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Experiment - cities or unrealized horizons

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Introduction. Strategies of experiments or a city in focus of various experiments

> The world of today is constantly being redefined by the process of globalization and although the bubble of this 'new world order' dominated by global capital, consumer culture and neoliberal economy has burst, its effects are irreversibly and intricately integrated into every aspect of our lives[1].

Despite of the fact that Russia has special features in this process, it has to accept common world trends in order to became a full member of the global world. However, there is a risk in excessive passion for western models and social structures, which together with the drain of intellectual and financial capital have reached far beyond admissible norms of a healthy society and stand in the way its further progressive development. Russia's joining WTO and the Bologna process, cultural, scientific and economic integration set a new format of reality and make those in horizontal activity field worry about their future, which does not in full extend refer to those on top of the power pyramid. The recent social fermentation of the society has demonstrated revival of interest to the country's political misbalance. The expectations projection of the active part of the society meets a blank wall of "managerial provinciality" and the lack of systematic and infrastructural vision of social and demographical integrity of the society.

As two thirds of the country's population are city dwellers and most of them live in the western and central part, there is a unique chance for the search and realization of big

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[1] *Now Is the Time—Art & Theory is the 21st Century*, the authors and NAi Publishers, Rotterdam, 2009, p. 63.

infrastructure projects which will change urban territories development and functioning conditions. A wave of interest to urban agenda, transformation of the regional management system, endless discussions about identification and resources give an excellent reason for consolidation of public conscience.

Big projects and big experiments are always the most illustrative activities. That is especially true if they are planned and implemented on a national scale. The possibility to design an ideal model and test it in time and space allows to determine the power and success of prognostic thinking. The most courageous social expectations and most innovative decisions on their achievement are tested on "ideal models". Every city has specific and general features. It is important to allocate priorities for urban planning, in both short and long terms. "Smart management" is the guarantee of the city's prosperity and vitality.

The Project of Milan Strategic Development till 2030 can be viewed as an example of the most successful efficient approach to identification of various levels of interest and development of new territories. Its developers (AB Metrogramma) sorted out five key mutually complementary zones in the city. As a result, we have an opportunity to see Milan, which is one of the most beautiful and controversial cities in Europe, like a cosmos—a complicated living organism.

> Goals and Strategies. The complexity of Milan lies in its many different district and district components. it contains. The point of departure for any future development strategy must be to correlate economic, creative, social, cultural and urban resources into a strategic system. To do this, the Milan Authorities have set out a 15-point program that is an integral part of the overall Milan Urban Plan. These 15 points come under one of three policy drivers aiming to ensure: 1. an attractive city; 2. a livable city; 3. an efficient city. The underlying method for identifying needs and drafting policy goals for the future metropolitan city entailed two essential features: listening to the expectations of citizens and stakeholders, and constructively assessing the resources available in the specific metropolitan areas[2].

The project takes into consideration the city specific character, its historically formed structure and possible reserves presented both inside the city and in the periphery. The key levels: epicenters, infrastructure, environmental system. As a result, they came up with a concept of a Multicentric City—The 5 Urban Ecologies as 5 Cities, where the developers can selected The Strategic Areas for the City Growth: The Consolidate City; The Linear City; The Brianza—The Productive City; The Trasversal City; The Agro City. Five city models, five levels of interests and most importantly awareness of the integrity of the system and directing its improvement and progressive sustainable development.

The authors of the Milan renovation project mark out a multilevel model of the city, a peculiar construction set made of five complementary cities inside one city. This approach allows to see complexity and contradictoriness of two Russian models of non-capital cities: Togliatti and Perm, which are going through complicated periods of self-identifications and postindustrial recession. It enables to imagine two different time plots in realization of large-scale political gestures and gives a chance to try to understand how big projects

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2   *The Plan. Urban Development UD03*, "Milano, The Dense City—Detroit, The Rarefied City", December 2010–January 2011, No. 047, p. 53.

that are started from scratch become a "revelation of the their time" and a big problem for their future.

The strategy of experiments is a complicated methodological format of reading of different focus level interests, represented at the city scale. How can one keep abreast and consider sometimes contradictory opinions and wishes of all parties? Who must provide this balance and with which decisions and instruments? How to get the feeling of the city and let it live and develop independently after all analytical conclusions, global schemes and initiated experiments?

Togliatti. Experiments of the 1960s. Ideal model of urban planning. Challenges and realities

Introduction of territory. The 1960s

The city Togliatti (Samara region, Russia) is located on a picturesque bank of the Middle Volga river. Togliatti is an industrial city with population of over 700 thousand people. This city represents a unique "ideal model" for domestic urban planning and includes many aspects of city-specific concepts due to the Soviet Union attempts to realize the principles of ideal urban planning. After the collapse of the Soviet Union people and their life priorities have changed dramatically but the city's functions stayed the same. This ambitious and break-through city building phenomenon combined several economic and political requirements of that time. It started from the fortress built on the order of the Russian empress Anna Ioannovna in 1737 and continued in the second part of the 1960's when an "ideal model" became determining for many thousands of people who changed not only their own destiny but also the historic landscape of the country.

Currently Togliatti is at a crucial moment of its history: it is among the first ones in the list of monofunctional cities of Russia to be considered as a testing area for reorganizations and experiments. The unique reason for the renovations is in the key projects demonstrating investment and intellectual potential of Samara region. But the city faces problems connected to urban policy which are similar to those of all Russian cities. Togliatti has turned from "ideal city-plant" of the 60's into a usual giant micro-district with multistoried buildings, wide avenues, wonderful scenery but low quality of life, depressive architecture, bad roads, lack of intensive cultural life. Young people leave the city and its population is getting older.

Togliatti is often called the second Detroit.

Unprecedented enthusiasm and speed of development. Gigantic investments and first international partners—Italian company FIAT. The city was filled with international specialists, the borders were open to understanding of other cultures and acquiring new technologies. Experimental nature of the city-plant demonstrated not only industrial transformation of the country and region territory but also mental transformation of the participants of this process. Serious breakthroughs happened simultaneously at several levels both industrial and technological—development of the engineering school and its integration into advanced

automobile industry experience, design innovations, as well as in all spheres of the city community life. Energy and enthusiasm ran through the city's emotional background in all directions. The most advanced, the most "non-Russian" city Togliatti where the index of happiness and pride was the highest in the country.

Strategies of renovation and self-identification. The 1990's

Communist paradise ended as swiftly as it started. Disintegration of political and economic systems of the country came. "Perestroika" of the 1980's broke the habitual way of life and the city plunged in darkness of crime and lack of economic regulation. Over its newest history Togliatti has made several attempts to develop its Development Strategy, which is an important platform for public consensus and an "ideal city" image support. The most large-scale attempt was made in the 1960's when the political decision about construction of the city-plant was made. The second one was in the 1990's which was a complicated and crucial period of the new Russia's statehood establishment. That was the time when the City Strategy embraced all the complexity of functioning and sustainable development, formation of the city community which was interested and involved into the process.

The Strategy was supposed to become an active expert basis for changing the quality of the city life, formation of taste for the genuine humanistic paradigm where everyone has the right to a better life and every citizen can influence on making timely and deliberate decisions. This approach was aimed at creating a barrierless environment in all respects: from formation of priorities policy to barrierless access to its achievements and the world experience. Horizontal connections could be compared with neuronal connections in a big "brain", which we call "the city".

Over ten years the urban economic measures on development of social initiatives in the field of city planning marked out by the researches of Togliatti strategic plan have remained urgent. The focus is made on consistent diagnostics of a city planning situation, its guidelines, reserves, motivation and indicators of development. "Among the processes reflecting social essence of economic changes one should name the following: change of criteria of social stratification of society; formation of new social layers; deepening of property differences; transformation the labor relations system; formation of the labor market; universalization of consumer markets; liberalization of the social guarantees system"[3].

Taking into consideration Togliatti layout structure as an "ideal model"—an etalon of the national city building—one can single out positive factors which has taken over last 60 years. These are efficient urban ecological zoning of the city, partitioned layout structure which contains potential reserves for development, mobile links of transport infrastructure and regional surroundings. But there are also some negative aspects such as absence of a fixed city "heart" as the city centre, extent of inter-district transport connections, practically

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[3] S. Zhilkin, V. Andrievskaya, A. Estrin, E. Ahmedova, T. Karakova, V. Shabanov, *Strategic Urban Planning*, Samara: NBF «SMS», Samara State Academy of Architecture and Civil Engineering, 2001, p. 94.

simultaneous moral and physical aging of half a century old buildings, poorly developed system of services for the population, saturation of the city with cultural objects, and as a result, isolation of its cultural life from external dynamics.

The concept of a social "community" is reaching a new level of awareness and research in which a key role belongs to spontaneous, diverse and innovative nature of the city development. Interdisciplinary format of interaction between specialists capable of keeping various focuses of attention of a city life and city community guarantee success. They are urbanists, environment analysts, lawyers, representatives of public movements, including those on preservation of architectural and landscape heritage, ecologists. Issues of territory development have been recently intersecting with an active position of major businesses.

"Pain spots" of the city conflicts have become apparent with new power in Togliatti as well as in many other major industrial cities.

> Population of Russian cities are characterized by low social activity in advocacy of its interests for a number of reasons, among which imperfect legislation, functionary outrage, lack of standing up for joint interests, and inability to structure interests and activities. […] A common tendency of global urbanization in big cities resulting in anonymity and individualization of a person can be laid over these factors[4].

A new model of self-government as an effective instrument for common interests consolidation ruins the sectorial approach to management, it sets the basis of conscious neighborhood and responsibility for directed transformation.

University—City—Plant. The 2000s

The "ideal projection" of the social and economic model has actually stopped its progressive pressure at the turn of the century. Topicality as a key feature of Togliatti failed to overcome complications of the new reality formation and absolutely forgot about the necessity to confidently march in step with time and a priori be in the forefront as it was seen in the 1960's.

Having been filled with efficient instruments of vital activity, the city-plant has lost the sight of the modern guiding lines and the vivid feeling of participation in what is happening outside. The cultural background abounds with provincial plots which are very remotely connected with mobile and actual reality. It is primarily a matter of modern art in all respects: theater, music, various types of plastic, fine, video and media arts, architecture and design. The events which are supposed to promote and "keep in tonus" the environment, fill its atmosphere with energy and new knowledge about the world, trends, innovations in the cultural life.

The world practice of the last decades visually demonstrates other possibilities for overcoming the misbalance between spiritual emptiness and economic growth of regions. The depressive background can be turned to "enlightenment" due to creation of the atmosphere of mutual creativity of all stakeholders: businesses, government, city dwellers, and young people who set future guidelines. How can these tasks be coped with? Only by thinking

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4   Zhilkin et all, 2001, p. 136.

about the future. The team that developed new horizons and opportunities for the city in the end of the 1990's became the general developer on the new wave of Togliatti renovation.

However, not industrial but postindustrial horizon—formation of new generation—was accepted as a guideline. A university appeared in the city which was unusual for a city which did not have regional functions. The mission of the university was "University is a city-forming factor". The tasks of this Large-scale experiment were connected with ambitions of Big open educational space, open to educational innovations, the world and its opportunities. A connection with actual problems of the city life, community and its civil activity and the desire to revive that progressive nature, in which the new city—Togliatti was created, all these determined horizons of responsibility for the life of the city. The university became the magnet and the centre of urban politics, strategic solutions and changes in all fields: economic, cultural and social.

The basic principle underlying the city-plant has gone through a serious transformation and become wider and more complicated due to its energetic partner—the university. It is up to time now to assess the success of the chosen strategy.

Perm. Experiment of the 2000's. "Cultural expansion" and a change in management paradigms

Introduction of territory

Perm is a city located on the Kama River. It has been a recognized centre copper and iron mining in Ural region starting from the XVIII century. Even at its early stage the city was an important port and trade center. It was also actively involved in cooperation in iron export with English manufacturers.

In the soviet period the industrial role of Perm region continued to increase, the city developed and its city building look changed according to the standard typology of Russian cities of that time—monoblock high-rise construction and monotonous urban landscape, economic upturn and recession, and then the search for the ways out of the existing situation.

These are several analytical conclusions made by the developers of the priority fields of Perm development till 2030:

> Perm is losing people. Not long ago Perm had million dwellers. However, this million was gained artificially during the period of evacuation of citizens from other cities during the World War II, active transfer of work force to Perm defense enterprises over postwar years, and active administrative joining of neighboring settlements in the 1970's.

> When people got opportunity to choose the place for living independently they started to leave the city. Over eighty thousand people left the city for last 10 years

which corresponds to the population of some Russian cities.

Thus, the strategic goal of the city is in "development, attraction and retention" and the mission of Perm is "the city which capitalization is based on capitalization of each citizen"[5].

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[5]   www.business-class.su. Presentation of the Strategy Concept.

Regional will and cultural expansion

Economic boom at the beginning of the 2000's, growth of political authority of the country, attention to development of regions at the turn of the century, created a new formation of regional politicians: ambitious, progressive, capable of taking a risk and going against the stream, having steadfast desire to glorify their home regions and open them to the world.

That was the scenario taking place in Perm. The regional authorities created a unique precedent for the rest of the country and actively uses their administrative and political recourse for launch of large-scale research devoted to the region development strategy, instruments of the territory management system transformation, search for its identity and rapid progress based on the cultural policy, involvement of leading national and international experts and practitioners in solutions of the assigned tasks. This was fully facilitated by a qualitatively new functional system of regional management, aimed at obtaining qualitative shift in economy, social and cultural policy launched in 2005.

Seven key aspects which development will allow to fully and stably develop the entire region: "Development of human capital", "Economic development", "Establishment of environment for comfortable living", "Recourse management", "Territory development", "Improvement of efficiency of state and municipal establishments working in social sphere" and "Innovations in culture and city territory development ("Perm—cultural capital")". The key accent in "Perm 3.0" project of postindustrial development of the region was made on the development of innovative environment in the region, university, educational and cultural components.

Centers—personalities—breakthrough

The search for identity derived from a cardinal revision of the city master-plan and revealing its reserves for development of the city infrastructure to signing long-term contracts with leaders of opinions, authorities in actual spheres of culture and arts: theater, music, design, architecture. Massive coming of celebrities, opening of unique emblematic platforms in the city, a series of bright large-scale events, appearance of provocative brand of the city and elements of identics that filled streets and squares as independent objects of urban environment—all these started to change irreversibly not only the look of the city but also affected deep foundations of local traditional views and contradictions. Local population had difficulties in adjusting to such cultural expansion and infringement of their habitual existence.

However, a large-scale influence on mental background that was formed over centuries cannot be achieved by temporary effects. Development centres for urbanistics, design, theaters and museums were initiated and established with support of the regional government. Ambitious government involved ambitious figures from various spheres, cultural provocateurs and innovators into the team. Experiments, publicity and openness became the norm. The city began to sound at the world arena as a new Russian center of activity where the most advanced technologies of city and territory development were implemented.

A big experiment through cultural influence—is an unexpected and powerful move capable of deep transformation of conscious and creating new guidelines, "road maps",

subcultural communities and changing genetic code. Such influence has an extremely long-term character and most complicated but efficient consequences for strengthening the society as a civil platform, which apprehends itself as a unique community of citizens—"professional citizens".

The topic of the city has recently gained a top importance all over the world. It can be confidently stated that this topic is actively developing in Russia and it is to a big extend due to the unique experiments held in Togliatti and Perm. Despite the fact that different approaches and viewpoints on the topic of urban development often have little to do with actual reality and take the topic away to a game of meanings for the sake of meanings. And it is the density and frequency of discussions that allow to keep it in the focus of attention and not to miss the slightest changes in interpretations, practical actions and assessment of results.

This is a short list of names of recent forums devoted to the topic of urban development held in various countries Smart City, Open City, New City, Creative City, Thinking City, City Celebrity, Livable City and etc. We see a specific set of meanings which reflect the need for social responsibility and expectations, dichotomy of time and value stimuli. But one of the approaches to the topic of a city arouses special interest. It is Glose Town—the forum born in the atmosphere of a Big experiment of the 2000s in the city of Perm. It is created and promoted with the efforts of young entrepreneurs, political technologists and innovative strategists. Postindustrial history of Perm demonstrates today a maximum concentration of "correct accents" in the topic of the city via all social, economic and cultural demands of modern times. A massive transformation of public mind through a complex influence on the provincial way of life with a pretension to the "metropolitanity".

It will be clear only in time prospective how the mechanism of retention and capitalization of the city and its dwellers will be realized. But even at the present moment one can state the fact that the first "shock" from the active intrusion of innovators from the capital in 2009 has changed into steady unwillingness to turn the course of events backwards. The habit to live under a shock and fixed attention of the country and the world has already been becoming "constructive dependency" of the authorities and those people who make decisions.

Conclusion. Questions to the city and to ourselves

In conclusion, we may say that the variety of methods and approaches to the analysis of the urban development and understanding of the horizons of what its ideologists have conceived is a specific form of the city philosophy or, better to say, its metaphilosophy. This helps us single out the following 9 key levels of the further development of the subject matter.

1. **Pre- and post project reality. Unrealized Horizons.** Opportunities to implement large-scale territorial projects. Energy of large-scale forms and activity of large amounts of people, moved by an ambitious idea. How are political initiatives fulfilled in locally? How does the spirit of the time and place allow to conquer the territory, develop it, to understand and approve of or to reject the achievements? How can the implementation of the project be turned into consistent reality?

2. **Streetcar Named Desire and its route.** Waiting to start moving at a certain departure point. If we are eager to fulfill all the mutual aspirations, will that be enough to define a route and to collect our fellow travellers on the way? What makes us support the joint idea? At what moment do we have this idea in our mind, but still leave, impregnated, but unsatisfied?

3. **What is Temperature of Comfort in the City?** Feeling safe or a habit of fluctuations? How can we define the crucial point where changes become undesirable? Who is responsible for exceeding admissible norms and how can we remove symptoms of either fading or fever? Whose expert opinion wins at the time of decision-making?

4. **What is Environment Pressure?** End to end motion, feeling of limits or absence of boundaries, reflection in oneself, possibility to embrace elasticity of an integrated form with an eye and leave alone attempts to find a cover from vanity and stop… How does an environment make a citizen, a tourist or a dependent out of us?

5. **What is City Heart?** Everyone knows the location of the city heart. But the way it responds to the blows of fate causes concern only after fatal effects. How do we keep the city heart's normal rhythm and save it from the burden of excessive exercise? Should we resort to a technologically advanced but non-durable implant?

6. **What is City Brain?** How are decisions made? With one's mind or heart? If one knows for sure what they cannot live without, what links all the existing elements into one sensitive neural network, what keeps them in suspense and anticipation, how can one preserve one's mind? How can we keep the city brain open, and balance its creative and pragmatic constituents?

7. **What is City Scale?** Personal and external dimension of the city significance. Big politics and local interests. Can we only see the big picture from a distance or is it perceived better from inside? How do we choose the best view point and make no mistake in the scale? Major landmarks and measurement tools.

8. **What is City Face?** Iconic and recognizable features. Clarity and impersonality. Feeling of affinity and ancestry. How do we maintain respect for "wrinkles" and other traces of the past? How do we preserve the emotional background and keep ready to adopt new roles?

9. **City Diagnostics or what is Formula of City Life?** Parameters of "universal happiness." Models, templates and patterns. Reproduction technology of good initiatives and considering common interests. Parts and the whole of the shared useful space. Personal success formula as the formula of social life. Expert councils and "professional citizens".

Making an emphasis according to this hierarchy brings focus on the universality of such concepts as "city" and "citizens." Regardless of where, when and in what capacity a person is, his formula of life "in the city" and "with the city" will always be formed according to the interaction of the common (public) and private (personal). Big Experiments are designed to set Big Horizons, but they also bring along responsibility for unfulfilled dreams and expectations, for the algorithms and codes of vitality, self-development and self-identification, which either were neglected during the forecasting process, or which cannot be predicted in

advance. But be that as it may, only intuition, courage and favorable circumstances (turning periods in history, political and economic crises or "booms", personal or national ambitions) allow us to be free and to be able to create future.

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