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## Territory of the sustainable development and mythology of space as factor of the sustainable development

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Alexandra Shcherbina

## **Territory of the sustainable development and mythology of space as factor of the sustainable development**

### **Fourth pillar for the sustainable development of the territory**

It is impossible to give careful consideration to a problem of development of the city Togliatti (Russia, the Samara region) without referring to a surrounding territorial, economic, historical context, natural and human resources. Research of nearby urban areas and consideration of the Samara region as a whole as polycentric conurbation will help to create the transcity's communication expressed in especially material categories: transport connection, commercial relations, regional events. For addition to that all these elements of communication should work efficiently. What needs to be developed is also: inhabitants' understanding of an urban environment as friendly, positive and open space. All of those components result in increase of attractiveness (meaning: economic, cultural, social, communication attractiveness and comfortableness) of the cities and the whole territory in the opinion of its inhabitants and guests. Sustainable urban development is based on a territorial context with active inclusion of research programs.

For receiving listed above estimated results, the united principles of formation of research approaches of the territory and its context have to be developed. They have to be applicable to certain subjects of the territory: to the cities and settlements. Researches on the developed principles will help to understand specificities of studied elements more deeply. Then it will be possible to define the priority directions of development and specialization of each element more precisely. The territory of the Samara region can be divided into zones which will specialize in certain tasks. This decision won't divide the region into separate

isolated entities, and will provoke development of transport communication between separate zones. With the remark that it will mean development of ecological public transport: trains, bicycles.

## **“Samara Luka” as meaning- and the form-building centre**

In this article the Samara region is considered as object of research with its cultural and historical resources and special emphasis is placed on the toponym “Samara Luka” as it in many respects is meaning- and the form-building centre of the territory. It is the most valuable and vulnerable zone of the region and the most attractive to recreation and tourism (sports and cultural). Historically developed mythology of the territory in a context of a sustainable development of the territory is the aim of this research. The problem of this article is formulated within insufficiency of definition “sustainable development” as the phenomenon with a strong distortion on economic, communicative, social making fortune and development of these directions, seeking to satisfy needs of an individual. As an additional condition to this definition many scientists talk about environment preservation, and that these requirements can be satisfied not only for the present, but also for future generations. Thus decision-making on development are formed in a logical way, proceeding from relationships of cause and effect.

The term “sustainable development” was formulated 1987 by the Brundtland Report<sup>1</sup> (is a part of the United Nations), but for the first time the inclusion of a cultural component as one of basic elements of a sustainable development occurred only in 2001 (to already existing elements: economic stability, ecological stability, political stability). UNESCO supplements the concept, declaring that “...cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature”; it becomes “one of the roots of development understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.” In this vision cultural diversity—the fourth area of policy of a sustainable development. Working with different variables, some researchers specified that the fourth measurement is the important and equal participant of already existing triad as appealing by three for the description of the difficult processes, occurring in society isn’t enough for effective management of development of territories. Working with various factors, some researchers have indicated that the fourth dimension is the important and equal participant of already existing triad. The appealing by three for the description of the difficult processes, occurring in society isn’t enough for effective management of development of territories. In this context, “Agenda-21 for culture” and the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) led a preparation of a policy statement “Culture: The fourth basis for a sustainable development” passed on November 17, 2010, in framework of summit of local and regional leaders—the 3rd World Congress of UCLG in Mexico City. This document opens new prospect and points to the relation between culture and a sustainable development by means of double approach: development of cultural policy

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, “Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development”, General Assembly Resolution 42/187, 11 December 1987. Retrieved: 2007-04-12.

and protection of culture in all state spheres<sup>2</sup>. Now in Europe the Network “Sustainable Development in the Diverse World” unites multidisciplinary opportunities and interprets cultural diversity as a basic element of new strategy of a sustainable development. Thus, it is visible that implementation of a cultural component in major factors of a sustainable development already happens and brings known results.

## **The myth-space in a context of a sustainable development. Origin and implementation**

The highlighting of cultural factor as one of the basis for sustainable development, and applying historically put installation in relation to the territory Samara Luka as to object of the most saturated and rich in the natural and cultural plan, we will consider a condition of the territory for today and we will build the scheme, the project its future. One of modern technologies of creation of comfortable temperature for development of the territory is an updating of the historical and mythological context transforming modern space of place (city) to multidimensional and multilayered object.

At the heart of the chosen approach of research lies not the simple collecting of a material on territory mythology. Only search, the analysis, comparison of concrete data, the facts, knowledge, forming of logical schemes and hierarchies of meanings which show the mythological world on concrete and simple structural elements, will help to find reasonable interpretation, and the most important, the reasons, at first sight to improbable fairy tales and territory myths. This approach is conditioned by rational mind of the modern man who isn't trusting in dark and hazy legends, but has interest in myth-creative thinking. In the near future it will be possible to accept this tendency as one of the main driving forces on updating cultural environment of the territory by its inhabitants. When they are motivated they will take part in cultural enrichment of the residence.

The scientific approach the known French scientist-researcher Claude Lévi-Strauss (structural anthropology) and a post-modernist paradigm in which context Jean Baudrillard had developed his theoretical thought, give a possibility to start “disentangling” of difficult mythological tradition of certain territory. Recognition of existence of similarity of the symbolical world and the world of values in different cultures and in different territories gives the statement that originality is defined by that unique, special approach to their realization in the certain territory. That is an interpretation of a certain concept, its existence, the relation to it of people and rituals and so on (archetypes ‘house’, ‘mountain’, ‘woman’, ‘man’, ‘family’—on examples of different cultures it is possible to see all differences in treatment of these concepts). From here the statement becomes clear that none of known civilizations can apply for universality and completeness of an embodiment of any values.

The following approach is the statement that any phenomena of culture (here already about the phenomena of culture of the territory of Samara Luka) can be considered a synchronous slice with other phenomena of culture of other territories, varying the scale of scientific

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<sup>2</sup> United Cities and Local Governments, “Culture: Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development”.

research: from internal communications, near external communications to transcommunications: cross-cultural and intertemporal. It is possible to draw a conclusion what exactly this scientific method becomes a clue to so high level “a myth’s concentration” of territory and its viability up to our days.

Let us consider in more detail two key statements, declared above:

- High level “a myth’s concentration” of territory consists of historically developed factors: Samara Luka began to become populated area since the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, and has been on crossing of trade routes of the West and the East, regularly was updated and became a habitat of different tribes, the states and religions. Thus there was a mixture and enrichment of cultural and mythological space in a certain geographical place. Besides there was preserved identity of this alloy of cultures owing to the fact of existence a natural boundary of the territory—a bend of the Volga River. Example of the “travelling” myth and transformation of a historic fact in the myth is Herodotus’s history about amazons. The fact of their documentary existence was confirmed in the territory Samara Luka in 20’s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (burial place of women-soldiers). Therefore search of sources of these or those mythological traditions cannot be limited to only a territorial and cultural framework.
- “Viability” turns out to be the result of the first statement above and is based on historically developed cultural heritage which continues to live and develop within a modern myth-creative. The historical mythology (heritage) can organically live in space of the modern city on condition of its updating, the correct dispensing and a location.

The rich mythological tradition Samara Luka is connected with a set of the accepted allogenic traditions easily were accepted and assimilated with local tradition. But there was a loss of information on their origin that led to the birth of new myths. Around the main objects of research specific situation emerged which can schematically described: a complicated system of myths from ancient times to the present, forming a united symbolical image of the territory, and the reason of emergence of some of those myths are not so obvious. Situations and the events described by them are so fantastic that their historical reliability is called in question. But fact of existence of myths says that they could not arise from “empty” place.

This statement is based on the scientific statement that mythology—always the mystified history without the special intention counted on it. Process of a mythologization of historical events happens a natural way by transfer of data from generation to generation, or from one cultural tradition another, or at assimilation of different cultural traditions and the birth of hybrid type. Primary data are submitted to inevitable and involuntary distortion, transformation, synthesis and enrichment.

The result of these processes—retelling of the facts (historical events, the natural occurrences and phenomena) turns into attempt of their reconstruction or interpretation, that is mythological trying to find the sense. Therefore it is possible to claim that they can be analyzed, decoded and reconstructed of their primary history. In mythological plots and images real events are coded, public standards of behaviour, ideas of the universe and its laws, memory about natural cataclysms of Earth, and great resettlements of the people. In confirmation of the thoughts here is the quote by a Russian scientist G.V. Vernadsky:

Footprint of an ancient historical basis can be easily found under a mythological cover.

## **World of signs and world of the facts. Principles of coexistence**

It is necessary to investigate the territory Samara Luka to find symbolical links, to restore historical and cultural parallels between the territory, people and the symbolical field which exists on a border of these two layers (“the world of the facts” in the semiotics concept of E. Cassirer, J.M. Lotman where the culture is considered as a sign and symbolical system) and to elicit those original facts which promoted formation of mythological space of the territory. Human mind creates diverse systems of vision and an explanation of the world: from a microcosm to macrocosm, their laws are difficult, the order of all elements depends on experience of the founder and then the interpreter. Artificially symbolical space—“the world of signs”, is infinitely unrolled in time, develops as the initiated, multilayered and creative process operated by a human being. There is a created sacral model of the world able to hold the system in static way and already to subordinate the man. The transfer of this idea on a example will clear some moments: two objects of research are chosen—the person and the territory (Samara Luka). Between them there is a “layer”—the world of signs, as a result of mutual influence and enrichment of two main objects.

When analysed closely each of the main objects includes some elements for research. The territory is the difficult compound system with elements: landscape, climate, flora and fauna<sup>3</sup>. The object of “man” includes such aspects of studying as a nationality, mentality, type of managing of society etc.

The complexity of research of this issue consists that these tribes, cultures were in large number. The time of their stay varies from tens to thousands years. It is necessary to consider the second, the third and even the fourth levels of influence of different terms on the mythological and cultural world of the territory. There is a question: who is influenced by whom?—the people coming to the new territory, and interpreting new geographical conditions are based on cultural, historical experience; or the territory possessing invisible potential (such “spirit of a place”) which defines already in advance mythological world of new people. The myth-creative does two major functions of sense of human activity: investment of all elements of world around with meanings and values; increase in variety of the human world expressed in material and non-material forms by means of the thought processes directed on the adaptation to changing terms.

Today the principle of giving a unique qualities for territory is actual for urban environment when modern scientists of different areas of knowledge have revealed a problem of negative perception of space for inhabitants. According to objective circumstances, depending on a place, time, an environment, “the world picture” undergoes changes and is transformed presently. The updating of experience it is possible to describe by means of the definition

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<sup>3</sup> A. Shcherbina, *The Museum in the City*, All-Russian Scientific Conference “From Alexandria to St. Petersburg: city-museums in the cultural history”, Russia, St. Petersburg, 2010.

“design-archeology”<sup>4</sup>. This principle can be used for creation of modern picturesque space of each cities of the Samara region to reveal their common cultural and territorial characteristics and at the same time show feature of each of them with help of new objects an urban environment—architectural objects, city furniture, events and so on.

The amplification of the cultural basis in aspects of a sustainable development will give a powerful impact to territory development in other directions: economic, ecological and social. Deep and attentive analysis of historical potential of Samara Luka can become commercially favorable project of development of ecologically focused sports and cultural tourism.

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<sup>4</sup> A. Shcherbina, “Design-Archeology as a Tool for the Presentation of Cultural Heritage”, 11<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference “EVA 2008 Moscow”, 2008. Referring Web Pages Web: [http://conf.cpic.ru/eva2008/rus/reports/report\\_1387.html](http://conf.cpic.ru/eva2008/rus/reports/report_1387.html); E. Shlienikova, A. Shcherbina, S. Malachov, E. Repina. “Park—reserve—museum. Samarskaya Luka as an ecosystem and the myth-space”, International Conference “Le via dei Mercanti”, Napoli, Italy, 2011.