CITY DESIGN AS FACTOR OF PERSONALITY
AND SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract. The article is focused on the analysis of existence of an individual in the urban environment. A human being is referred to as an individual engaged in creative activity of developing and updating the urban environment. It is pointed out that the local designer environment is of complicated nature being under the influence technogenic, social and environmental factors. The author of the article argues that the positive assimilation of an individual is the result of synthesis of an ideal concept of city and the individual. The analysis reveals the complicated nature of the urban body, its cultural character which determines the self-reflection of a human being in the semantics of urban architecture.

Key words: human existence, urban design, design environment, a human being, interrelation of a human being and a society, adjustment, individuality of a human being.

Social philosophy represents the city as a certain cultural reflection, the context where a person realizes himself in some space-design forms, the semantics of streets, squares, churches and soon. The city, as any social organism, needs to be legitimized in the sphere of city culture design before it occurs in real social background. The city is an active formative factor in the society and represents the idea of design. Social historical development of the society, as well as the specific national culture and mentality transform the city. Design is an active cultural force that transforms human existence, promotes inveteracy of a human in the design existence, and triggers enculturation of social and geographical space (Norenkov, 2005). Nowadays, both the organization of the environment and its research should be considered in the triad “human-design-city”. The most vivid manifestation of this phenomenon we can see in new town planning principles in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. At that time “the Cities”, later known as “skyscrapers”, appeared in almost every big city. Each element of the above mentioned triad is of specific nature and evolves according to its own law. Despite the significant differences and certain autonomy, the elements are closely related.

Urban environment is the living in crucially new spatial conditions. It has two basic features, on the one hand, a high population density, and on the other hand, spatial dispersal of people in their specific spheres of activity. Obviously, the process of urbanization has a detrimental effect on people’s relationship. Thus, the increase in the number and intensity of human contacts, traditional human relations undermining, anonymity and impersonal nature of communication, the loss of traditional neighborly relations, transparency, growing publicity of human activity and changes in human attitude to the environment that is hostile to humans due to the problem of homelessness (M. Heydmets). Humans encounter the environment and experience various feelings: a) the stress level (buzz, pollution, overcrowding, impulses oversaturation); b) social features of environment (the role of physical environment in social interaction development or suppression); c) orientation and mobility (the way citizens use the city according to their "images" and representations of the habitat); d) environment saturation (aesthetic level of impulses, which mediate needs satisfaction and create a sense of content); e) culture and leisure (the way city address the issues in the intellectual, cultural, sporting and educational fields); f) decision making options (the way citizens perceive some decisions about habitat development and extent of their participation in such process). We claim that urban environment is a complex subject-object unity including the whole set of spatial-functional and behavioral interactions. The spatial organization of the environment integrates a limited range of elements formed during the long historical evolution such as squares, streets, and alleys. Parameters of these elements create both urban environment and the rhythm of urban design such as geometric complexity, relations, order and chaos, decorative items, as well as symbolic meanings of the city. Designing symbols are similar for perception as well as other symbols,
such as forming. These symbols comprise both a symbolic meaning and function generating other meanings related to the object both culturally and historically.

The image of the environment notably combines the reasons of designing "function" and its consequences (the complex of material, physical and aesthetic conditions of functional task implementation). Thus, one cannot think about the environment beyond the simultaneous perception of "shell" and its "content", "subjects" and "objects" of their performed activities. This is the essence of the design attitude to the environment. This attitude consists of architectural and design (subject and spatial) sources of environmental condition and the very condition (the atmosphere of the environment). These two conditions are inseparable and are the subject of design. The basis of the environmental design works development involves the "mediums" of emotional beginning. They are organized in a certain way and focused on industrial and household processes and their relevant microclimatic conditions, and also (and this is most important) the participants of this process as subjects of different activities, "consumers" of environmental sensations. The second component is the architectural and spatial framework emerged in built squares, configurations of buildings and open urban spaces. The city image designed in urban environment exists not only in minds of its followers, but also in the "Stone Chronicles", in design and architectural framework of the city, which reached us through the centuries and shows us archetypal ways of human life. One imagines the social background of the city as a text and the scientists come across the problem whether to "decrypt" or "decode" aesthetic, moral, and cultural preferences of urban residents, mental characteristics of the city, and echo of outlook content (Voronkova, 2012). This approach creates the image of the city and urban environment design defining the auto model of culture, the tool of its self-knowledge and self-reflection. Social conditions, specific historical destiny, city role in the life of the country and people, the level of culture, art, science and technology affecting the humans determine the city image and "style". Another determinant factor of the city image is the functional characteristic and the contour of city professionalization (PROON, 2011). Thus, the city may be industrial, a city of science, recreation, port and so on. Moreover, the city development depends on economic opportunities of the country, its place in the system of agglomeration and transport systems substantially. Climatic, geographical, meteorological and other natural factors determine the city image too and influence the human as the creator of design culture. Studies of urban environment focus on themes of soul and the city image. Philosophical analysis of the city tries to penetrate into the "soul" of the city, outline its contours, comprehend its routine, and understand culturally creative meanings and values, which form the destiny of the person and the city. This feature of approach differentiates it from other sciences, including urbanism, which explores some aspects of the urban organism, as well as the history of architecture or city planning. Spengler is one of the most prominent explorers of the city soul in the twentieth century, the one, who initiated the history of such works. He dedicated the second volume of his work "The Decline of The West" to the city soul, following his methodology of city soul searching. Spengler claimed that he had penetrated into the soul of the city and discovered Chinese, Indian, Apollonian and Faustian city images, referring them to culture. For him, the term "soul" meant "the very substantive beginning or irrational range of possibilities to be implemented". Thus, the soul of the city is a historically formed holistic unity of city life aspects, independent of its perceptions, unchanged in its essence, not limited to the sum of its constituents, resulting in a unique style of the city culture and is a part of the national culture. "The city soul" and "the city image" are broad concepts. Both, integrity and fragments are important for the city image. The soul of the city cedes on relative links between urban culture elements. The soul is not completely reflected in the city. The image does not reflect a subconscious part of the city soul, an unperceived component for minds and feelings of people.

When design first began to mature at the beginning of the XX century as an academic discipline, it became a dynamic area of study in its own right, its subject and methodology being invigorated by the relevant issues taken up by its scholars from the industrial sphere. The interdisciplinary give-and-take resulted in new research directions, introducing design at the urban level. The development of design was characterized by a movement to give focus to its spatial parameters, thus providing more opportunities for personal creative activity and self-development in the urban environment. Billboards, outlets, and stylish telephone boxes as well as vending machines, facades decorated with supergraphics, icons mounted on the buildings, street furniture and facilities, the latter including audio and video information bars, special complex programmes, to mention just a few of examples of design forms illustrating the contribution to the city environment by an individual and a city design, taken as a whole. The spatial urban environment, the so-
called town planning takedown, also got saturated with various design forms and samples of monumental and decorative art, such as street signs, street advertising, display advertising, supergraphics of façade and road surface, sculpturing, decorative panels, etc. The above-mentioned objects are the integral components of modern spatial urban environment, that constitute its comfort and design image of the whole city, the latter being updated in the qualitative aspect as a synthesis of design, industrial art and urban development. The process of such updating can be viewed at different levels of spatial architectural development of the city. The hierarchical structure of spatial urban environment is introduced by decorative art, ensembles, and the layout of the city according to its urbanization plan.

The state, the city and the region constitute the urban social context introduced in its turn via conceptual framework to which an individual can get adjusted or not. If they fail to adjust, they will have to abandon the city boundaries. Such conceptual framework is to reinforce the connection between the city and its citizens and justify the existence of an individual. An individual should correspond to the conceptual framework which illustrates a metaphysical impossibility. The design essence of the city is objectified through the concept of the ideal city, urban legends and myths, metaphors etc that express the shadows of meaning of the concept of city, the latter being either assimilated or rejected.

According to Gegel, one can formulate a syllogism establishing the interrelation of a city and an individual, and a spirit which is equal to itself and masters itself. The spirit of the city alienates itself into the body of the city and moving backwards masters itself in the conscience of an average citizen. The creative activity of an individual are traditionally viewed as new in an objective or a subjective way. With reference to the city, establishing of correspondence between a citizen and the city is viewed as new in a subjective way, while specific mental context, which defines each city and is formed through designing of pieces of art that constitute the environment of a citizen, is viewed as new in an objective way.

Positive or negative perception characterizes the process of saturation of individual experience with urban concepts and values, when an individual gets absorbed with axiological and ontological mapping of the city. The whole process leads to the formation of positive, negative or neutral correspondence which itself splits into situational and positive types and has a dynamic nature that is an evidence of harmony between an individual and the all-life-long changing environment (Donnikova, 2011). The harmony between an individual and the city is established by means of either assimilation or rejection of the city environment by an individual. The process of assimilation is emotionally coloured. It gets an individual into the axiological designer field, when an individual resonates the rhythm of the whole city and is considered to be an intentional, existential and transcendental element of that whole. Both assimilation and rejection of the city environment by an individual are mutually dependant.

Thus urban design environment is a complex concept formulated as a result of natural, technological and social environment. The individual spirit of the city acquires vitalizing spirit and masters itself through the specific conceptual framework in the conscience of its citizens. The objective parameters are mastered through the specific conceptual framework in the conscience of the local community, and can be viewed at the level of urban design forms. The city is the environment for individuals to creatively express themselves through symbolic design forms and urban culture and further to the historic memory of the local community. The creative activity enables an individual to both get to the core of the urban spirit and inner world of a human being. Creative designer acts are of a transcendental nature that is they lead an individual out of the boundaries of their existence and further to the acquiring of complicated experience. The tension between the sense of existence and existence itself results in the appearance of the transcendental field and is the source of creativity as well. During the process of adjustment an individual intensifies the creative activity by putting into practice the potential accumulated both socially and genetically, at the same time organizing its life in the urban environment up to one’s taste.

References