised by other researchers [25], is worth mentioning here.

Each generation organizes their professional time in a slightly different way. All architects balance their professional attention between creativity and management, but the younger generation (the most numerous and active) spends much more time on management than on creativity. This tends to make them managers rather than creating designers. The youngest generation has a more even distribution of their professional time and a greater focus on communication than other generations. This trend could be an indication of the socialization of the architect and architecture and a move towards more inclusive design. An analogy can be drawn with Samuel's research, according to which social architects are those for whom the process and the community are more important than the buildings themselves, their artistry, or their aesthetics [28, p. 119–142].

The study revealed that most Lithuanian architects come to the profession because of their desire to use artistic and creative talent, and not because of pragmatic considerations; this is also

reflected in the results of similar studies in other countries [1]. The selection of this motivation as an essential one reveals the treatment of architecture as art. While it is believed that the architectural field is concentrated around aesthetics and form, artistic skills and creative abilities are crucial for a successful professional career. Secondary motives (the prestige of the profession, the desire to solve environmental and societal problems, the example of a fellow architect, higher income) are equal to the importance of the stimulus of artistic creativity only when all of them are considered together. The identified priority sequence of incentives confirms the persistence of established stereotypes attributed to architecture (artistry, individualism, prestige), although this is only partially confirmed in real practice [33; 28].

To summarise the dynamics of motivation for choosing a profession, over all three generations, there is a tendency towards a more pragmatic approach, with the prestige of the profession and the expectation of higher income becoming increasingly important. The youngest generation is slightly less artistic and less influenced. Although more and more architects are being identified as taking responsibility for solving societal and environmental problems, the low number and its slow growth among ones who are entering the profession is not in line with Western trends. For example, at the end of the last century, Carnegie Report recorded that in North America, 40% of students surveyed said that their motivation for going to architecture school was not money, but rather the wish to improve communities and the built environment [4].

Although there is more disappointment than positivity in the architects' community's responses on how the professional status of architects is changing, there is no unanimity on this issue. It demonstrates the importance and differences of the public respect each architect experiences personally for his or her work as a professional, the significance of the objects he or she has designed, the feedback and the rewards from the public. More unified disappointment of the professional generation is influenced by many years of experience in different environments, especially when compared to the Soviet times. Erman, Altay, and Altay, who have studied the relationship of Turkish architects with clients and users, relate this to the higher expectations of the elder generation for their authority than the younger generation [14]; de Graaf relates these generational differences to the modernist ideology that prevailed in architecture at that time and labels the generations as heroic and post-heroic [11, p. 286]. Both when discussing the distribution of professional time and the dynamics of the architect's status in society, respondents expressed growing frustration that instead of the

socially respected creator's role, they were pushed into unprestigious managerial and administrative matters against their will. In this way, their creative abilities are underrealized, the expectations of their career paths are not met, and as a result, professionals feel frustrated.

Paradoxically, despite the disappointments, most architects would not change their professional path. The senior generation is the most determined to be architects. The two generations that received their professional education during the independence years have a similar, slightly less positive view of the choice of architecture as a profession.

One can observe a dramatic contradiction between the abundance of complaints about the professional routine (the entrenched bureaucracy, the managerial issues that overshadow the joy of creativity, the disrespect of the government and society) and the ultimately positive answer to the question of whether he or she would choose to become an architect again. On the one hand, it shows that alternative career paths are not being sought (or found) according to their abilities, aspirations, and expectations. On the other hand, it reveals a disproportionately high level of loyalty to the profession despite its shortcomings, and the resilience of the profession, with its community being able to compensate the grievances in other ways. Saint calls such limitless devotion to the profession a "belief system, a quasi-religion in which architecture becomes an obsession, an encompassing attitude of life" [27, p. 8].

All professional generations of Lithuanian architects who are currently in practice care about the quality of architecture. Although 10 architectural quality criteria [23] are not of equal importance in the minds of architects, all of them are relevant. All generations have agreed that 'urban integrity' is a key criterion. In the question of understanding the context, the answer that is directly related to 'urban integrity' – the urban environment – also stands out. The other insight is that the senior generation prioritizes 'architecture' and the youngest one – 'nature' in their context awareness. Taking into account the urgency of the effects of climate change, it could be predicted that 'nature' will surely become more and more important in the understanding of the context within which the object is designed. Also, another significant shift in architects' approach is a turn toward society and the recognition that it is an important participant in the design process – this shift in attitude is evident in the youngest generation of architects in the market. All the professional generations of architects surveyed agreed that the basic and most important principle of their work is 'to understand and respect the context'. Listening and responding to the needs of the client is also a significant factor in design. Although architecture

is a field of art, the expression of artistic ideas is becoming less important to architects, especially in the youngest generation. The attitude of Lithuanian architects active in practice is changing, although slowly, in the same direction as outlined in the doctrinal documents and initiatives mentioned in the introduction to the article [10; 16; 17; 29], as well as in recent literature that addresses the quality and resilience of the built environment [9; 26; 7].

Even though in previous studies it was hypothesized that the current professional generations of architects have different attitudes, the results of this survey did not highlight their obvious differences, nor did they provide a basis for the formulation of an identity for each professional generation. The similarity of attitudes and opinions between professional generations could be explained by the transmissibility, the influence of the previous ones – the process that is perceived in the general structure of society [36].

We observe that the three generations surveyed follow the general evolution of mindset in

architecture, but the representatives of each generation feature certain differences in specific areas, indicating the dynamics of an attitude or predicting a transformation in the whole architectural community. In this way, the differences identified among the generations surveyed enable us to observe a shift from architecture as a lifestyle to a multifaceted practice; from a focus on creativity to the inclusion of management and other activities; from the importance of the architect's creative artistic abilities to the reputation of the profession and the emphasis on responsibility towards the environment and humanity; from the principle of an artistic idea to the principle of the quality of the environment; from the importance of architecture in the context of design to the priority of the natural and social context.

The youngest generation of architects acts as an indicator of change. It is characterized by accepting a diversity of architecture, in architectural practice, and even in the incentives to become an architect. This generation predicts a balanced and liberal approach to future architectural practices.

#### Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the respondents for their open and honest answers. They are grateful to Rūta Leitanaite and Marius Dirgela (Lithuanian Architects' Union) for their help in the preparation and distribution of the questionnaire, as well as to the Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, and Panevėžys chapters of the Lithuanian Union of Architects, and the Architects' Chamber of Lithuania for the distribution of the questionnaire. The authors are grateful to sociologist Agnė Girkontaitė for her consultation and assistance in data processing.

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**Kopsavilkums.** Pētījumā galvenā uzmanība pievērsta arhitektu profesionālajam profilam, analizējot viņu identitāti un radošos principus. Mērķis ir izpētīt Lietuvas arhitektu profesionālo kopienu, kas šobrīd veido apbūvēto vidi, apzināt to neviendabīgumu profesionālo paaudžu izteiksmē.

Pētījuma problēmu veido pašreizējās pretrunas arhitektūras jomā par mainīgo arhitekta statusu, darbību un pienākumiem. Pētījuma aktualitāte slēpjas vairākos aspektos: padziļinātu socioloģisko pētījumu trūkums par Lietuvas arhitektu profesionālo kopienu, pārdomas par globālo arhitektūras situāciju un jauno arhitektūras projektēšanas programmu virzību un attīstību kvalitatīvai apbūves struktūrai un videi.