Modern City: from Identification to Individualization

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Abstract: The article examines the problem of theoretical understanding of prospects of modern city development. Based on key texts by the twentieth century urbanists, the authors analyze two basic models of describing city emergence and development. The first model describes a generic city, which is a fractal phenomenon. The second model concerns a historical city – a city that has a clearly defined historical center. The first model tends to expand the territory and neutralize the identity of the location, the second works conversely. This text considers the logic of modern city development. Those models used as a description tool provide general ideas about the specific processes taking place in modern urban spaces. In the article, modern city development is not assessed as positive or negative. The results of the analysis presented in the article are interesting not only in terms of prospects of city development, but also in terms of people inhabiting them.

1 INTRODUCTION

Formation and development of a city directly depends on its inclusion in spatial and temporal logic. Very often the very definition of "city" is revealed in the context of spatial limitation from locations called "village", in the light of which the city is characterized by a radical acceleration of all processes involved. The spatio-temporal characteristics of the city's "body" determine the special architectonics of not only streets, squares and parks, but also of the management of the entire infrastructure and the citizens themselves (Babaeva, 2023). All these make the basis of the city identity as a form of organization of human life.

From the moment of its formation, a particular city becomes woven into a complex coded structure, permeated with history, culture and a variety of ideas with respect to its purpose. Cities are always loaded with narrative, which can manifest itself through myths, traditions and personal stories of its founders and inhabitants. Due to this narrative nature, just at the first mention of a big city, you can find several ideas about it. Such an attitude towards the city forms what the Ethnology Professor Rolf Lindner called "the imaginary" of the city (Berking, 2018). This indicates that cities are not a simple mixture of social patterns, but for the most part have internal resources for independent generation of components and their interaction, which then form urban worlds (Meblin, 1999). Based on this, urban space, in all its diversity and differentiation, acts as the engine for inventing the identity of the many objects and subjects included in it. This situation paved the way for urban anthropology, enabling it to thoroughly identify what can be designated as urban "settings," while formally taking the city itself beyond the scope of description [Sennett, 1999).

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

Thus, a specific city appears not only from a spatio-temporal perspective, but also as a unique code. This means, following the logic proposed by Foucault (Fuko, 2005), that one should individualize something radically different that cannot be identified. It should be borne in mind that identification and individualization are two opposing

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practices. In identification we use a universal model in which we relate one object to another. This does not mean that the procedure will not help to get to the inner essence of the "city" concept. Identification will allow revealing, among the entire diversity of cities, two basic models of their existence: a generic city (in the construction principle similar to a fractal city) and a historical city. Regarding individualization it should be noted that it does not imply the correlation of two objects to confirm identity, but rather, on the contrary, it is a strategy of searching for differences that are revealed mainly in the existing models. The purpose of this article is a theoretical reconstruction and description of the key models of modern city development. The authors do not claim to provide an exhaustive description of the issue, but the main conclusions allow us to outline the most important differences between the stated models.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Most of the current problems of both large and small cities are based on misunderstanding of the very essence of the city. Why does it exist? Who should inhabit it? What development opportunities does the city have? Solving each of these issues brings more and more problems. An example is the stage of Soviet urbanism. Almost a third of modern Russian cities arose in Soviet times, when rapid industrial development urged the need to build more and more factories and industries, which in turn justified the emergence of cities around these industries. Thus we had a large number of machine-cities, whose industrial heart provided life for the community. However, this monofunctionality ultimately led to its decline. As soon as industries suffered hard times requiring them to close down or reduce the work capacity, life in the city (in post-perestroika times) immediately stopped, since there was nowhere to redirect the potential of the urban population. As a result, there came an outflow of people from the locations and gradual death of the urban space (Kurennoj, 2017).

Most European cities developed in accordance with the same logic. Exceptional attachment to historicity hampered their development. The indigenous population of such cities, in search of satisfaction of their needs, is ousted to the periphery, and the center is filled with tourists. On the assumption that the origin of individualization is usually associated with physical substance, with history, with context, with something real, it is problematic to admit that something modern – made by us – can also participate in its formation (Koolhaas, 2015).

However, the exponential increase in population leads to the idea that at some point the past will become too small and not capacious. In fact, people themselves, townspeople, become protagonists of this exhaustion. In this case, for example, if architecture is considered to be a container and priority carrier of history, then it becomes obvious that modern citizens and their needs will be forced to explode and devastate the previous substance.

History has a property which is clearly seen in the example of historical cities and that is the ability to disintegrate: the more it is exploited, the less significant it becomes. This process is accelerated by the increasing number of tourists who neutralize any identity. The theorist of architecture and urbanism Rem Koolhaas writes that "identity is like a mousetrap in which more and more mice must share the original bait and which, if you look closely, may well turn out to be empty for many centuries (Koolhaas, 2015). In this case, one can see that the more intense individualization of a city becomes, the weaker it correlates with its identity.

This statement refers us to the arguments mentioned above that the stronger the identity is, the heavier and more concentrated the resistance to expansion, renewal or interpretation is. In this sense, developing Koolhaas's idea, identity, especially affecting the city, is like a lighthouse – rigidly fixed in space and overdetermined: the lighthouse is not able to change its location or the properties of transmitted signals without radically disrupting the entire navigation format. In other words, Paris or Rome can only become more "Parisian" or "Roman" by turning into Hyper-Paris and Hyper-Rome, into a "polished caricature" of themselves (Dunn , 2012).

Identity centralizes, it insists on the essence and on the point. As the rays of the solar pattern city spread, its sphere of influence also grows, and, therefore, this sphere needs to be marked and signified. This leads to the fact that the distance between the center and the periphery begins to grow to such an extent that over time it breaks off. The periphery of large historical (identity-bound) cities may fail to be connected to the "core" itself. Residents of the outskirts of St. Petersburg, Paris or Rome may have absolutely no connection with those who live in the center. Moreover, to them the center can mean something completely different: for example, the phrase "*go to the center*" can only mean the center of a specific periphery area, while the phrase "*go to the city*" can already imply a trip to the historical center.

The constant interest of the center in the periphery is due to its own emptiness. The periphery suffers due to the fact that the center is still alive and draws the audience's attention away from it.

There are cities that have completely abandoned any connection with the center, but there are also those that are still tied to the center, for example, Amsterdam or Moscow are hyper-centralized cities. Being the most important place the centre requires constant renovation, maintenance and modernization. In this case, paradoxically the center must be both historical (i.e. ancient) and maximally functional (i.e. new), static and dynamic (Koolhaas, 2016). All this turns into a permanent and consistent renovation, which must remain invisible to the naked eye. This gives rise to the unstoppable processes of "deepening", that is construction of underground roads and tunnels, "increasing", implying scattered construction of skyscrapers, reconstruction of old houses into offices, industrial buildings into loft spaces, old shops into fashion boutiques, etc. Moreover, all this leads to a complete loss of authenticity (Koolhaas, 2016).

In other words, the city is spread and polished, remaining only a mirror copy of its past, built into the necessary future. Such practices are dictated not only by a painful attachment to one's identity, but also by the desire to compete with other city types that are just finding its niche – a fractal city or a generic city.

What happens when you abandon the attractive centre and move beyond the cycle of addiction? There will be nothing left but a reflection of current needs and opportunities – this is a city without history. This becomes a generic city or a fractal city. This city can sometimes literally be represented by a grid and has no geographical restrictions. If this city becomes insufficiently spacious, it expands, either horizontally in the form of numerous districts, or vertically in the form of brand new skyscrapers and gigantism; if it becomes no longer relevant, it is updated. This update is completely free. Similar ideas are reflected in urban concepts of the designer-city that, like a film studio, is able to reconstruct a new identity by every Monday morning.

An abundance of fractal cities can be found in Asia, although this model originated from America. Tokyo, Shanghai, Singapore, Taipei, etc. are all the model samples.

However, a historical or hyper-centralized city, for example, Barcelona or Moscow described above, can also become a generic one. Sometimes they go so far in their simplification that they turn into a generic city (Koolhaas, 2016).

In fact, the fractal city is a pure substance left after significant sectors of urban life have become digital and entered cyberspace. A generic city is a place of weak connections, rare and extended sensations and emotions. People are in a hurry to earn money, accumulate emotions, their life is subject to nomadic logic. In a fractal city where high speeds prevail, fashion, innovations, etc. change quickly, one needs to move quickly in order to be in the flow, otherwise you will find yourself on the periphery.

The fractal city is motionless because it does not need to fight for space. The sensations inside the city can be either reconstructed and intensified in the mind, or ignored, choice being the key characteristic of such a city).

When Jane Jacobs beat the alarm, describing in her work "The Death and Life of Great American Cities" the gradual fading of the bubbling life of the city, she saw the problem in the fact that the streets became only a container for the most necessary things, while losing their bustle (Jacobs, 2015). However, this did not mean the death of the city, but solely its transition to a generic state. All the main characteristics of the fractal city are scattered over a large distance, in different directions, and this leads to the necessity to clear the streets of all traffic, except automobile or rail traffic. This movement is immeasurable, since it can take minutes, or maybe hours, to cover the same distance. In a generic city, speed is one of the most important characteristics, so the clarity of architectonics is maintained very consistently. Once the city becomes the center of industrial life and at the same time the place of existence of a huge number of people, streets and avenues are built clearly and linearly without additional decorative elements in accordance with the need to increase the throughput of the human flow.

One of the main differences between generic and other types of cities is anomie, i.e. devaluation of traditional social norms, as well as extreme liberalization of relations. But the collapse of norms and attitudes is not destructive, but, on the contrary, simplifies the perception of the city (Smith, 2001) and the logic of relationships between citizens.

The fractal city throws its possibly overloaded and rich identity into airports and railway stations. Loaded with this conceptual mission, airports and stations should become emblems of the city, and it is often with these symbols that the city life is identified.

The fractal city destroys everything that does not work, that is no longer useful. High-rise buildings and skyscrapers consume everything else, and may become the last building typology, they can exist anywhere, from a field to a historical center. The

generic city appears either where there is nothing, or replaces an ex-city. He is unable to exist otherwise, because then he would become historical. This, apparently, is the essence of the city: the integration of human material to maximize efficient production, as well as transmission of financial flows and innovations.

The generic city is actually the apotheosis of multiple choice, since it reflects all possible ideas and intentions. It is not planned in offices, as it carries a certain element of chance, where traditions, futuristic concepts and stereotypes are mixed together. This explains the fact that in generics there are sometimes completely different compositions of skyscrapers and traditional market quarters. Genericism marks the death of planning: neighborhoods arise deliberately or accidentally, populations grow or decline, roads lead anywhere and nowhere at the same time. In this absolute multiple choice it is impossible to distinguish between causes and effects, they coexist. This city evolves with a clear domineering structure that gives the impetus for the city to appear on the map, and then vanishes, as if the city itself is getting rid of any power.

The generic city once had its own history, but chose to get rid of it due to the fact that it seemed to have lost its meaning, to be old and unsanitary. But lack of history does not hamper making benefit from it. Instead of specific memories, the generic recreates a generalized memory of history, a kind of conditioned memory. Cities are beginning to form quasi-historical places to invite tourists to (Shuman, 1998).

A city is a plane most efficiently filled with people and processes, and the presence of history in most cases only reduces this efficiency. The generic derives its quasi-identity from its location, and it is necessary only in order to correspond to the place that upgrades all its needs.

Compared to historical cities, a fractal city does not have a heyday (Koolhaas, 2016), a golden age, or decline, because as soon as it ceases to play its function, it gets abandoned. The very idea of gradual layering and movement towards a finished form is alien to him, since he has no layers. It is rather an abstract substance that appears in a convenient place to satisfy the needs of residents in order to simplify their interaction while satisfying the maximum number of needs.

4 CONCLUSIONS

To sum up everything presented above, it is sure to be obvious that the generic city model is gradually gaining pace. This does not at all mean exclusively negative consequences; on the contrary, it will rather lead to the city being digitized. It becomes soft, changeable and adaptive. It is exactly the way city inhabitants themselves would like to see it. The generic city opens the way for us to a new understanding of modern cities – cities that arise as needed and also quickly disappear, making way for the new ones. The fractal city is a post-city that takes the principle of emergence (i.e. one of the few characteristics that unites cities as such) to superior limits.

With all this, one needs to understand that a generic city and a historical solar pattern city are not exhaustive concepts that should form the basis of a modern classification of cities. As it was said, these are only models that nevertheless clearly reflect the spatio-temporal logic of the city development. The generic city has overcome the gap in the single temporal axis. Time there has the same fractal character as everything else. Multiple lines flow from one part of the city to another – economic time may not correlate with political time, and political time with social time either). The solar pattern city is still dependent on the postulation of succession of time. This can be seen in the example of maintaining the integrity of the historical core, which leads to the rigid centrality of the city.

The same applies to space. The generic city, as already mentioned, has no limits to its space, since it does not have a formalized structure that would dictate this limit. Instead, it represents space itself in all its self-sufficiency. The centered city also radicalized the very idea of space through the idea of a special place, i.e. the center itself.

Neither the first model nor the second represents unambiguously positive or negative aspects of urban development, but they allow understanding how most modern cities, not only large metropolitan areas, but also many smaller cities, exist in the context of their relationship to space and time. However, the greater prevalence of the fractal model suggests that the concept of a modern city is based on the ideas of a decentralized and limitless space, where there is no characteristically defined identity (instead there are many individualizations) and a clear time axis that would guide the city. However, in addition to spatiotemporal logic, it is also necessary to point out the internal forces that fuel the development of modern cities.

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