Neighborhood Planning and Bodies of Self-Organization of the Population: Adapting the Concept of Integrated Development (CID) for Neighborhood-Level Planning in Ukraine

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Abstract

This thesis explores how Ukraine can introduce neighborhood-level planning and governance by adapting the Concept of Integrated Development (CID) and empowering Bodies of Self-Organization of the Population (OSNs). Drawing on international case studies and collected empirical data, it argues that OSNs can serve as an institutional backbone for participatory neighborhood planning if provided with proper tools and support. The study proposes a simplified, modular CID tailored to neighborhoods as a strategic framework for building inclusive, resilient, and community-driven urban environments in Ukraine's post-war recovery context.

Key words: neighborhoods, participation, urban planning, governance, resilience

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1. Introduction

This thesis makes the case for the urgent need to introduce neighborhood-level planning and governance in Ukrainian cities, with Bodies of Self-Organization of the Population (OSNs) positioned as the core institutions at this scale, and the Concept of Integrated Development (CID) adapted as the main planning tool for neighborhoods.

It could be argued that neighborhood-scale planning is inefficient, or even irrelevant, in the context of Ukraine's administrative and post-war challenges. However, by examining both historical legacies and international experience, this research demonstrates that engaging residents in shaping their immediate environment through participatory planning or self-governance leads to stronger social ties, fosters local identity, builds trust between citizens and institutions, and improves the capacity to respond to crises.

This study explores neighborhoods as both a planning unit and a governance level, drawing insights from global examples where localized participation has been institutionalized to various degrees. Models such as Japan's *machizukuri*, Chicago's Quality of Life Plans, or the UK's Neighborhood Plans highlight that planning at the neighborhood scale matters not only in its outcomes, but also in its process. It serves as a mechanism for social cohesion, democratic inclusion, and the collective shaping of place and aspirations.

For conceptualizing relevant tools it is essential to understand Ukraine's spatial and planning history. The Soviet legacy of microrayons, originally envisioned as self-sufficient neighborhood units, failed to create meaningful public life, leaving us with degraded public spaces, isolated sleeping districts, and declining social infrastructure. Understanding this historical context helps us envision a future where residents have a voice in shaping their everyday environment — their homes, courtyards, schools, parks, and streets. At the center of this vision stands the OSN — a unique, constitutionalized, yet underutilized Ukrainian institution that could serve as the backbone of neighborhood governance.

This thesis builds its argument through a combination of literature review, international case studies, and empirical analysis of current initiatives in Kyiv, including interviews with experts and city officials, analysis of planning documents, and pilot neighborhood project. It provides a critical overview of

global and historical approaches to local planning and governance, and offers a framework for introduction of neighborhood planning and governance rooted in participation, local identity, and engagement at the most immediate level of everyday urban life.

2. Methodology

This research applies a qualitative approach combining legislative analysis, case study review, expert interviews, and contextual analysis of pilot initiatives in Kyiv. The goal is to develop practical recommendations for adapting the Concept of Integrated Development (CID) to the neighborhood level, using Bodies of Self-Organization of the Population (OSNs) as institutional anchors.

2.1 Research Design

The research follows a descriptive and analytical design with elements of comparative analysis. It combines document analysis (laws, municipal statutes, Law on OSNs), a review of international cases (USA, Japan, Germany, UK), and semi-structured expert interviews. This design enables the creation of a comprehensive understanding of the potential for OSNs to function as institutional foundations for neighborhood-level planning.

2.2 Legislative and Institutional Review

The study analyzes national and municipal legal frameworks regulating OSNs, focusing on the Law of Ukraine "On Bodies of Self-Organization of the Population" and Kyiv's municipal statutes. It also examines how the CID is positioned within Ukrainian planning legislation and how it could be scaled to neighborhood-level application, identifying gaps in delegation, funding, and procedural support for OSNs.

2.3 Comparative Analysis of International Practices

The research includes a comparative overview of neighborhood planning in the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Taiwan. Cases such as Neighborhood Councils in Los Angeles, the UK's Neighborhood Plans under the Localism Act, Japan's *machizukuri*, and Taiwan's community planners model are

analyzed with a focus on their planning tools, participation structures, and institutional frameworks.

2.4 Expert Interviews

Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts in planning, governance, and civil society, including Members of Parliament, OSN leaders, urban planners, and international academics. The interviews explored the roles, challenges, and institutional potential of OSNs in enabling neighborhood governance and planning. The selected interviewees include:

1. Oleksii Kovalenko – trainer specializing in capacity building for OSNs;

2. Hanna Bondar – architect, urban planner, and Member of Parliament;

3. Liling Huang – professor from Taiwan, coordinator of the community planners program;

4. Yaroslav Zalevskyi – head of an Condominium, demonstrating community self-organization practices outside of formal OSNs;

5. Oleksii Orlovskyi – director of the "Democracy and Good Governance" program at the Renaissance Foundation;

6. Anna Mykhailova – a head of the OSN Nyvky, Kyiv.

7. Katanya Raby – an urban planner based in Chicago.

8. Dmytro Ruban – First Deputy Director of the Department of Public Communications of the Kyiv City State Administration.

2.5 Case Study: Kyiv

The research includes analysis of planning documents such as the Podil CID and the pilot project *"Менеджмент житлових мікрорайонів"* in Obolonskyi and Dniprovskyi districts, including internal materials and an interview with the Deputy Director of Kyiv's Department of Public

Communications. These cases inform practical recommendations for planning and governance at the neighborhood level.

3. Literature Review

In recent decades, the concept of the neighborhood received quite a lot of attention in both practical urban policy and planning theory. This concept becomes crucial for fostering local governance, community resilience, and social cohesion for cities not only in the West but also many developed countries in Asia adopted this approach. This growing attention to neighborhoods has both historical and theoretical foundations. Historically, many neighborhoods emerged organically as cities developed over time, shaped by local geography, social ties, and economic patterns. At the same time, 20th-century planning theories increasingly emphasized human-scale environments, walkability, intimacy, and rich social functionality as core principles of good urban design. As Alberti and Radicchi[1] summarize under the concept of the "Proximity City," such ideas span a range of influential models, including Perry's Neighbourhood Unit (1929), Christaller's Central Place Theory (1933), Hall's Proxemics Theory (1966), Calthorpe's Transit-Oriented Development (1993), and Gehl's Human Scale City (1971, 2010). These diverse approaches, despite differing contexts and goals, share a common emphasis on creating urban spaces that prioritize people's everyday needs, social interaction, and accessibility at the neighborhood scale. The historical evolution of neighborhood-based planning will be explored in more detail in the following sections.

The modern concept of neighborhood was gradually developing throughout the 20th century with key contributors coming from different traditions and countries. In developing models of neighborhood planning, key contributions have emerged from different planning traditions. The first conceptualisation of a self-contained planning unit was Clarence Perry's Neighborhood Unit idea that first appeared publicly in the 1929`s Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs. The Perry`s aim was to create self-contained spatial communities structured around schools, shops, and pedestrian-friendly layouts[2]. This approach sought not only to

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[1] Alberti and Radicchi, *From the Neighbourhood Unit to the 15-Minute City*, p.159
[2] Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design Since 1880* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), p. 133-139

manage traffic and promote safety but also to foster a sense of belonging through spatial proximity and shared local facilities[3]. In Europe, Perry's ideas intersected with the garden city movement, while in the Soviet Union, similar principles materialized differently through the microrayon, shaped by socialist ideals of collectivism and functional zoning under Stalinist and post-Stalinist planning[4]. The microrayon became a dominant form of urban organization in the Soviet context, embedding schools, clinics, shops, and playgrounds within a walkable radius to promote communal life while enabling centralized state control. Alberti and Radicchi further link these historical models to contemporary debates on urban form and mobility, tracing the legacy of both Perry's neighborhood unit and the Radburn experiment in shaping community identity. Their analysis highlights how neighborhoods remain a reference point in urban planning discourse, continually adapted to new social, political, and environmental challenges.

As we can see, originally, neighborhoods were conceptualised mainly as spatial units of urban planning structure aimed at increasing urban comfort and fostering community. However, they were supposed to be created in a top-down manner, and governing powers at the neighborhood level remained within the jurisdiction of municipal authorities rather than being delegated to local residents. However, modern theoretical developments and practical approaches worldwide increasingly promote decentralization of governance to the neighborhood level. Sullivan and Lowndes argue that neighborhood-level governance is essential because it "provides more opportunity for citizens to participate effectively in decisions". They root this argument in both practical and normative dimensions of the traditional theories that support and promote local self-government[5]. This thought development is well aligned with Henri Lefebvre's influential concept of "right to the city", which argues for active engagement and empowerment of city residents in the making and governing of the surrounding urban environment[6]. Margit Mayer builds on Lefebvre's ideas, noting that this right involves "not merely formal rights, but rather the collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization," emphasizing that active political participation and grassroots

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[3] Alberti and Radicchi, *From the Neighbourhood Unit to the 15-Minute City,* p.160–161

[4] Richard A. French, *Plans, Pragmatism and People: The Legacy of Soviet Planning* (London: UCL Press, 1995), 29–62

[5] Vivien Lowndes and Helen Sullivan, "Rationales and Challenges for Neighbourhood Governance," Public Administration 86, p. 57.

[6] Henri Lefebvre, Le Droit à la Ville (Paris: Anthropos, 1968)

mobilization are required for effective realization of the right to the city[7]. This conceptual shift towards neighborhood-level governance has found an institutional expression in different forms across the globe: from the United States' Neighborhood Councils, through the UK's Localism Act and Neighborhood Planning, neighborhood committees (comités de quartier) in France, to Japan's participatory machizukuri approach. Although these neighborhood governance initiatives have a common objective - to allow for local communities and facilitate true participation, their institutional contexts, possibilities for governance, and relations with the broader municipal institutions are very diverse.

Yet, even though the trend toward decentralization appeared since the late 20th century, the prevailing model of planning still remains largely top-down. The critiques like Jane Jacob challenged such rationalist approaches, arguing instead for recognising the organic complexity and unpredictability of urban life.[8]

Jacobs argued that cities are not simple (with few variables) or anarchic (completely random), but are complex systems wherein everything affects everything else in interrelated ways. For example: the walkability, the land-use mix, the safety, the business health — all of them relate to each other at the neighborhood scale. She borrowed the concept of "organized complexity" from natural sciences like biology, to explain cities and neighborhoods[9]. Jacobs suggested that they need to be studied like ecosystems or living things, instead of mechanical systems or engineering issues. According to Jacobs, top-down imposed planning does not work because this means to treat cities like simple or chaotic problems, ignoring their organic interconnectedness.

Many authors emphasize that neighborhoods are not only physical territories but more socially constructed spaces with identity, collective memory, and contested meanings[10]. As Lowndes and Sullivan summarize, drawing on Blokland's work, neighborhoods gain significance through residents' symbolic and practical uses of place, generating attachments that foster belonging and

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[7] Margit Mayer, "The 'Right to the City' in Urban Social Movements," in Cities for People, Not for Profit: Critical Urban Theory and the Right to the City, ed. Neil Brenner, Peter Marcuse, and Margit Mayer (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 63.

[8] Jacobs, Jane. The Death and Life of Great American Cities. New York: Vintage Books, p. 428-433

[9] Ibid. 433.

[10] Vivien Lowndes and Helen Sullivan, "Rationales and Challenges for Neighbourhood Governance," Public Administration 86, p. 56–57.

sometimes resistance to homogenizing urban trends. These authors have also perfectly conceptualized the main traits that make up a neighborhood:

"Support or shape the development of individual and collective identities; facilitate connections and interactions with others; fulfil basic needs such as shopping, health care, housing and education; are sources of predictable encounters; have geographic boundaries, the meaning and value of which are socially constructed".

Policy approaches across countries have increasingly reflected the growing interest in neighborhood-level governance, balancing between centralization and decentralization. In the UK, this shift became especially visible with the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, which aimed to give more power to local communities by enabling them to create neighborhood plans, influence development decisions, and take ownership of local assets.[11] The Act institutionalized neighborhoods as recognized governance units, formalizing community participation in planning processes.

Yet, despite these initiatives, scholars note a continuing tension between empowering neighborhoods and retaining centralized control. Lowndes and Sullivan argue that while governments rhetorically promote localism, they often maintain strong bureaucratic oversight, leaving neighborhoods with limited formal powers and uncertain status within governance structures.[12]

Understanding how neighborhoods emerge as socially and spatially lived complexities, rather than artificial constructs is essential for modern planning and governance. While Perry's work offered a foundational top-down planning model, today's urban challenges require more flexible, inclusive, and participatory approaches. Neighborhoods are spatial and social environments where people build identity, establish routines, and form relationships with each other and with the city. This dual nature of neighborhoods as both lived spaces and structured environments makes them a meaningful lens to analyse the city and society. This scale is suitable for thinking not only about urban form, but also about participation, planning, and localized governance.

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[11] Ibid. 86,

[12] Vivien Lowndes and Helen Sullivan, "Rationales and Challenges for Neighbourhood Governance," Public Administration 86, p. 57.

4. Context Review

To understand the potential for neighborhood-level planning in Ukraine, it is crucial to examine how neighborhoods were historically formed and and later shaped by different ideological influences on urban planning. This section presents two ways the neighborhoods were structured — as organically grown urban communities and state-imposed planning models like the Soviet microrayon. It also outlines the influence of these legacies for current urban governance in Ukraine.

4.1 Formation of Neighborhoods

Clarrens Perry is often referred to as a creator of the neighborhood concept. He indeed was the first one to conceptualise the Neighborhood Unit, however, it would be wrong to say that he invented this special planning principle. This is important to mention not with the intention to reduce Perry`s contribution, but rather to better understand the nature of neighborhoods and how deeply embodied and natural they are for our cities.

Despite the concept of the neighborhood being relatively recent, in the essence it is not a purely theoretical construct imposed by planners. Rather, it emerged through close observation of how traditional urban areas organically organized social, economic, and political life. Clarence Perry should definitely be credited for formalizing the Neighborhood Unit in 1929, yet he did not develop his ideas entirely based on calculations but rather through his experience living in Forest Hills Gardens, an old traditional community in New York. As Peter Hall notes, "Perry learned just how much good design could contribute to the development of a neighborhood spirit" by directly observing the spatial and social dynamics in this locality[13]. What he saw and experienced was only analysed and later developed in a concept that allowed to reproduce these conditions that enabled the high quality of community living. This important realization underscores that neighborhood planning is historically rooted in real urban experiences and traditional planning where physical space, social networks, and local governance are all interconnected.

Let us take a closer look at how the neighborhoods are formed and what preconditions exist. The neighborhood concept can be equally applied for urban

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[13] Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design Since 1880*, 4th ed. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 134–135

areas with a long historical continuity, for newly developed areas or even those in the development or planning stages. What lies in the core of the concept - is a desire to create or improve the spatial preconditions or affordances for comfortable and community-centered urban life. Enabling residents to connect with each other and the city, and exercise their "right to the city" by participating in the governance of the territory they can comprehend, build their identity on, and experience in daily life. This allows urbanites to implement their "right to the city" at fullest by shaping, appropriating, and experiencing the spaces that define their everyday urban experience — a concept that, as Margit Mayer emphasizes, involves not merely formal rights, but "the collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization."[14]

The difference between historical and newly created neighborhoods lies in the way they are formed. Historical neighborhoods mostly emerge from the long-standing cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic influences and interconnectedness within a certain living area. These neighborhoods often were formed naturally by residents with ethnic, religious or social commonalities grouping in the distinct area, creating community enclaves that remain while the demographic patterns change over years. Such communities developed strong support networks for the emerging and sustaining local identity and community cohesion[15]. In contrast, newly developed neighborhoods mostly result from urban planning and residential development projects that aim to increase housing supply or redevelop areas. These neighborhoods can sometimes lack the historical community cohesion, so prominent in older neighborhoods, which lead to different dynamics. However, at the same time newly created neighborhoods might have a more logical spatial layout with richer diversity of local institutions offering residents better access to services.[16]

While some neighborhoods evolved naturally through cultural and social ties, others were shaped by top-down planning efforts. In Ukraine, this tension became especially visible during the Soviet period, when state-led urban transformation introduced entirely new spatial logics. To better understand the

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[14] Margit Mayer, "The 'Right to the City' in Urban Social Movements," in *Cities for People, Not for Profit: Critical Urban Theory and the Right to the City*, ed. Neil Brenner, Peter Marcuse, and Margit Mayer (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 63.

[15] Talja Blokland, Urban Bonds (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), cited in Vivien Lowndes and Helen Sullivan, "How Low Can You Go? Rationales and Challenges for Neighbourhood Governance," Public Administration 86, no. 1 (2008): 56.

[16] Francesco Alberti and Antonella Radicchi, "From the Neighbourhood Unit to the 15-Minute City: Past and Recent Urban Models for Post-COVID Cities," in Urban and Transit Planning, ed. Francesco Alberti (Cham: Springer, 2023), 159–160.

challenges facing neighborhoods in Ukraine today, it is important to examine how Soviet urbanism disrupted traditional urban structures and imposed a new standardized model — the *microrayon*.

4.2 Soviet Urbanism: Disruption of Urban Space and Mikrorayons

The Soviet period brought multiple waves of radical transformation to Ukrainian urban space, long before the concept of the microrayon (microdistrict) appeared in Soviet planning theory in the 1960s. From the earliest years of Soviet rule, mass appropriation of private property, large-scale forced migration, political repression, war, and rapid industrialization shook and fundamentally altered the ethnic, religious, and social landscapes of Ukrainian cities. As Richard French notes, in the days following the October Revolution, "large houses of the rich and the bourgeoisie […] were commandeered and subdivided into apartments and rooms for the proletariat."[17] This was part of a sweeping nationalization of land and urban property that marked the beginning of a new era in which the state controlled and dictated the rules of urban life. The Red Terror, rapid industrialization, and the war on religion not only changed city demographics but also swept away traditional cultural identities embedded in the urban environment.[18]

Throughout the 1920s to the 1950s, Soviet urbanism was marked by constant experimentation — and by tension between architects and urban planners on one side, and communist politicians and functionaries on the other. In the 1920s and early 1930s, the Soviets explored the idea of a "City of Socialist Man". Architects attempted to embody Marxist ideals and Constructivist principles in the urban fabric, rejecting Tsarist-era social inequalities and any form of divergence. This gave rise to bold spatial experiments such as the linear city concept and the Sotsmistechko (Socialist Town) in Zaporizhzhia, as well as other diverse and sometimes contradictory urban forms across Ukraine. However, in the end of 1930s the Stalin's regime became more and more reactionist to the communist revolution ideals which was most evident in the rejection of the urban experiments

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[17] Richard Anthony French, *Plans, Pragmatism, and People: The Legacy of Soviet Planning* (London: UCL Press, 1995), 28.
[18] Ibid., 28–30.

and the rise of the Stalinist empire architecture. Stalin's repressions and WW2 disrupted the development of planning thought in the Soviet Union.

In the aftermath of the WWII and the decline of the planning and architectural experimenting, the soviet urbanism was fully subjected to the political motives, thus becoming entirely pragmatic, centralised, and standardized. Under Khrushchev's leadership in the 1950s, the Stalinist empire architecture was rejected all-together with Stalin's cult. Now the emphasis has changed drastically to mass development of the prefabricated panel houses in order to accommodate the growing post-war population that was largely living in "barracks". The aim to resolve the housing crisis across the Soviet Union required a replicable standardized solution. This paved the way for the emergence and rapid spreading of the so-called Khrushchevka (panel housing) and a new standardized urban planning unit - microrayon (micro district). Microrayons provided a formula for the arrangement of the massively developed housing in an efficient manner that provided a functional living environment for the "Soviet man".[19] The concept was rooted in debates of the Soviet planners in the1920s but it rejected previous excessive ideological conditioning focusing more on the function.

Microrayons were the smallest urban units, essentially clusters of mass-produced residential buildings combined with public service institutions such as kindergartens, schools, small shops or markets, and cultural clubs or libraries for leisure.[20] The buildings did not form traditional streets, instead, the freestanding block housing placement followed Le Corbusier's modernist vision of the "tower in the park," with large green spaces and courtyards separating the blocks. As Peter Hall explains, Le Corbusier believed that "we must decongest the centers of our cities by increasing their density. In addition, we must improve circulation and increase the amount of open space. The paradox could be resolved by building high on a small part of the total ground area."[21] The Soviet urban planning logic was aligned with other modernist movements around the world. It also proclaimed the ambition to make cities modern and more livable for people. Microrayons were meant to bring all necessary amenities within walking distance, to logically separate functions, and to increase greenery in urban spaces. Unfortunately, these

[19] Richard Anthony French, *Plans, Pragmatism, and People: The Legacy of Soviet Planning* (London: UCL Press, 1995), 80–81.
[20] Ibid., 80
[21] Peter Hall, Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design Since 1880 (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 242.

aims were only partially realized,[22] and the miscalculations in Soviet urban planning deepened the disruption of the city fabric over time — with consequences that remain visible in Ukrainian cities even today.

4.2.1 The Microrayon as a Failed Neighborhood Model

Despite the proclaimed desire to make cities walkable and human-oriented, Soviet urban planning was tightly tied to state-centered ideology, which in its essence did not account for the individual. As a result, it largely failed and produced vast urban areas that continue to deteriorate and struggle to transform into more livable places today.

Although the microrayon concept was intended as a modern solution to housing and neighborhood organization, its application in reality revealed many miscalculations and critical flaws that undermined its capacity to function as a true self-contained neighborhood unit. Richard French notes that while the microrayon was designed as an integrated living unit, "practice fell considerably short of the integrated living unit of theory, usually in the failure to provide, or long delay in providing, the service infrastructure within the microregion."[23] This mismatch between planning and execution often led to environments where residents had to rely on services and amenities in city centers, thereby undermining the ideal of self-sufficiency.

Yaroslav Hyrych notes in his analysis of urban development in the USSR during the 1950s–1960s that residential construction was often carried out on empty plots of land in the form of large-scale housing complexes, not always according to the microrayon model. This approach increased the disconnectedness of different parts of the city and further increased the need for commuting. As he writes, "the need to produce large volumes of housing within relatively short time frames led, on the one hand, to the application of advanced construction technologies, and on the other hand, to carelessness and often low-quality buildings."[24] But even when implemented carefully, the microrayon concept failed to deliver on its core promises.

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[22] French, 90

[23] Richard Anthony French, *Plans, Pragmatism, and People: The Legacy of Soviet Planning* (London: UCL Press, 1995), 83.

[24] Ярослав Гирич, Містобудування в УРСР 50–60 роки (Київ, 2007), 147.

The concept aimed to reduce daily commuting by concentrating key amenities and institutions within walkable distances inside the planning unit. However, several contradictory ideas diminished the microrayon's potential to make Soviet cities genuinely walkable. The urban planning before the 1950s, which often used a quarter layout, in Khrushchev time was considered rigid: "the separation of residential districts into small isolated blocks — with schools, kindergartens, and nurseries, as well as garages and other utility buildings placed within the inner courtyards near residential buildings — worsened living conditions for residents", notes Hyrych.[25] In contrast, the microrayon model attempted to organize urban space by strict functional zoning into residential, educational, service, and commercial areas. The majority of space was dedicated to housing — primarily 5- or 9-story buildings constructed in open space, with no coherent street structure. These buildings were free-standing, with the surrounding open areas envisioned as green and pedestrian-oriented.

Service institutions were planned with distance in mind. Hyrych mentiones that the distance from the farthest residential buildings to a school was not supposed to exceed 0.7–1 km, and for kindergartens, nurseries, and shops — 0.5–0.7 km. Commercial and trade centers were to be located within a 15-minute walk, not farther than 1 km.[26] Yet even when these distances were observed, the core issue remained — these centers were functionally segregated and ideologically constrained. Trade was limited to a few state-run stores and, if possible, a small market area for villagers selling homegrown food. There was no private entrepreneurship, no mixed-use buildings, no active ground floors, and no locally driven services. Residential buildings were residential only. This lack of economic diversity and rigid functional zoning prevented the emergence of vibrant local identities and social networks.

Although Soviet urban planners proclaimed the goal of reducing commuting by placing basic services nearby, in reality, most residents still had to travel long distances to reach their workplaces, which were often located in enormous industrial clusters far from home. Microrayons had no capacity to accommodate workplaces for most of their inhabitants. In many Soviet households, it was common for more than one adult to be employed, but only a small portion of them could be employed within the microrayon — in schools,

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[25] Ibid., 148.
[26] Ibid.

kindergartens, or the state-run shops.[27] The rest had to leave their districts each morning and return in the evening, turning microrayons into "half-dead" zones during the day, populated mainly by children, the elderly, and the unemployed, lumpenized adults.

These issues were exacerbated by extreme standardization and spatial monotony, imposed by a system obsessed with mass production and centralized control. Hyrych emphasizes that the unification of building methods and architectural design, when applied to the historic fabric of cities, led to "the loss of the individuality of the urban environment, shaped over centuries."[28] He also quotes the Ukrainian urbanist H. Filvarov, who described the social consequences of mass migration into Soviet cities and the ideological reshaping of urban life: "rural populations, having found themselves in large cities, became marginalized, and largely did not accept the established system of urban cultural and aesthetic values. Their negative and aggressive attitudes, influenced by the prevailing ideology of the time, led to the destruction of the historically formed ethical system of urban life and to the neglect of spiritual and material traditions."[29] The suppression of individuality and its subordination to the needs of the collective, he argues, resulted in the deformation and decline of traditional forms of urban life and behavior.

In summary, the microrayon concept was presented as a progressive solution to the challenges of the 20th century that soviet cities faced but in practice combined with soviet ideological and economical limitations it turned into a range of long-term problems that continue to shape Ukrainian cities today. The mismatch between the conceptual idea and its practical application, combined with the prioritization of speed over quality, rigid planning, prohibition of private businesses and absence of community engagement mechanisms, made microrayons unsuitable foundation for vibrant, comfortable and sustainable neighborhoods.

Key issues of microrayon concept identified:

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[27] Richard A. French, *Plans, Pragmatism and People: The Legacy of Soviet Planning* (London: UCL Press, 1995), 125.

[28] Ярослав Гирич, Містобудування в УРСР 50–60 роки (Київ, 2007), 148.

[29] Ibid.

- Often low quality of housing stock and infrastructure

- Strict functional differentiation and zoning

- Complete absence of private initiative and entrepreneurship

- Monotonous and standardized building typologies

- Long-distance commutes caused by gigantomanic industrial zoning and economic centralization

Rather than fostering self-sufficient communities, the microrayon became a symbol of disconnectedness, monotony, and ideological control. Yet understanding and analysing its failure is essential, because many of the problems it created are still influencing Ukrainian cities significantly. Any attempt to build a better urban future in Ukraine must start by confronting this legacy. As the Soviet Union collapsed these structural foundations of Ukrainian cities did not disappear. Instead, we inherited thousands of microrayons that are combined in large "sleeping districts" and "residential massives" that now have lost their ideological meaning but did not find a new organisational form for planning and governance. The rapid transition to the market economy and the emerged neoliberal paradigm promised flexibility, investment, and modernization, but often led to even further fragmentation, common space degradation, and new forms of inequality in the urban fabric of Ukrainian cities .

5. Neighborhood as Planning and Governance Concept

Ukrainian cities embed in their fabric tensions between planning approaches of different periods with opposing ideological foundations. While Ukraine is moving toward adopting more integrated planning frameworks, current urban planning remains general and centralized—operating almost exclusively at the municipal (hromada) level and often failing to respond to the complexity of local urban contexts.

The only identified exception so far has been the Integrated Development Concept of the Podil district in Kyiv, but such examples are rare. In most cases, planning comprehensive documents with integrated approach exist only for the entire hromada, with no instruments for finer-grained, community-level spatial

management. Even these plans, although a step forward, fall short of reaching the human scale of planning—the scale where people actually live, interact, and shape their environment.

One of the reasons for this limitation is the lack of a consistent conceptual and operational framework for dividing urban space into small-scale, human-centered units. Without a clearly defined spatial unit—such as a "neighborhood" or adapted microrayon—it becomes nearly impossible to conduct localized analysis, planning, or governance. Concepts like the neighborhood unit or microrayon historically emerged from a desire to structure built environments in new ways that would ensure a certain quality of life for residents. However, these models overlooked two key factors: cities already have an established urban fabric and residents are not passive users of space but active participants who continuously shape their environments passively through daily practices but also require mechanisms to engage intentionally with each other and space .

What Ukraine is missing is a planning framework that is both flexible and adaptable to diverse urban morphologies, yet specific enough to offer a coherent, guiding vision. Such a framework must bridge the physical form of place with the desired quality of life and the long-term civic engagement of its residents. As Alberti and Radicchi explains,Western urban planning evolved through a series of spatial models throughout 20th century —from Garden Cities and Perry's Neighborhood Unit to Central Place Theory, Proxemics, Compact City principles, New Urbanism, and ultimately toward time-based proximity models such as the 15-minute and 20-minute cities. These new generally-accepted approaches share several core principles: creating mix-use neighborhoods through integrating housing, public services, workplaces, green spaces, and civic amenities within walkable dostance connected by well-planned public transportation systems.[30]

This thought development reflects the broader Western shift toward integrated approaches to spatial development and governance which is promoted by European policy documents like the Leipzig Charter. The conclusion is clear: to overcome the fragmentation of Ukrainian cities and regain control over urban

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[30] Francesco Alberti and Antonella Radicchi, *From the Neighbourhood Unit to the 15-Minute City: Past and Recent Urban Models for Post-COVID Cities*, in *Urban and Transit Planning*, ed. Francesco Alberti et al. (Springer, 2023), 162–165.

development, bringing it at the human scale, we must introduce a new planning framework that identifies and enables action at the level of the neighborhood.

But, as previously mentioned, residents require mechanisms to connect, engage and intentionally shape their environment. Stopping at the planning stage would be insufficient. The sustainability of any neighborhood depends not only on design and infrastructure but also on connectedness of its residents with each-other and space and their filling of ownership. Without mechanisms for participation, representation, and local agency, even the best-designed spaces risk becoming alienating or dysfunctional as both examples of microrayns and neighborhood units show. As Jane Jacobs emphasized, vibrant urban life depends on informal, overlapping systems of mutual trust and everyday negotiation.[31] Similarly, from the governance theory side, Elinor Ostrom's idea of polycentric governance argues that complex social-ecological systems can be managed successfully only when decision-making is distributed over multiple levels, including the most local one.[32] Therefore, the neighborhood, as a city`s cell, can function not as a planning unit only but also as the smallest governance unit.

In the face of growing complexity of modern life, decentralization is not just desirable but necessary. In Ukraine we have a successful decentralisation reform which distributed power and budgets from the central government to the level of municipalities. Perhaps, now it is time to deepen decentralisation by sharing decision making power with the people on the lowest level of organisation - neighborhoods. These territorial units are the spaces where people live, care, and invest emotionally, therefore are the most logical units for democratic innovation, community resilience, and co-production of urban solutions. As Vivien Lowndes and Helen Sullivan explain, neighborhood governance rests on four interrelated rationales—civic (participation), social (well-being), political (accountability), and economic (efficiency)—each of which justifies bringing decision-making closer to people and empowering them to shape their surroundings.[33]

In conclusion, the current absence of a coherent neighborhood-level planning and governance framework in Ukraine is not just a technical issue—it is

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[31] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).

[32] Elinor Ostrom, "Collective Action and the Evolution of Social Norms," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 14, no. 3 (2010): 137–158

[33] Vivien Lowndes and Helen Sullivan, "How Low Can You Go? Rationales and Challenges for Neighborhood Governance," *Public Administration* 86, no. 1 (2008): 55–58.

a serious gap in our democracy system. Addressing it means defining the neighborhood as both a spatial and political unit: a place where residents can actively participate in shaping the future of their direct environment and the whole city.

5.1 The Missing Neighborhood Framework in Ukraine

Now we have reached the central proposition of this thesis: to view the neighborhood as the smallest unit of planning, citizen engagement, and governance. The neighborhood is a structural cell—both in the spatial organization of the city and in the political fabric of a truly democratic society. It is at this level, between the household and the district administration, that most aspects of everyday life unfold.

When individuals are required to interact with administrative structures operating at the citywide level or even within districts with 300,000 residents it becomes exceedingly difficult to form a meaningful connection between person and institution. A serious gap emerges between the ordinary citizen and the governance system. Addressing this disconnection is essential if we are to build a more resilient and inclusive society.

Neighborhoods offer a tangible framework through which citizens can participate in the democratic process—by shaping their immediate environment, or at the very least, by witnessing how democracy manifests itself in spatial transformations. By conceptualizing the neighborhood as both a spatial and governance unit, we lay the groundwork for local resilience, civic participation, and effective democratic practice. In the following section, we take a closer look at diverse models of neighborhood governance from around the world. Through the lens of comparative analysis, we will explore how different systems conceptualize and structure neighborhood-level governance and planning — and consider what lessons these approaches might offer for us in Ukraine.

5.2 Models of Neighborhood Governance and Planning Globally

Neighborhood governance is not a rare phenomenon. Models of city decentralization to the neighborhood level can be found across all continents. Most Western countries have undergone a process of decentralizing urban governance and empowering local territorial communities. A wave of decentralist movements emerged in the 1990s in the developed world—from the United States, where Neighborhood Councils were introduced in Los Angeles, to Japan, which became

known for its Machizukuri movement. However, despite a clear global trend toward stronger local communities capable of shaping the development of their neighborhoods, the models differ significantly.

In this section, we will compare several neighborhood governance frameworks through the lenses of institutionalization, influence, planning approaches, and territorial scale (size and population). We will examine two examples from the United States: Los Angeles, which represents one of the most progressive neighborhood governance systems in the country, and Chicago, which—despite being a highly centralized city—provides an important example due to its clearly defined neighborhood structure.

We will then turn to the European context, beginning with the UK and its Localism Act of 2011, which introduced Neighborhood Plans as a formal planning instrument. We will follow this with an example from Central Europe, represented by Berlin. Finally, we will explore Asian experiences of neighborhood governance, which are particularly rich and instructive. The main focus will be on Japan's Machizukuri system, with a brief look at Taiwan as a complementary case.

Both countries have demonstrated that neighborhoods with strong localized governance and engaged residents tend to be significantly more resilient in the face of catastrophic events such as earthquakes—a lesson that resonates strongly with Ukraine as it faces mass destruction caused by Russia's full-scale invasion. To support this comparative analysis, the section concludes with a table summarizing the core characteristics of each model.

5.2.1 Neighborhood Councils (NCs) in Los Angeles

The Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (NC) system was established with a city charter in 1999 as a response to growing discontent in those areas that felt underrepresented in municipal governance. The crisis escalated in the San Fernando Valley, which went as far as advocating for secession from the Los Angeles municipality. In response, the city leaders initiated structural reform to embed citizen participation at the most local level of government. Today, Los Angeles has a network of over 90 NCs, each certified by the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC) and supported by the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), also known as Empower LA. To become certified, a proposed NC must represent a minimum of 20,000 residents, gather 200–500 stakeholder signatures, adopt bylaws, and establish an internal

governance and financial accountability system.[34] The average size for an NC is 39,000 residents and often, they include a few neighborhoods rather than being one cohesive territorial community.[35] The literature suggests that some of the largest NCs have internal discussions about separating. Due to their size and internal diversity, some of the larger councils have begun discussing the possibility of subdividing into smaller entities.

NCs are well institutionalized and embedded in municipal governance, yet operate as self-organized voluntary associations with a primarily advisory role. They are tasked with three main functions: promoting civic participation, resolving community issues, and advising on city policies. While they are formally advisory, their influence is institutionalized through three mechanisms: the Early Notification System, city budgeting consultations, and Memoranda of Understanding with departments like the Department of Water and Power. Each NC is allocated approximately $37,000 annually for administrative costs and community projects. Previously, the budget was $50,000; however, it was recently reduced. The NC as a body is defined by its board—the elected (sometimes appointed) core team that organizes all activities and connects the community with municipal institutions. Board sizes vary (from 7 to over 30), and members are required to complete some training, such as ethics and funding courses. NCs work closely with local stakeholders—residents, businesses, schools, nonprofits. They mostly focus on issues such as zoning, public safety, transportation, and economic development. One of the biggest criticisms pointed out in studies is that NC boards are often dominated by affluent, well-educated, older White homeowners.[36] This raises concerns about inclusivity and representativeness, which undermines their legitimacy and ability to connect with the community.

Despite these embedded mechanisms, the planning role of Neighborhood Councils remains limited and largely advisory. NCs do not produce formal community planning documents that are integrated into the statutory planning system. Instead, they act as consultative bodies within the broader framework of city-led planning. Nevertheless, planning and land use are central to their work:

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[34] Sonenshein, Raphael J., Kelly L. Lytle Hernandez, and Matt Barreto. *What Makes a Neighborhood Council Effective?* Los Angeles: Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs, 2007.
[35] Neighborhood Council Review Commission. *Final Report: A Review of the Los Angeles Neighborhood Council System.* Los Angeles, 2007.
[36] Sonenshein, Raphael J., Kelly L. Lytle Hernandez, and Matt Barreto. *What Makes a Neighborhood Council Effective?* Los Angeles: Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs, 2007.

nearly 49% of issue-oriented agenda items relate to zoning, development proposals, transportation, and environmental impacts. Some councils engage in more proactive planning—13% of land use-related items involve attempts to influence long-term development or design guidelines. Yet these efforts lack legal weight and are not formalized into recognized planning instruments.

The Early Notification System (ENS) is a mechanism introduced to ensure councils are informed about upcoming city decisions in time to formulate a response. Through this system, NCs can submit Community Impact Statements, which are entered into the public record of relevant hearings but have no binding authority. A mechanism of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) allows more structured collaboration with municipal decision-making institutions. These are often signed with departments like Water and Power—enabling early consultation and shared oversight on specific issues. However, these remain exceptions rather than systemic practices, and most council interactions with planning processes remain responsive rather than strategic.

While institutional support is quite strong and there are specific legal mechanisms that embed NCs in municipal governance, the system faces many challenges. Effectiveness varies widely between councils, and the performance of the system is questionable as it struggles to provide an even outcome across neighborhoods. Some NCs show excellent results in engagement and local problem-solving, while others struggle with dysfunction, low participation, and internal conflicts. DONE can initiate decertification procedures for non performing councils. Scholars have identified three key factors linked to NC effectiveness: internal capacity of the board (the ability to run meetings, resolve conflicts, set goals), external networking (engagement with city officials, agencies, and other NCs), and "attention-action congruence"—the alignment between the issues NCs prioritize and the concrete actions they take to address them.[37] Despite limitations, the LA NC system represents one of the most structured and well-resourced models of participatory neighborhood governance globally. It offers an example of how municipalities can institutionalize local voice, foster civic infrastructure, and decentralize public engagement.

In conclusion, while Neighborhood Councils in Los Angeles are formally embedded in the governance system and engage deeply with land use topics, their

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[37] Sonenshein, Raphael J., Kelly L. Lytle Hernandez, and Matt Barreto. *What Makes a Neighborhood Council Effective?* Los Angeles: Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs, 2007.

planning role is overwhelmingly reactive. They respond to city-led proposals and processes rather than initiate or shape long-term visions for their territories. This reactive approach limits the community's ability to imagine and shape the future of their neighborhood—something that Lefebvre described as a key part of the right to the city. Without the power or structure to co-create binding spatial plans, NCs will continuously lose the opportunity to activate residents around a shared vision of the future.

5.2.2 Chicago's Community Areas and Quality of Life Plans

The United States represents a very heterogeneous municipal governance system with very different approaches that can be found across the country. To expand our understanding of various possible models that take into account and empower neighborhoods, we will additionally examine a model of Chicago, Illinois. Its system is very different from LA. It is multi-layered and complex, yet learning it can be beneficial for understanding the role of neighborhoods in modern cities and finding useful tools that could be adapted for Ukraine. In order to better understand the complexity of Chicago neighborhood planning, I both revised the literature and conducted an interview with Katanya Raby—an urban planner from Chicago who works at different planning levels, including neighborhoods, and currently works for a Community Development Corporation (CDC) in Chicago.

Chicago can be fairly characterized as a more centralized city in comparison to Los Angeles. The city has multiple levels of formal and informal segmentation frameworks. The governance and politics is done through the system of 50 Wards that cover the territory of the whole municipality. These wards delegate deputies to the City Council and function similarly to districts in Ukraine. Parallel to the ward system, a network of 77 Community Areas covers the city. Community Areas function as community-based units with distinct identities and defined boundaries, with populations ranging between 2,500 residents in the smallest and 105,000 in the largest, but on average around 30,000 residents.[38] The Community Area could be identified as equivalent to the neighborhood concept in

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[38] Katanya Raby, interview for this thesis 2025

LA. In the literature and practice, people mostly refer to Community Areas as neighborhoods:

> *"I've been using the word neighborhood and community area*
> *interchangeably. But the official name is community area... Those are*
> *the actual boundaries that are determined on our community area map*
> *of the 77 communities."*
> — Katanya Raby, interview for this thesis, 2025.

In Chicago, there are also more than 190 territorial units called "neighborhoods", however, these units exist mostly in the names of localities and small area identities, with no official recognition or boundaries. The community engagement and outreach to the population is primarily happening at the level of Community Areas with multiple tools. The Community Areas were originally developed in the 1920s by sociologists from the University of Chicago as a research framework to analyze the city. Although they have no administrative function (it is performed through wards), the Community Ares have since become officially recognised and used for planning, data collection, and identity building.

Community Areas have no permanent representative body, yet there are different Community Area-level nonprofit organizations like Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and committees like Community Area Business Chambers or other thematic organizations of residents and stakeholders. The CDCs can operate within one or several Community Areas. They focus on advocating community needs, engaging residents, developing plans for the community, and often providing or renovating affordable housing. These organizations are not part of the city structure as Neighborhood Councils in LA but operate in a similar way:

> *"Usually those [CDCs] are like... I don't want to say central, but*
> *they're a featured organization in communities that are leading a lot of*
> *the planning efforts or deeply involved in the planning efforts."*
> — Katanya Raby, interview for this thesis, 2025.

CDCs often rely on federal programs, or private funding. Their capacity and impact vary significantly from area to area. However, they are consistently supported by national-wide non-profit Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and foundations like MacArthur Foundation that provide funding for

planning, projects and capacity building programs for CDCs.[39] Katanya described CDCs as following:

> *"These are nonprofits that receive local, county, state and federal funding. A lot of times they do a lot of our affordable housing work... corridor planning, community revitalization, beautification, and programs for residents who want to become entrepreneurs or rehab their homes."*
> — Katanya Raby, interview for this thesis, 2025.

We can conclude from this that CDCs perform many functions similarly to Neighborhood Councils with a less degree of institutionalization yet with more flexibility. They are engaged not only in reactive actioning but have a more visionary and project-based approach.

Unlike Los Angeles, Chicago has no requirement for comprehensive planning neither on the city level nor on the Community Area level. This results in a more fragmented and often discontinuous planning landscape.[40] The planning tool applied on the Community Areas level in Chicago is called the Quality of Life Plan. It is developed by nonprofit organizations like local CDCs within the long-term program New Communities Project implemented by LISC and funded by private and federal foundations. The document has no binding force. It functions more as a strategic roadmap that reflects the shared priorities of residents, businesses, and local public institutions, and other local stakeholders. These plans adopt a comprehensive approach to planning and cover issues such as housing, economic development, education, safety, and public space. These plans provide guidance for investment in projects for money allocated within the NCP program and help to attract external investments.

The project funding provided within NCP is called "seed grants" as it is usually not enough to cover all project expenses and its purpose is to help community groups to kick-start their initiative and attract other funding. However, Greenberg, Brown and Comey argue that the planning process itself is transformative for the community: "*NCP helped build trust between residents, nonprofits, and institutions—even in neighborhoods with histories of*

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[39] David Greenberg, Prudence Brown, and Kristin Comey, *The Role of Community in Comprehensive Community Initiatives: The New Communities Program in Chicago* (New York: MDRC, 2014).

[40] Katanya Raby, interview for this thesis 2025

fragmentation or inter-group tension". Many communities developed stronger networks and partnerships between stakeholders who never cooperated before the NCP implementation.[41] This neighborhood development program has also become a national reference point in the USA for holistic neighborhood planning and revitalization. While such informal and NGO-led planning tools as the Quality of Life Plans provide an important space for community input, their impact often depends on the strength and coordination of the nonprofit sector.

5.2.3. Berlin's Quartiersmanagement

Berlin's urban governance structure is multi-layered and complex. The city comprises 12 boroughs (bezirke), which are further divided into 97 officially recognized quarters (ortsteile). These Ortsteile are further informally subdivided into small, identity-rich neighborhood units - kieze (ortslagen).[42] However, these neighborhoods in Berlin have no formal role in administration, planning and governance. However, there is a framework that enables neighborhood planning and citizen participation in neighborhood governance but only temporarily as a part of the federal program Sozialer Zusammenhalt.[43]

At the heart of neighborhood-level participation in Berlin is the Quartiersmanagement system, part of the federal urban development program "Social Cohesion" (Sozialer Zusammenhalt), launched in 1999 and implemented until now. It targets socially and economically disadvantaged urban areas that mostly do not correspond with the boundaries of specific quarters (ortsteile) or neighborhoods (ortslagen) but might include several neighborhoods. The program operates in two phases: integrated planning and providing funding for improvements to public infrastructure and the urban environment. The program's goal is to stabilize these areas and foster local engagement.[44]

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[41] David Greenberg, Prudence Brown, and Kristin Comey, *The Role of Community in Comprehensive Community Initiatives: The New Communities Program in Chicago* (New York: MDRC, 2014), 12.

[42] Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, Bauen und Wohnen. "Berliner Quartiersmanagement-Verfahren." *Berlin.de*. Accessed May 31, 2025.

[43] Mariana Morais. *Citizen Participation in Urban Policy: Lessons Based on Berlin and São Paulo Experiences*. WZB Discussion Paper SP V 2022-101. Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB), 2022.

[44] Ibid.

Quartiersmanagement areas are functionally defined zones, usually occupying part of the Ortsteile territory. It is identified for targeted intervention and based on social criteria, not geography. Within each area, a Quartiersbüro (neighborhood office) is established to coordinate participation and projects. A key participatory mechanism within this framework is the Quartiersrat (Neighborhood Council). These are temporary advisory neighborhood bodies composed of 15–25 elected volunteer members. Councils are re-elected publicly every two years. At least half of the members are local residents and the other half is composed of representatives of local institutions or other stakeholders. For example, there might be representatives of schools, religious groups, housing companies, and businesses.[45]

Each council participates in shaping the Integrated Action and Development Concept (IHEK) - an informal planning document specific to the Quartiersmanagement area. Its development process is highly participatory with the council playing a role of mediators between professionals and local residents. The planning method reflects an integrated approach with consideration of social, spatial and economic aspects of life. IHEK informs quarter and city level policies and programs. Additionally, once the IHEK is developed, local residents can apply for small grants to implement local projects. For example, community clean-ups, markets, or planting days. Funds are allocated from an annual "Action Fund" of €10,000, with a maximum of €1,500 per project by the residents jury, which is a separate temporary body.[46] This fund is called "Kiez-Kasse" and it aims at encouraging bottom-up initiatives and enabling rapid activation of local groups provoking engagement and creativity.

Importantly, Quartiersräte exists only during the Quartiersmanagement intervention period, which may last from 5 to 15 years.[47] Once the program ends, the Quartiersbüro is being closed and the neighborhood councils are dissolved, unless local actors independently find funds to support its lasting functioning.[48] Thus, while being highly participatory and engaging in proactive strategic

[45] Mariana Morais. *Citizen Participation in Urban Policy.*

[46] Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, Bauen und Wohnen. "Berliner Quartiersmanagement-Verfahren." *Berlin.de.*

[47] Ibid.

[48] Mariana Morais. *Citizen Participation in Urban Policy.*

activities, these councils are not permanent advisory bodies like Neighborhood Councils Los Angeles or Ukrainian OSNs.

Berlin's model demonstrates how state-supported temporary participation structures can activate neighborhoods and build local capacity and cohesion. However, this framework lacks permanency, legal authority and provides this opportunity only to the defined struggling neighborhoods leaving out other communities.

5.2.4. UK's Localism Act and Neighborhood Plans

The UK has a highly developed planning and governance framework, structured as a multi-tier system with a high degree of autonomy at the local level. London, for instance, is governed by the Greater London Authority, which oversees city-wide strategy and is headed by an elected mayor. At this level, the main strategic planning instrument is the London Plan, which sets broad priorities for development, infrastructure, and transportation systems.

Beneath this level, London is divided into 32 boroughs - units similar to districts. Each with populations ranging roughly from 150,000 to 390,000. These boroughs also function as Local Planning Authorities and are responsible for developing their own Local Plans. These plans provide detailed policies on land use, housing, transport, and environmental protection within their jurisdictions territory. The lowest tier of the UK`s government are parish or town councils with populations ranging between 1,000 to 30,000 residents. Although the UK does not have formal neighborhoods in most cities, the concept of "neighborhoods" is widely used in community engagement and planning.[49] A single London borough may include 5 to 20 or more neighborhoods, while a rural parish or town council typically include one to several neighborhoods. In both cases they are used for planning and community identity building but have no formal governance role.

While this planning system offers a relatively decentralised approach to planning, it remains fundamentally top-down. The plans are legally binding and must conform with the higher-level plans (like Local Plan and London Plan).[50]

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[49] Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. *Neighbourhood Planning*, https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2.
[50] London Assembly Planning Committee. *Neighbourhood Planning – Progress and Insights.* London, March 2020.

Additionally, they are typically produced by professional planning departments with limited resident involvement.

The UK`s planning framework was significantly reformed with the adoption of the Localism Act in 2011. It caused a significant shift in planning and governance by introducing a statutory right for local territorial communities to develop neighborhood plans. The main objective of the Act was to decentralize decision-making, empower communities to influence development in their areas, and enable faster construction of housing. It encourages community ownership of plans and their deliverability. This Act was part of the "Big Society" concept that promoted radical decentralization and engagement of average residents in the governance processes.[51]

The main planning tool of this policy is the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)**,** which is a legally binding planning document created at the neighborhood level. It becomes part of the Local Plan upon adoption, yet it has to align with the existing municipal or borough plans.[52]

Neighborhood plans are not comprehensive vision documents and primarily address spatial development issues, such as deciding where new housing, shops, and offices should go, identifying sites for development, introducing design codes, and protecting green spaces or historic sites. NDPs cannot block development already approved in local plans but they may propose additional or more detailed development regulations.These plans are developed by the existing parish or town councils in rural areas. In urban areas neighborhood communities establish Neighborhood Forums - temporary bodies made up of local residents and businesses. Forums are registered and supported by the local planning authority (boroughs) and are dissolved after the plan is adopted.[53]

NDPs in the UK represent a unique example of participatory planning at the neighborhood level being formalized into statutory documents that are legally binding. In this regard, they are an impressively progressive tool. However, this system has notable shortcomings. The procedures for adoption are bureaucratic and complex, and all plans must align with existing Local Plans, limiting

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[51] Department for Communities and Local Government. *Localism Act: Neighbourhood Plans and Community Right to Build – Impact Assessment.* London, March 2012.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

autonomy.[54] But, most significantly, NDPs lack an integrated planning approach, overlooking crucial aspects such as community cohesion, economic development, and social support.

5.2.5 Japan's Machizukuri and Taiwan's Community Planners Program

To enrich our understanding of Neighborhood-level planning and governance models we should also take a look at practices in East Asia. Particularly, Japan and Taiwan might offer invaluable lessons for Ukraine's post-war recovery and further decentralization. These countries, especially Japan, are often exposed to natural disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons, and have evolved planning systems that enable bottom-up coordination, resilience-building, and rapid local response to devastations. Their experience shows that empowering neighborhood structures not only enhances everyday live experience but is also crucial in times of crisis. Furthermore, their bottom-up evolution of institutions illustrates that decentralization is not unique to Western democracies, but is a universal process driven by community needs and local ownership, which Ukraine can learn from.

Japan's planning approach emphasizes local-level autonomy through the framework of *machizukuri*, translated approximately as "small-area making." *Machizukuri* emerged gradually in the 1970s as a response to the limitations of strict and non-transparent top-down government. Over time, *machizukuri* developed into a citizen-led movement aimed at creating vibrant and livable neighborhoods, going beyond traditional resident associations to include stakeholders like shopping street cooperatives (shotengai kumiai), NGOs, and universities. This inclusive nature and multi-stakeholder engagement strengthen community cohesion and responsiveness, especially in times of crisis. For instance, after the Kobe earthquake in 1995, areas with active *machizukuri* networks demonstrated faster recovery and higher levels of local volunteerism. This case demonstrates the importance of neighborhood-level networks for resilience and mobilization in the time of crises.[55]

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[54] London Assembly Planning Committee. *Neighbourhood Planning – Progress and Insights.* London, March 2020.
[55] André Sorensen and Carolin Funck, *Living Cities in Japan: Citizens' Movements, Machizukuri and Local Environments* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 3-9, 12-14, 86-87.

Institutionalization of neighborhood engagement is crucial for making it sustainable. As André Sorensen notes, "institutions shape both the formal rules structuring governance processes and the goals and imaginaries of the various actors involved".[56] However, in Ukraine, this process must be approached cautiously and implemented gradually. The evolution of *machizukuri* in Japan serves as a valuable example—it developed as a "big and slow-moving sociopolitical process".[57] This suggests that reforming OSNs and introduction of the neighborhood framework should not be imposed top-down. Instead, the process should be co-led by residents and local stakeholders, allowing it to evolve organically into a strong and lasting institution.

Taiwan complements Japan's example by showing how capacity-building and institutional support can enhance neighborhood planning. Taiwanese community planning has borrowed some terminology and concepts from Japan's *machizukuri*, however, the country has also developed its own path, tailored to its political, social, and spatial contexts. A central innovation was the launch of the "Training 1,000 Community Planners" program, which embeds semi-professional facilitators—often students or residents - into neighborhoods to mediate between government planners and local communities.[58] As Liling Huang noted in our interview, "community planner is kind of a concept," rather than a strictly licensed role, enabling greater flexibility and inclusivity.[59] This model offers a compelling solution for Ukraine's OSNs (organs of self-organization of the population), which often struggle due to limited professional and organizational capacity.

Universities in Taiwan have played a foundational role in the development of the community planner model by acting as both training hubs and long-term partners for neighborhood planning.[60] In collaboration with NGOs and local governments, academic institutions have designed and delivered specialized workshops, courses, and fieldwork opportunities that equip students and young professionals with practical tools for community facilitation. As Liling Huang explained, "universities cooperated with NGOs… to provide capacity-building

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[56] Ibid, 58.

[57] Ibid, 85.

[58] Liling Huang, *Training 1,000 Community Planners: Participatory Community Planning in Taiwan* (International Development Planning Review, 2015).

[59] Liling Huang, interview for this thesis, 2025

[60] Liling Huang, *Training 1,000 Community Planners: Participatory Community Planning in Taiwan*

programs and send students to work directly in communities".[61] This model not only helps close the expertise gap in under-resourced neighborhoods but also creates a new generation of planners rooted in participatory values. For Ukraine, where OSNs often lack the technical skills and support to lead planning processes, universities could serve a similar role and cultivate planners and facilitators to strengthen neighborhood planning and self-governance.

6. Ukrainian planning and governance context

6.1 National Reforms and Decentralization and Planning

Ukraine's decentralization reform, initiated in 2014, significantly reshaped local governance by transferring administrative and budgetary powers to newly amalgamated territorial communities - hromadas. It is fairly considered one of the most successful reforms of post-Maidan Ukraine. The reform created municipal-level administrative units with real political, fiscal, and service-delivery autonomy through elected local councils, direct budgetary relations with the state, and expanded responsibilities for education, infrastructure, and local development.[62] The focus of this reform was on enhancing institutional autonomy at the regional level by decentralizing power to amalgamated municipalities, yet the decentralization could be deepened by applying this successful model further within cities. This would mean to extend it to the neighborhood level. Although Ukrainian municipalities have introduced participatory tools such as participatory budgeting, youth councils, IDP councils, and public consultations for development strategies, these mechanisms remain centralized at the city level.[63] Thus, the internal diversity of urban neighborhoods remains overlooked. In most Ukrainian cities, citizen involvement in shaping their immediate surrounding environment remains weak or entirely absent.

Ukraine's planning system has also shifted significantly in 2020, moving away from its rigid Soviet-style hierarchy toward a more decentralized and integrated model. The 2020 reform introduced the Comprehensive Spatial

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[61] Liling Huang, interview for this thesis, 2025

[62] Oleksandra Keudel and Oksana Huss, "Polycentric Governance in Practice: The Case of Ukraine's Decentralised Crisis Response during the Russo-Ukrainian War," *Journal of Public Finance and Public Choice* 39, no. 1 (2024): 13, https://doi.org/10.1332/25156918Y2023D000000002.

[63] Ibid, 17

Development Plan (KPPR) as the main planning tool. It merges land-use and spatial planning and transfers key powers to local governments.[64] The new framework significantly empowered municipalities, yet it retained a strict top-down structure of the planning system. Alongside this, the Integrated Concept of Development (CID) was introduced as a flexible, participatory tool inspired by European practices. This planning tool is non-binding, however it encourages cross-sectoral coordination and public engagement.[65] It also has a great potential to be adopted at the neighborhood level.

The Integrated Concept of Development (CID) in Ukraine is aligned with the principles set out in the 2007 Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, which advocated for holistic, place-based, and participatory urban development. The Charter introduced the idea of integrated urban development policy approaches as essential for addressing economic, environmental, and social challenges in cities. It called for the creation of locally tailored strategies that coordinate investments, strengthen deprived neighborhoods, and actively involve citizens and stakeholders in shaping their environments.[66] Therefore, CID is particularly well-suited for adaptation at the neighborhood level, as it accounts for the complexity of urban life and places strong emphasis on participation, local engagement, and cross-sectoral coordination. Similar to Germany's Integrated District Development Concept (IHEK), it offers a flexible framework that empowers communities to articulate their own visions and priorities while combining different aspects of urban life into vision.

6.2 Kyiv Case Study

This section explores the existing institutional and planning framework in Kyiv with focus on neighborhood scale. It highlights the limitations of the current centralized system and examines emerging practices that indicate a growing

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[64] Law of Ukraine "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding Land Use Planning," No. 711-IX, July 17, 2020. https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/711-20#Text.

[65] Oleksandr Ansisimov, Maria Smirnova, and Ievgeniia Dulko. "Establishment of a New Planning System in Ukraine: Institutional Change Between Europeanization and Post-Socialist Path Dependence." *Planning Theory & Practice* 25, no. 4 (2024): 490. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2024.2414973.

[66] Eltges, Markus. "Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities – A Work in Progress." *European Spatial Research and Policy* 16, no. 2 (2009): 64–66. https://doi.org/10.2478/v10105-009-0013-5.

demand for city decentralization and neighborhood-based planning and governance.

6.2.1 *Administrative and planning system in Kyiv*

Kyiv is divided into ten administrative districts (raions), which function as branches of the state administration rather than autonomous municipal governments. Previously it used to have district councils as most Ukrainian cities, but they were dissolved in 2010. As a result, planning and governance remains highly centralized at the city level. The only officially adopted statutory planning document in Kyiv remains the General Plan designed until 2020 for the entire city concerning mostly development, zoning and infrastructure. There is no city-wide CID adopted for Kyiv, however, there is a non-statutory Strategy of Kyiv until 2025.[67] The only adopted CID is designed for one raion - Podilskyi. The tool used for detailed planning of smaller-scale territories is called Detailed Plan of Territory (DPT), however it has no participatory mechanisms and is highly criticized to be developed exclusively in the interests of specific developers, leaving no official mechanisms for addressing the needs of local communities. [68] Although over 172 registered bodies of self-organization of the population (OSNs) exist in Kyiv,[69] most operate in isolation, lack delegated decision-making powers, and have minimal involvement in planning or service delivery. Participatory tools such as public consultations and participatory budgeting do exist, but they are organized city-wide and do not reflect the social, spatial, and historical diversity that exists within and across Kyiv's districts and informal neighborhoods.

6.2.2 *Public Demand for Decentralized City*

In 2019, the Integrated Development Concept (CID) of Podilskyi District was adopted as a strategic, non-statutory planning document, developed with support from international donors under the *Kyiv 2030* initiative. While the CID outlined physical planning priorities, one of its most significant contributions lies

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[67] Kyiv 2030, *General Plan and Zoning of Podil District: Inventory*, Integrated Development of Podil District, 2019.

[68] Roman Mironchuk, "Hromadam zaboronyly vykorystovuvaty detal′ni plany terytorii dlia novoho budivnytstva," *Minfin*, January 7, 2025, https://minfin.com.ua/ua/2025/01/07/143053329/.

[69] Kyiv City State Administration. "U stolytsi funktsionuie 172 orhany samoorganizatsii naselennia — Maryna Khonda." July 26, 2019. https://kyivcity.gov.ua/news/u_stolitsi_funktsionuye_172_organi_samoorganizatsi_naselennya_-_marina_khonda/.

in its critique of the centralized administrative model and its proposals for reform. The document explicitly calls for urban-scale decentralization, proposing to divide Podilskyi District into three smaller administrative units—Podil, Kurenivka, and Vynohradar—based on typological, functional, and historical distinctions. This reflects a broader recommendation to align Kyiv's administrative boundaries with real urban fabrics and strengthen the city's responsiveness to local needs. The CID also advocates for integrating bodies of self-organization of the population (OSNs) into the district-level governance system, supporting their institutional development and embedding them within a more participatory model of local administration.[70] These recommendations position the Podil CID not only as a spatial planning document but as a strategic framework for rethinking neighborhood-scale governance in Kyiv.

This call for decentralization and alignment of governance with the real city fabric is further supported by research on neighborhood identities and the potential for community-building in Kyiv. A 2021 study by CEDOS and NGO Khmarochos in the Podilskyi District identified strong emotional ties to specific localities and outlined four potential neighborhood areas: "Podil/Kontraktova," "Tarasa Shevchenka Metro/Old Podil," "Valy/Kontraktova Square," and "Vozdvyzhenka/Zamkova Hora/Kozhumiatska."[71] Despite the absence of formal neighborhood governance, residents expressed a clear desire to influence decisions in their immediate environment and participate in shaping public spaces and local priorities. Similarly, a 2022 study in the Obolonskyi District mapped 14 distinct localities that hold potential for becoming self-identified neighborhoods, including Minskyi, Parkove Misto, Obolon Center, Pivnichna Obolon, Vyshhorodska, and Heroiv Dnipra.[72] These areas are characterized by clear spatial boundaries, shared infrastructure, and localized social dynamics. Both studies emphasize a disconnect between the city's administrative-territorial structure and the lived urban experience of its residents—pointing to a strong public demand for governance

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[70] Kyiv 2030. *Kontseptsiia intehrovanoho rozvytku Podils'koho raionu m. Kyieva* [Integrated Development Concept for Podilskyi District of Kyiv]. Kyiv: Kyiv City Council / GIZ, 2019, 16.

[71] Mariia Hryshchenko . *Podil: Potentsial do hromadotvorennia. Zvit za rezultatamy sotsiolohichnoho doslidzhennia* [Podil: The Potential for Community-Building. Report on the Results of a Sociological Study]. Kyiv: Hmarochos, 2018.

[72] Ivan Verbytskyi, Mariia Hryshchenko, Varvara Podnos, and Ihor Tyshchenko. *Obolonskyi raion: Potentsial do hromadotvorennia* [Obolonskyi District: The Potential for Community-Building]. Kyiv: CEDOS, 2022.

and planning systems that are decentralized, participatory, and grounded in the actual social and spatial identities of Kyiv's communities.

6.2.3 Pilot Project: Management of Residential Microdistricts

The great news for Ukraine is that in Kyiv there is a project that aims to pilot neighborhood-level planning and self-governance. The Department of Public Communications of the Kyiv City State Administration has launched an experimental initiative called *Менеджмент житлових мікрорайонів* ("Residential Microdistrict Management"), aimed at piloting a neighborhood-level approach to local governance and planning. Inspired by Germany's *Sozialer Zusammenhalt* program and supported by German government funding and expertise, this project seeks to adapt the logic of *Quartiersmanagement* to the Kyiv context.[73]

The project is being piloted in two districts—Obolonskyi and Dniprovskyi. Since Ukrainian cities have no neighborhood-level units in either administrative or planning governance, the first step of any similar project would be defining these neighborhoods, or residential microdistricts in the case of this project. Both districts were divided into microdistricts of approximately 15,000–20,000 residents (see maps 1 and 2).[74]

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[73] Dmytro Ruban. *Interview by author*. May 2025.

[74] Department of Public Communications, Kyiv City State Administration. *Informational Briefing on the Pilot Project "Residential Microdistrict Management"*. Unpublished internal report provided to the author, May 2025.

1- Райдужний
2- Воскресенська слобідка
3 - Воскресенка 1
4 - Воскресенка 2
5 - Воскресенка 3
6- Микільска слобідка
7 - Північно-Броварський масив
8 - Селище Аварійне 1
9 - Селще Аварійне 2
10 - Лівобережний масив
11 - Русанівка
12 - Березняки 1
13 - Березняки 2
14 - Соцмісто
15 - Стара Дарниця 1
16 - Стара Дарниця 2
17 - ДВРЗ

Map 1. Defined residential microdistricts in Dniprovskyi District.[75]

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[75] Department of Public Communications, Kyiv City State Administration. *Informational Briefing on the Pilot Project "Residential Microdistrict Management"*. Unpublished internal report provided to the author, May 2025.
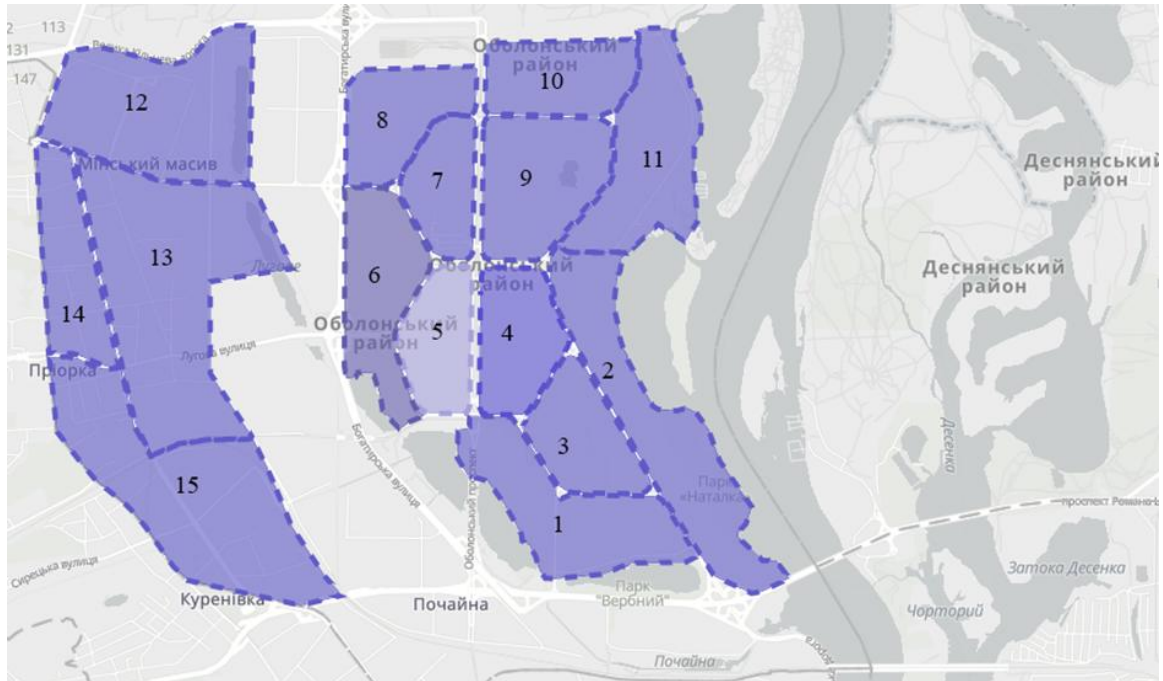
Map 2. Defined residential microdistricts in Obolonskyi District.[76]

As Dmytro Ruban, First Deputy Director of the Department of Public Communications of the Kyiv City State Administration, noted in an interview:

> *"We structured the neighborhoods based on three layers: historical development patterns, common infrastructural needs, and how residents themselves defined their everyday geography."*
> — Dmytro Ruban, interview conducted for this thesis, 2025

The methodology relied not only on technical criteria or architectural typology but also on resident input through focus groups to determine real boundaries of these functional neighborhoods.

The second phase of the project was analytical. Altogether, over 60 indicators across 11 thematic clusters (e.g., mobility, education, public participation, ecology) were collected and analyzed, producing color-coded well-being maps for each microdistrict.[77] Participatory approach plays a crucial role throughout the whole project. Residents were invited to assess their areas subjectively, which revealed a strong gap between perceived and actual

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[76] Department of Public Communications, Kyiv City State Administration. *Informational Briefing on the Pilot Project "Residential Microdistrict Management"*. Unpublished internal report provided to the author, May 2025.

[77] Ibid.

performance. Interestingly, the significant finding of this assessment was that in areas labeled "critical" in terms of civic engagement, the infrastructure and quality of life overall was also the lowest. As Ruban noted:

> *"Where there is no community, there is no demand. And where there is no demand, the city doesn't invest."*
> — Dmytro Ruban, interview conducted for this thesis, 2025

The next phase of this project aims to develop solutions for three selected microdistricts — two in Dniprovskyi and one in Obolonskyi. The selection was based on the greatest needs, thus to support the most disadvantaged neighborhoods—a similar logic to the *Sozialer Zusammenhalt* program. During the Summer 2025, the Department will combine a series of workshops with residents and experts, but the final product of this phase has to be a comprehensive planning document developed together with the residents specifically for their microdistrict.[78] These plans will combine expert proposals with community-driven input to produce actionable roadmaps for social infrastructure, governance improvements, and community engagement.

This experiment reflects a broader ambition to institutionalize a neighborhood-scale governance model in Kyiv. As Ruban noted:

> *"We are convinced that real decentralization in Kyiv must start at the microdistrict level. This is the scale at which communities can form and genuinely influence their environments."*
> — Dmytro Ruban, interview conducted for this thesis, 2025

However, it is important to note that this program is piloted by the Department of Public Communications and not the Department for City Development and Architecture, which undermines the potential for institutionalization and scaling of this experience.

The project also envisions a greater role for OSNs (bodies of self-organization of the population) in the process of planning and governing these created residential microdistricts. This would require them to expand their roles in

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[78] Department of Public Communications, Kyiv City State Administration. *Informational Briefing on the Pilot Project "Residential Microdistrict Management"*. Unpublished internal report provided to the author, May 2025.

managing local assets, coordinating service delivery, and participating in planning decisions. Ruban notes:

> *"Bodies of self-organization of the population (OSNs) are, in our view, the only realistic mechanism that can ensure continuity and institutional presence within a neighborhood. NGOs come and go."*
> — Dmytro Ruban, interview conducted for this thesis, 2025

Dmytro Ruban thinks that OSNs could really become the backbone institution for neighborhoods and enable a new level of self-governance and democracy. Involving OSNs would also make this model very different from the German program, as OSNs are not temporary and they would stay even when the program is finished, therefore providing the necessary continuation and sustainability for the intervention. However, in the current legal framework that OSNs operate, there are many obstacles:

> *"What we're now thinking about is: what exactly should OSNs do at the neighborhood level? We see three key functions — basic coordination of local initiatives, ensuring two-way communication with the city administration, and helping manage certain public resources, like community spaces or small budgets. But for this, they need a clear legal status and support."*
> — Dmytro Ruban, interview conducted for this thesis, 2025

He also emphasized that OSNs have to become part of the planning and decision-making process to enable residents to have real influence on their immediate environment:

> *"If we want this system to work, OSNs need to be integrated into planning—not as observers, but as participants."*
> — Dmytro Ruban, interview conducted for this thesis, 2025

However, for this vision to succeed, both the municipal legislation on OSNs should be amended and an integrated planning document for microdistricts should be carefully designed. The content and legal format of this planning tool must be conceptualized to offer a coherent yet flexible tool that responds to both administrative needs and the participatory aspirations of local communities.

6.3 OSNs as Institutional Backbone for Neighborhoods in Ukraine

In Ukraine, there is no formal concept of a neighborhood or any territorial unit that would serve as the smallest organizational element of the urban fabric. The lowest official governance level remains the *raion*. However, one legislative framework does connect small-scale territories and local governance: the *Bodies of Self-Organization of the Population* (*OSN – Organy Samoorganizatsii Naselennya*).

This form of organization is inherited from the Soviet era, but it has undergone democratic development, especially during the second decade of Ukraine's independence. Nevertheless, this institution remains in the long-term reformation process, it provides a unique framework for self organisation of population on the territorial bases. OSNs enable direct participation by citizens in local governance at the level of their immediate living environment, such as a house, a street, or a microdistrict.[79]OSNs, in terms of organisational nature, occupy a unique space between an official governance body and a civil society organization. As noted by Oleksii Kolesnikov, OSNs are "a hybrid institution that reflects both the delegated authority of public administration and the grassroots initiative of self-governance".[80] This makes OSNs a potentially suitable organisational form to become backbone institutions for neighborhoods in Ukraine. That are understood both as territorial communities and as local governance units. Their dual character and legislative status create an opportunity to rethink and reorganize municipal governance within Ukraine's decentralized political landscape and bring it to the lowest level - neighborhood.

This section explores the legislative framework under which OSNs function, identifies the key features that make them compatible with the concept of neighborhood governance, and highlights the major challenges that must be addressed for OSNs to effectively fulfill this proposed role.

6.3.1 Historical Background and Institutional Nature

OSNs as an institutional form of local organization remain little known both among the general population and even among many practitioners or

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[79] Oleksii Orlovskyi, Правовий статус органів самоорганізації населення в Україні: проблеми теорії і практики (Kyiv: Institute of Civil Society, 2011), 6.
[80] Oleksii Kolesnikov, *Асоціація органів самоорганізації населення як форма співпраці та координації* (Kyiv: Laboratory of Legislative Initiatives, 2013), 3.

democratic innovators in Ukraine. Despite their legal potential and formal status, this tool receives limited attention from international donors and development programs. Among the few exceptions is the Renaissance Foundation, which has consistently supported capacity-building and research related to OSNs since the mid 2000s and up until now.

Two researchers stand out with their sustained contribution to the field and deep understanding of OSNs: Oleksii Orlovskyi and Oleksii Kolesnikov. According to Orlovskyi, the origins of OSNs in Ukraine can be traced back to 1917, when house committees (*domkomy*) first appeared during a brief phase of revolutionary self-governance. By the 1930s, the process of institutionalizing OSNs had begun. Orlovskyi notes that these early forms were motivated less by democratic ideals and more by the Communist Party's desire to involve the population in maintaining public spaces and carrying out various administrative tasks at the grassroots level.[81]

In the independent Ukraine, OSNs were first mentioned in the Constitution in 1996 upon its adoption, which elevated the legal significance and potential of this institution drastically. The Law of Ukraine "On the Bodies of Self-Organization of the Population" — adopted in 2001 — kick-started the transformation of OSNs into a potentially grassroots democratic institution capable of empowering local activism at the level of a building, street, or *mikrorayon*. However, this legislative innovation was far from perfect, and it soon proved to be inefficient. The law lacked clarity in defining mechanisms for delegation of authority, financial sustainability, and coordination between OSNs and other institutions of local self-government.[82]

In an interview conducted for this thesis in 2025, Oleksii Orlovskyi metaphorically described this legal gap:

> *"OSNs were given status, but not the tools. It's like giving a driver a car without keys or fuel. The law recognized their existence, but did not provide them with capacity."*

He further reflected:

[81] Oleksii Orlovskyi, *Правовий статус органів самоорганізації населення в Україні: проблеми теорії і практики* (Kyiv: Institute of Civil Society, 2011), 5-6.
[82] Ibid, 12–14.

"We had to explain dozens of times to local governments that OSNs are not just house committees. They have other powers, but even officials didn't know this. And the problem lies not only in a lack of information, but also in a lack of clarity in the legislation."

These insights show how the reform, while symbolically changing the status of OSNs, still failed to provide sustainable institutional foundations for them, which continues to shape their functioning until now.

In practice, many OSNs are often described as unrepresentative and dysfunctional. They are frequently dominated by elderly residents and lack appeal to younger generations.[83] This claim is also very well supported by the interview insights:

"Most of them are pensioners who have a lot of free time, but there are almost no new people. Young people don't see the point in this, and they don't even understand what it is."
— Yevhen Kovalenko, interview conducted for this thesis, 2025

There are also cases where OSNs have been perceived as closely tied to municipal administrations — sometimes functioning more as instruments of loyalty than platforms of representation. As one interviewee cited in Orlovskyi's analysis noted, OSNs are often "mobilized as support structures during election campaigns,"[84] raising concerns about their independence and political neutrality. Yaroslav Zalevskyi, a head of the homeowner association in Syrets, Kyiv, who also leads a microrayon-wide initiative group also expressed suspicion towards the city-led initiatives of creating OSNs:

"Very often, OSNs are created by local deputies as a kind of manual tool. They use OSNs to deliver certain messages to residents, to influence them, to promote their own actions. Just like developers have pocket housing maintenance companies, these are pocket OSNs."
— Yaroslav Zalevskyi, interview conducted for this thesis, 2025

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[83] Oleksii Kolesnikov, Асоціація органів самоорганізації населення як форма співпраці та координації (Kyiv: Laboratory of Legislative Initiatives, 2013), 8.

[84] Oleksii Orlovskyi, Правовий статус органів самоорганізації населення в Україні: проблеми теорії і практики (Kyiv: Institute of Civil Society, 2011), 15.

This shows that despite its potential, OSNs struggle to gain public trust and are perceived as something uninteresting or outdated and rather politically instrumentalized than a platform for promotion of local interests.

Despite these critiques, OSNs already provide certain benefits to municipalities and their communities. This is both confirmed with the analysed literature and interview insights. All key informants interviewed for this thesis spoke about benefits some successful OSNs manage to bring. The most basic function, yet very helpful for municipalities, is aggregating information from residents. OSNs serve as a communication link between citizens and local government, enabling them to target the very lowest level and address local issues. In Vinnytsia, OSNs actively participate in bottom-up budgeting processes in aspects of infrastructural development of the city suburbs.[85]

In Kyiv, OSNs are often overlooked, yet also often locally play an important role. Anna Mykhailova, the head of OSN Nyvky, shared some of their successes in the interview for this thesis:

> *"Through the OSN, we succeeded in getting lighting installed in an alley that people used to avoid. Residents gathered signatures themselves, the OSN submitted the request, and it actually worked."*

> *"The OSN initiated the repair of sidewalks near a school, and we managed to get it included in the city's program. Without them, the residents simply wouldn't have known where to start."*
> — Anna Mykhailova, 2025.

Hanna Bondar, member of the Parliament and a deputy from the Kyiv Podil district emphasized the role OSNs play in her efforts to involve citizens in the area of her representation:

> *"When we were developing public space improvement projects, it was often through OSNs that we managed to organize meetings, collect signatures, and hear the residents' opinions. It made the whole process much easier."*

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[85] Oleksii Kolesnikov, Асоціація органів самоорганізації населення як форма співпраці та координації (Kyiv: Laboratory of Legislative Initiatives, 2013), 12–13.

"OSNs are convenient to involve as representatives of a neighborhood — they already have contact with residents, they can explain things, convey messages, and collect feedback."
— Hanna Bondar, 2025.

This claim of the important role that OSNs play in establishing connection between the regular citizens and a government structure is also well reflected in the case shared by Yaroslav Zalevskyi. In response to persistent air pollution from a nearby industrial steel recycling factory, local residents repeatedly appealed to environmental and other municipal authorities but were ignored. And only after the OSN Kurenivka initiated a collective appeal and reached out to the MP Hanna Bondar, her intervention pushed the case forward:

> *"They [the OSN in Kurenivka] sent out a call, and we shared it through our building chats to gather signatures for a petition to the MP. We collected around four or five thousand signatures. They submitted it to MP Hanna Bondar. I might have forgotten to mention this, but I'm incredibly grateful to her — she helped us a lot in this matter… She personally came to the factory, saw the emissions herself, and confirmed that the plant was making life unbearable in our neighborhoods."*
>
> — Yaroslav Zalevskyi, interview conducted for this thesis, 2025

These cases show that even in their imperfect form with limited recognition, OSNs can act as efficient intermediators and help residents formulate and advocate local needs and even mobilize collective action.

The proven potential of OSNs and a visible and growing interest in reforming and modernizing this institution brings a lot of hope for it. While OSNs have experienced institutional stagnation in 2010s, the ongoing decentralization process and renewed focus on participatory governance open up a promising future for their evolution. As Oleksii Kolesnikov observes, the most recent draft law on OSNs (#6319) represents "a compromise for the main interested parties, yet it has the potential to significantly improve the legal framework for OSN

activity and finally break the 'vicious cycle' of failed reform attempts."[86] Even though the amendments to the Law on OSNs suggested in this draft law are not perfect, yet it might bring OSNs significantly closer to becoming a truly remarkable grassroot democratic institution that can help engage and govern at the scale of the neighborhood.

6.3.2 Legal Framework and Challenges

The legal foundation for OSNs in Ukraine was laid in the Constitution adopted in 1996, which in the section on local government in the Article 140 explicitly allows local residents to initiate the creation bodies of self-organization on the territorial bases: "Village, settlement, and city councils may, at the initiative of residents, permit the creation of house, street, quarter, and other bodies of self-organization of the population, and may endow them with a portion of their own competences, finances, and property".[87] This constitutional backing elevates OSNs above many similar institutions in other countries like Neighborhood Councils in LA, Japanese Machizukuri, or German Quartiersräte and creates significant institutional potential for their development.

The main legal act regulating OSNs is the Law of Ukraine "On the Bodies of Self-Organization of the Population", adopted in 2001. It defines OSNs as representative institutions created by residents of a certain part of a settlement`s territory — such as a house, street, quarter, or entire microdistrict and even districts to address issues of local importance and advocate interests of residents of their territory.[88] Thus, OSNs are territorially grounded and serve as the smallest representative units within Ukraine's local governance structure. This legal foundation positions OSNs as a unique institutionalised territorial, we can say neighborhood, representation distinct from NGOs or ad-hoc community groups.[89]

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[86]Oleksii Kolesnikov et al., *Rozvytok instytutu OSN v umovakh polityky detsentralizatsii vlady v Ukraini: Analitychna zapyska* (Odesa: Asotsiatsiia spryiannia samoorhanizatsii naselennia, 2023), 9.

[87] Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, *Constitution of Ukraine*, adopted June 28, 1996, Article 140, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/254к/96-вр.

[88] Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Law of Ukraine "On the Bodies of Self-Organization of the Population", no. 2625-III, adopted July 11, 2001, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2625-14.

[89] Oleksii Orlovskyi, *Pravovyi status orhaniv samoorhanizatsii naselennia: Avtoreferat dysertatsii na zdobuttia naukovoho stupenia kandydata yurydychnykh nauk* (Odesa: Odeska natsionalna yurydychna akademiia, 2004).

According to Article 6 of the Law of Ukraine "On the Bodies of Self-Organization of the Population", residents legally residing within the relevant area have the right to elect and be elected to OSNs. These bodies can represent citizens before municipal councils, participate in the drafting of local budgets and development programs, and organize public works such as greening, maintenance, or local infrastructure repair within their territory.[90]

Importantly, the law allows for delegation of responsibilities and budgets to OSNs by municipal authorities. This includes the financial support, but also the provision of equipment, materials, and other resources necessary to implement delegated tasks. Additionally, OSNs may be registered as non-profit organizations, enabling them to receive grant funding and participate in broader civil society cooperation. Yet, Kolesnikov claims that some OSNs face difficulties when attempting to register as non-profit due to uncertainty in the law.[91]

Even though the constitutional status of OSN could be expected to put OSNs on a priority list, the legislative collisions and shortcomings remain unaddressed since the adoption of the specialised law. Scholars like Orlovskyi, Kolesnikov and Mayko, have repeatedly emphasized several issues embedded in the current legal framework under which OSNs operate:

Territorial duplication. The current law allows OSNs to be created at multiple levels, including houses, streets, quarters, or microrayons, without a clear mechanism to coordinate overlapping jurisdictions. This results in the so-called "matryoshka problem," where several OSNs function on the same territory with unclear hierarchy or roles.[92]

Unclear delegation procedures. The process by which local councils delegate powers to OSNs is very poorly defined, thus most municipalities leave OSNs without real influence or budgetary tools to act. It is unclear what kind of responsibilities could be delegated, how to regulate it and how to organize cooperation of OSNs with other municipal institutions in order to perform these

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[90] Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Law of Ukraine "On the Bodies of Self-Organization of the Population"

[91] Oleksii Kolesnikov, *Асоціація органів самоорганізації населення*, 2023, p. 32

[92] Tetiana Maiko, "Funktsionuvannia orhaniv samoorhanizatsii naselennia v mistakh," *Visnyk Natsionalnoho universytetu 'Yurydychna akademiia Ukrainy imeni Yaroslava Mudroho'*, no. 2(33) (2017): 221.

duties.[93] According to Dmytro Ruban in Kyiv there was only one OSN with a delegated responsibility - to maintain a small park. All other 100+ OSNs in Kyiv have no delegated responsibilities[94].

Ambiguous scope of powers and undefined mechanism. While the law outlines many potential functions, it fails to provide clear mechanisms for their realization. This leads to OSNs being underutilized or exploited for political purposes.

No clearly defined duties or performance criterias. This additional challenge is not explicitly mentioned by the reviewed authors, but identified while researching OSNs. Unlike municipal structures, OSNs are not assigned any specific duties they have to perform or deliver, thus it makes it impossible to develop a KPI system or legally assess the efficiency of a certain OSN.

Despite the clear shortcomings in the legal framework, OSNs remain in a transitional phase and can still be shaped into effective neighborhood-level representative bodies. Since independence, they have undergone several waves of activation and stagnation.[95] Yet the ongoing decentralization reform and increasing demand for participatory governance offers a new window of opportunity for their success. As the system of local self-governance in Ukraine continues to evolve, OSNs may find their niche as the lowest, yet most intimate layer of democratic infrastructure, connecting people with both their immediate environment and the broader governance system.

7. Recommendations

Neighborhood planning in Ukraine requires both institutional support and appropriate tools. The following recommendations focus on OSNs and the adaptation of the CID to the neighborhood level.

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[93] Oleksii Kolesnikov, *Rozvytok instytutu OSN v umovakh polityky detsentralizatsii vlady v Ukraini: Analitychna zapyska* (Odesa: Asotsiatsiia spryiannia samoorhanizatsii naselennia, 2023), 4-5.

[94] Dmytro Ruban, Interview for this thesis, 2025

[95] Oleksii Kolesnikov, *Rozvytok instytutu OSN v umovakh polityky detsentralizatsii.*

7.1 Neighborhood Planning in the Context of War and Recovery

In wartime and post-war Ukraine, neighborhood-scale planning becomes increasingly relevant. While formal evidence is limited, international experience suggests that neighborhood-level planning and self-governance, when supported by clear frameworks, can help address challenges such as chaotic reconstruction, integration of IDPs, and democratic disengagement. It offers a way to connect residents with public institutions and foster everyday participation. In Japan, the *machizukuri* model has shown how localized planning strengthens community resilience and fosters their post-disaster recovery. For Ukraine, introducing neighborhood planning and strengthening the role of OSNs as neighborhood organisations could support social cohesion, localized decision-making, and lead to a more inclusive and adaptive recovery.

7.2 OSN as a Core Neighborhood Organisation

While changes to the legal framework that regulate OSNs at the national level remain essential, municipalities already have the capacity to support OSNs within the existing system. City councils can enable OSNs to function in a more structured way as neighborhood-level institutions by improving local regulations and providing accessible tools. This includes setting expectations for their work, facilitating coordination with other actors, and offering templates or procedures that clarify how OSNs can represent their communities effectively.

One of the most important tools in this context would be a localized planning framework that could help OSNs shift from reactive to proactive modes of action. Such a tool would allow them to identify shared priorities, set strategic goals, and engage residents in shaping the development of their neighborhoods. The following section presents recommendations for designing such a planning tool, based on the Concept of Integrated Development.

7.3 Adapting the Concept of Integrated Development (CID) for Neighborhoods

This section outlines how the Concept of Integrated Development (CID) can be adapted as a practical planning instrument at the neighborhood level.

7.3.1 Justification for CID Adaptation

Based on the analysis of international experience and the Ukrainian planning system, adapting the Concept of Integrated Development (CID) to the

neighborhood level could offer a pragmatic and system-compatible response to the current gap in neighborhood planning. This format is already recognized in Ukrainian legislation and familiar to planners and activists. This approach would avoid the need to invent a new planning instrument from scratch. Furthermore, CID`s integration of various spheres into a comprehensive vision and emphasis on participation makes it well-suited for addressing both administrative and community cohesion goals.

A neighborhood-level CID could provide a clear yet flexible framework for cooperation between local actors like residents, businesses, public institutions, local government and help them to define local priorities and aspirations. The neighborhood, as the smallest functional and emotional unit of urban life, requires visionary planning that connects lived experience with governance. Adapted CID and it`s development process could strongly position OSNs as mediators between all stakeholders of the neighbourhood and local government.

7.3.2 Proposed Structure of a Neighborhood-Level CID

Noteworthy, applying CID at the neighborhood level could be challenging. The municipal-level CID format is resource-intensive, technically complex, and cannot be developed solely through community efforts. It requires a lot of professional input, data analysis, and coordination across sectors. Therefore, the adapted format must be more modular, accessible, and clear about which sections demand expert involvement and which can be shaped through participatory processes led by OSNs. It is important to include the New European Bauhaus values of inclusion, beauty, and ecological sensitivity in the design of this planning document as it will align them with European priorities. Additionally, CID should enable community based projects and businesses by providing a direct link to the municipal or private grant programs.

The neighborhood CID should include:

- A chapter on identity and community, co-created with residents, outlining local history, values, and shared aspirations.

- A spatial framework, with maps showing public space networks, local mobility, walking routes, and centers of activity.

- A resource map identifying local assets like drinking water access, service infrastructure, underused public buildings.

- A housing section, addressing the condition of the housing stock, outlining modernization goals, potential sites for in-fill developments and zoning suggestions.

- A mobility chapter, focused on internal connectivity and links to the broader city.

- A local economic development chapter, outlining preferred business types and offering support mechanisms like grants for small, community-oriented enterprises.

- A sustainability section, proposing measures for greening, air purification, and temperature regulation.

- A local institutions section, combining an inventory of key facilities with recommendations for expanding their role as active community anchors.

- A beautification and design code section, providing flexible guidelines on visual identity, public signage, and the promotion of community-based art.

- An implementation roadmap, listing specific actions, projects, stakeholders, and responsibilities, with short and long-term goals.

CID should become more than a technical document, it should become a shared framework that will tell a story and set aspirations, while also providing a clear roadmap to them. If properly structured and supported, it can help residents realise their 'right to the city' by defining the future of their neighborhoods while aligning with the broader goals of inclusive and sustainable urban development.

8. Conclusion

This thesis examined the rationale and potential for introducing neighborhood-level planning and governance in Ukraine by adapting the Concept of Integrated Development (CID) and strengthening the institutional role of Bodies

of Self-Organization of the Population (OSNs). By reviewing international practices and local case studies, it demonstrated that neighborhoods represent a meaningful scale for spatial planning and civic engagement, particularly in the post-war context. Moreover, based on the case-study of Kyiv it shows the existing public demand for decentralization of the planning and governance systems in the city, while also presenting a pilot project that attempts to create neighborhoods.

Examined global models such as Japan's *machizukuri*, the UK's Neighborhood Plans, Chicago's Quality of Life Plans, and German`s *quartiersmanagement* show that neighborhood planning can foster inclusion, strengthen local identity, mobilize collective efforts and support housing and economic development. In Ukraine, while decentralization has empowered municipalities, cities still lack formal mechanisms to engage with residents at the neighborhood level. The very absence of the neighborhood concept in Ukraine makes this framework difficult for comprehension and institutionalization in Ukraine. However, OSNs, a unique institution that enables people to form territorial representative bodies on the lowest localised level, opens up a clear trajectory to introducing neighborhood governance in Ukraine. Despite their constitutional recognition, OSNs remain underutilized, often operating without clear mandates, budgets, or developed planning tools. Likewise, comprehensive planning instruments like CID are rarely applied below the municipal level, disabling residents to engage in shaping their immediate environments.

This study argues that two key steps could help bridging this gap. First, OSNs should be defined as core institutions for neighborhood governance. Even though these changes to become national-wide and sustainable would require national reform, local authorities already have the tools to start this process by clarifying OSN functions and offering frameworks for their institutional development and planning. Second, the CID should be adapted into a simplified, modular planning tool suitable for neighborhoods and its participatory development. Such a tool would enable communities to identify local priorities, develop shared visions, and coordinate action. This would help OSNs and communities shift from reactive problem-solving to proactive development.

Neighborhood planning is a democratic practice rooted in everyday life able to strengthen our democracy overall, rather than a technical exercise. By enabling communities to participate in shaping their streets, courtyards, parks, and

schools, Ukraine can foster stronger and more resilient cities that are better equipped to recover from war and resist uncertainty.

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10. Appendices

Oleksii Kovalenko - expert on OSNs and trainer of the capacity building program for OSNs, co-author of Kyiv city Charter on OSNs

Interview Focus**:** Neighborhood Self-Organization Bodies (OSNs) and their role in urban governance

1. Could you briefly describe your experience working with OSNs, particularly in Kyiv?
2. What are the key functions OSNs should ideally perform in urban environments?
3. How would you assess the real functioning of OSNs in Kyiv? Are there any that stand out as effective or promising?
4. What practical tools and mechanisms do OSNs currently use to influence decision-making in Kyiv?
5. What are the main challenges OSNs face in exercising their representative function?
6. How should OSNs interact with public authorities and decision-making bodies? What role should they play in local governance?
7. What role can OSNs play in spatial planning or influencing development in their neighborhoods?
8. Should OSNs implement projects themselves, or focus solely on advocacy and representation? Why?
9. How do you see the generational challenge in OSNs — are younger people involved? What could motivate their engagement?
10. What institutional or legislative changes are needed to make OSNs more effective and truly representative?
11. Could OSNs serve as entry-level platforms for public administration careers or civic leadership?
12. Are there active associations of OSNs in Kyiv? How do you evaluate their role and cooperation between OSNs?

10.2 Interview Questionnaire: Hanna Bondar

Hanna Bondar – architect, urban planner, Member of Parliament of Ukraine, co-author of urban planning legislation

Interview Focus: The role of OSNs in decentralized urban governance and spatial planning; legal frameworks and international references for neighborhood-level institutions

1. In many Western countries, neighborhood councils are recognized as the lowest level of governance. Why do you think this level of governance and planning has not developed in Ukraine?
2. Do you see any parallels between the Soviet concept of the "mikrorayon" and the modern idea of neighborhoods (neighborhoods as territorial communities)?
3. What role can OSNs play in defending community interests, particularly in the context of urban development and environmental protection?
4. What functions do you think OSNs can or should be allowed to perform according to current legislation?
5. In your opinion, is it possible or necessary to delegate more powers to OSNs, and if so, which ones?
6. Can international models, such as New York's Community Boards, serve as a good reference point for strengthening OSNs?
7. Why is decentralization of planning processes important for Ukrainian cities, especially in post-Soviet urban governance contexts?
8. What do you think about involving OSNs as a mandatory stakeholder in planning decisions, such as public space design or architectural competitions?
9. How do you assess the current legal framework around OSNs—should it be changed on the national level, or can cities like Kyiv adjust it through municipal regulation?
10. Do you think it is possible to give OSNs the ability to proactively shape the agenda for their neighborhood development (e.g., through non-formal planning instruments)?
11. Could a neighborhood-level "Community Plan" be a useful tool for OSNs? What should such a plan include in your view?

12. How should the boundaries of neighborhoods or OSNs be defined—based on administrative, morphological, or identity-related factors?
13. What is your opinion on the concept of mikrorayons today? Do they still play any functional or planning role in Ukrainian cities?
14. What would an ideal model of an OSN look like to you in terms of scale, functions, and integration into city governance?

10.3 Interview Questionnaire: Liling Huang

Liling Huang – Professor of urban planning from Taiwan, expert in community planning and Machizukuri, former member of OURS (Organization of Urban Reforms), key figure in institutionalizing bottom-up planning in Taiwan.

Interview Focus: Taiwan's experience with community planning; Machizukuri as a flexible planning model; tools and conditions for neighborhood-level participation in urban governance.

1. Could you describe your experience with community planning in Taiwan?
2. How did the concept of Machizukuri influence this process?
3. Why is neighborhood-level planning important for community resilience and trust?
4. How did the system become institutionalized, and what role did professionals play?
5. How does Taiwan's approach compare to neighborhood planning in the US or UK?
6. What planning tools do communities use in Taiwan?
7. Can communities influence municipal planning decisions?
8. How are neighborhood boundaries defined, and how flexible is this process?
9. What roles do local leaders and community associations play?
10. What conditions are needed to enable neighborhood planning in contexts like Ukraine?
11. What are the strengths and limits of informal, flexible planning systems?
12. How can planners support low-capacity communities in becoming active participants?

10.4 Interview Questionnaire: Yaroslav Zalevskyi

Yaroslav Zalevskyi – head of an OSBB (condominium association), local activist in the Syrets neighborhood (Kyiv)

Focus of interview: Explore grassroots neighborhood activism, the potential for OSBBs and informal groups to form neighborhood-level governance structures, and their interaction with existing OSNs (bodies of self-organization of the population). Discussed his experience mobilizing residents around an environmental issue and views on OSNs and neighborhood boundaries.

1. Could you briefly introduce yourself and your involvement in local activism or OSBB?
2. What motivates you to be active in your neighborhood?
3. When did you start organizing or engaging your neighbors, and what prompted it?
4. Have you tried to collaborate with neighboring buildings or organize actions beyond your OSBB?
5. Can you describe a specific spatial or environmental project you've led or participated in?
6. How did your group mobilize people to act?
7. What challenges have you faced while organizing at the neighborhood level?
8. How do you define your neighborhood? What territory do you consider your community?
9. Are you familiar with local OSN? Have you collaborated with them? What is your impression of their role?
10. If you were to create an OSN, what would its main functions or tasks be?
11. What problems do you think neighborhood-level self-organization can solve?
12. Do you think OSBBs or informal groups like yours can evolve into more structured neighborhood organizations?
13. What would you need from the city or law to support this kind of neighborhood-based activity?

10.5 Interview Questionnaire: Oleksii Orlovskyi

Oleksii Orlovskyi – Director of the "Democracy and Good Governance" Program at the International Renaissance Foundation, expert in civil society development, public law, and democratic institutions.

Interview Focus: The role and evolution of OSNs in Ukraine; their potential as neighborhood-level governance bodies; necessary legal reforms; models of representation; and possibilities for integrating OSNs into community planning frameworks.

1. How do you assess the current state and function of OSNs in Ukraine today?
2. What role do you believe OSNs can or should play at the neighborhood level?
3. Are there any positive examples of OSNs functioning as real platforms for community representation?
4. What are the main challenges that limit OSNs' effectiveness or legitimacy?
5. In your view, should OSNs represent all residents or only those officially registered?
6. How could OSNs be reformed to become more inclusive and participatory?
7. Could OSNs serve as territorial governance bodies at the neighborhood level?
8. How do you view their potential to influence spatial planning and local development decisions?
9. Would it be realistic to assign OSNs the responsibility for developing local visions or community plans?
10. What legal or institutional reforms are needed to strengthen OSNs as democratic actors?
11. Could OSNs become part of a more structured planning system involving municipalities?
12. How can we ensure OSNs don't become monopolized or overly formalized?
13. Do you think a bottom-up format of OSNs can coexist with Ukraine's top-down administrative system?

10.6 Interview Questionnaire: Anna Mykhailova

Anna Mykhailova – Head of the Neighborhood Committee (OSN) "Rada Mikroraionu Nyvky", Kyiv.

Interview Focus: Understanding the current functioning of OSNs at the neighborhood level through the case of Nyvky; exploring challenges, spatial

initiatives, citizen engagement, relations with authorities, and ideas for how integrated development planning tools could support their work.

1. Could you briefly introduce yourself and describe the scale and composition of your neighborhood and committee?
2. What do you see as the main purpose and role of an OSN in your community?
3. What legal powers or mandates does your OSN currently have? Have you ever received delegated powers from the municipality?
4. What are your committee's current and past projects? Which ones were successful?
5. What challenges do you face in terms of resources, bureaucracy, or implementation?
6. Do you engage in any spatial planning or visioning for your neighborhood (e.g. mapping, future projects)?
7. How do you interact with residents, and how actively do they participate in your initiatives?
8. What communication channels do you use with residents (e.g. Telegram, meetings, public reports)?
9. What is your relationship with local authorities – district, city administration, or deputies? What works and what doesn't?
10. Do you receive any support from city programs or NGOs for capacity building?
11. Are there examples of cooperation with local businesses or property management companies?
12. What spatial projects are important to your OSN right now (e.g., parks, parking, housing renovation)?
13. How do you feel about the city's and the national legal framework for OSNs?
14. Would you find a local-level Integrated Development Concept (CID) useful, and what would you want to include in such a planning document?

10.7 Interview Questionnaire: Katanya Raby

Katanya Raby – Urban planner based in Chicago, Associate Outreach Planner at the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), with experience in regional planning and community-led development initiatives. She previously worked at a Community

Interview Focus: Understanding Chicago's neighborhood governance, planning systems, and community planning tools; identifying flexible, grassroots planning mechanisms; and drawing lessons for implementing neighborhood-level planning in Ukraine.

1. Can you describe the neighborhood system in Chicago and how community areas and wards function?
2. What roles do community areas play in identity and governance, despite not being formal administrative units?
3. How do wards operate politically, and how do they interact with community areas?
4. What types of planning documents or systems exist at the community level in Chicago?
5. Could you explain the role of LISC and the "Quality of Life Plans"? Who initiates and implements them?
6. What are Community Development Corporations (CDCs), and how do they function in planning and neighborhood development?
7. How do CDCs differ from official city planning bodies, and what role do they play in community engagement?
8. Are there any formal or informal ways neighborhoods can influence municipal planning decisions?
9. How does regional planning function in Chicago, and what is the role of CMAP?
10. How are neighborhoods and communities defined in practice—officially and informally?
11. How is the comprehensive planning system structured in Illinois, and how does it compare to California's?
12. What challenges exist in maintaining planning continuity due to political cycles?
13. What elements do you think should be included in a neighborhood-level Integrated Development Concept (CID)?
14. Do you have advice for designing a planning process that is both participatory and policy-relevant?
15. How might Ukraine benefit from incorporating community identity and historical narratives into neighborhood planning?

10.8 Interview Questionnaire: Dmytro Ruban

Dmytro Ruban – First Deputy Director of the Department of Public Communications of the Kyiv City State Administration (KCSA); co-author of the pilot project "Management of Residential Microdistricts," based on experience from Berlin and Leipzig.

Interview Focus: Understanding Kyiv's pilot on microdistrict management; the rationale behind defining neighborhoods; potential powers and functions for OSNs at the neighborhood level; institutional constraints; and the city's vision for decentralization and deliberative democracy at the local scale.

1. Could you briefly introduce the project "Management of Residential Microdistricts" and your role in it?
2. How were microdistrict boundaries defined in the pilot (criteria, population size, data sources)?
3. What was the reason for choosing a population size of ~15,000 residents per microdistrict?
4. What are the main goals of the microdistrict management concept in Kyiv?
5. How does the Kyiv project differ from the German model it's inspired by (Berlin, Leipzig)?
6. Why do you think it is important to establish a planning and governance unit at the neighborhood (microdistrict) level?
7. Which functions could realistically be delegated to OSNs operating at the neighborhood level?
8. Could OSNs take on responsibilities like maintaining public spaces, managing funds, or coordinating local development projects?
9. Are there plans or possibilities for OSNs to generate income or manage budgets?
10. What internal city-level barriers exist for scaling the microdistrict management model citywide?
11. What risks or resistance could undermine this initiative?
12. How can deliberative democracy be embedded at the neighborhood scale? What role can OSNs play in this?
13. What is your position on performance-based funding for OSNs, linked to community projects rather than fixed salaries?