

Some Theoretical and Methodological Issues of Regeneration of the Market Squares in the Historic Towns of Galicia

Abstract

There are around a hundred towns in the region of Galicia, which have the official status of historic settlements. They are included into the appropriate list and should be conserved. The market squares in these towns are among the most interesting urban objects of unique architectural and urban features. The paper is dedicated to the issues of their regeneration, more precisely, some theoretical and methodological ones. The meaning of the very notion of regeneration and also the essentiality of an urban object are studied. From such a perspective the directions of the research of regeneration issues are suggested.

Keywords: market squares, historic towns, Galicia, regeneration, urban object.

The notion of regeneration has been accepted into the Ukrainian restoration from the Soviet era science, in which it was generally interpreted in the late 80's in the sense of a specific method of intervention into a historic and architectural environment of the town. As L. Prybieha says, this notion, and along with it the notion of revalorization can be occasionally found in slightly different meanings in publications in the late 70-ies of the 20th century, especially in the works of I. Hlyamzha, E. Mikhaylowsky, J. Raninsky¹. For example, J. Raninsky, attributing regeneration and revalorization to the "methods of reconstruction that can be used for monuments of urban development"², defines them as the restructuring or urban conservation. Revalorization according to E. Mikhaylowsky is the "return of aesthetic significance"³. Meanwhile Edgar Puchins, the author of the regeneration project for Old Riga, defined regeneration as "the transformation of historically formed urban complex by restoring its lost parts, planning and spatial structure, composition integrity and functional activity" [1]. This definition became the base for all following ones we can find in the Ukrainian scientific literature: "the revival of an urban organism with the reconstruction of its lost parts"⁴; "the recreation of lost planning and spatial structure parts, composition integrity and functional activity of historic towns or their centers, distinct ensembles, architectural complexes"⁵; "the restoration of the historic spatial structure of a monumental urban formation and its functional and aesthetic inclusion into the life of the town or another settlement"⁶.

Such definitions of regeneration are not entirely consistent with the interpretation of this notion in the Western scientific

school, in which it has acquired a broader content in general. Although therein it is also not possible to avoid a confusion in such terms as regeneration, renewal, redevelopment, revitalization, rehabilitation etc., because, as Peter Roberts has noted: "urban regeneration is a widely experienced but little understood phenomenon"⁷. With this in mind, it is used to outline the conceptual boundaries first in the works dedicated to the regeneration, in particular basing on the wordings by C. Couch K. and P. Roberts. Couch underlines that "urban regeneration moves beyond the aims, aspirations and achievements of urban renewal, which is seen as a process of essential physical change, urban development (or redevelopment), with its general mission and less well-defined purpose, and urban revitalization (or rehabilitation) which whilst suggests the need for action, fails to specify a precise method of approach"⁸. At the same time Roberts defines it as "comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change"⁹. The author also stresses that regeneration approaches should focus on far-reaching strate-

gic goals¹⁰. The normative definition of regeneration, which is based on the American approach of the period of 1980-s¹¹ has been proposed in Great Britain in 2003. According to it regeneration is “the holistic process of reversing economic, social and physical decay in areas where it has reached a stage when market forces alone will not suffice”¹².

Scientists of the Polish school put similar content into the notion of revitalization which is defined as the system of measures to return the areas that have lost their social or economic functions to life and sustainable development. In particular, in the twelvevolumed work “Rewitalizacja miast polskich jako sposób zachowania dziedzictwa materialnego i duchowego oraz czynnik zrównoważonego rozwoju” revitalization is presented as “coordinated process carried out by local authorities together as well as local communities and other stakeholders, and which is a part of the development policy and aims to prevent the degradation of urban space and crises phenomena, encourages the development of quality changes due to social and economic activities rising, improvement of living conditions and protection of national heritage, taking into account the principles of sustainable development”¹³.

Thus, the notion of regeneration in the global scientific context emerges as a universal phenomenon of comprehensive, all-embracing solution of problems of the city in the paradigm of sustainable development, which includes such methods of intervention into the urban environment as reconstruction, restoration, revalorization, revitalization etc. As the object of regeneration any already formed urban structure can be considered if it suffer losses or decline.

Whereas the cultural heritage is seen on a par with all the other resources that should be preserved and increased for subsequent generations. Sometimes the term “heritage-led regeneration” is used to emphasize the conservative focus of regeneration in the conditions of intervention into a valuable historic and architectural environment.

In contrast to this the term of regeneration in the Ukrainian restoration is used only in relation to valuable historic urban entities or even to the monuments of urban development¹⁴. That is, the aspect of an urban object cultural value is accentuated (its historical planning and spatial pattern, functional organization, aesthetics). At the same time a wide range of strategic issues, such as social, economic, environmental, communicational, technological etc. as well as the goal of sustainable development itself are overlooked.

Let's pause at this point in analyzing the terminological aspect, and turn back to determine the regeneration below, after considering the object of our study.

Legal grounds to speak about an urban object from the perspective of its cultural value have appeared in 2010, when this notion was normalized in the Law on “Conservation of Cultural Heritage” and distinguished from an architectural object, while previously there was only the notion of an architectural and urban object (united). This amendment was of a great theoretical and practical importance. To begin with, it demonstrated the recognition of another nature of the urban objects cultural value, in contrast to architectural ones. And nowadays it gives the reason to inventory a huge number of

urban objects, put them into the list of monuments and preserve them in such a capacity. The principal difference between an urban and architectural object is a serious methodological problem, and it does not allow us to transfer mechanically the tried and tested methods from architectural restoration, and requires to ascend to a qualitatively new level of understanding of the item. To do this, it is important first of all to find out what exactly the difference is. For its part, it will be a step towards the definition of urban object itself, as well as to the interpretation of the essence of its cultural value.

It seems expedient to consider the problem from the perspective of systems theory. The occurrence of new qualities of the whole in comparison with the qualities of its elements is intuitively explained by the emergent properties of the system, or the so-called nonadditivity. A number of researchers, including the author of this paper, note that urban object cannot be a simple sum of architectural buildings it is composed of¹⁵. But a critical analysis shows that is not an entirely correct approach to see the emergence of some unexpected qualities as the property of the system. In particular, A. Korosov argues that the emergence is the absolute property of all systems, and the principle of emergence involves the study of the nature of specific qualities of systems that depend not just on the quality of system elements, but also on its internal relations (i.e. the composition) and relations with the system-spanning environment¹⁶.

From these positions an **urban object can be defined as a structural element of a town or a city, which territorial cohesion is caused by the unity of its functional and spatial organization**.

A comprehensive approach requires to decompose an urban object into three levels: macro (level of a city in which the object serves as a structural element); meso (actually targets the urban object as a system, in which we can allocate sublevels for analysis e. g. urban quarter) and micro (by taking buildings as elements and also distinguishing a lower level of elements – architectural details).

At the same time, moreover such an urban object as a market square is a complicated architectural and urban complex (or, in case of its complete composition – an ensemble), it also integrates the entire range of constituents of the town and can be seen as its reduced model. Thus, a correct solving the re-

generation issues requires a multidisciplinary research of the market squares in the historic towns of Galicia.

It should be noted that the Ukrainian researchers have drawn attention to the importance of going beyond the context of architectural and urban form in the study of urban object. In particular M. Bevz speaking about the conservation areas in historic towns emphasizes that they "usually are not only architectural and urban planning monuments, but also comprehensive social and functional complexes"¹⁷. However, these ideas have not acquired a logical conclusion, because (as mentioned above) the recovering of the lost parts of urban objects is been still declared as the purpose of their regeneration. And that contradicts the very analytical nature of restoration at the present stage of the scientific thought evolution.

Similarly the vision of the regeneration purpose as the need of functional adaptation of an urban object into a town organism seems not entirely correct. We believe such adaptation is better to apply to apart architectural monuments.

Urban objects whether valuable or ordinary from the perspective of historical and cultural heritage are usually put into a settlement life in one way or another and need not adaptation but effective management in terms of economy, ecology, functional organization, public relations, etc., it means continuous, comprehensive, balanced development, everything what the notion of sustainable development includes.

The market squares of the historic towns and cities in their universality and comprehensiveness of urban qualities illustrate the best the fact that urban objects need development, but not adaptation. Thus, the issues of their regeneration are to be considerably augmented. And the regeneration in the Ukrainian scientific context can be defined as **the comprehensive process of transformation of a valuable in cultural sense urban object that aims to preserve its cultural heritage, as well as its sustainable development.**

Therefore interdisciplinary approach requires deep researches in other directions in addition to the historical and architectural or historical and urban studies. Let's try to outline the directions that must be included in the subject of a market square regeneration.

Transport problems solution. Motorways pass currently through more than 80% of the market squares in the historic towns of Galicia. The 8 of them have the roads of international level, 11 – of national, 35 – of regional level. The others have local roads. Although the presence of a road was historically essential for city-forming and shaping and the roads crossed the market squares from ancient times, nowadays it is important to withdraw the transport beyond the market.

There are two main arguments for this: the traffic threatens the preservation of the square's physical structure; market square is the main public urban space in the major number of towns, in which pedestrians-first approach is to be implemented. This problem can be solved only by developing of an innovative and integrated transport system for the whole town. It is complicated by the fact that the streets of historic towns are usually too narrow, but they cannot be expanded because of their historical and cultural value.

Architectural and urban space solution. That is the most fully developed and highlighted in the literature side of the problem. But it's remaining still unresolved and as we've said the main reason for this consists in trying to apply the methods of architectural restoration to an urban object. The present day methodology of designing a valuable from the perspective of cultural heritage environment is based on the evaluation of buildings it includes. In general it means the restoration of architectural monuments; the reconstruction of significant and ordinary historic buildings as well as lost ones and the removal of disharmonious buildings or correction of their architectural appearance. Each of these methods, except probably the restoration of architectural monuments, is very difficult to substantiate in a scientific way, so long as the market square is an object of a very continuous and complicated construction history. Therefore the reconstruction to a specific date or period, or the so-called stylistic as well as holistic restoration cannot be regarded as appropriate, but more as emotionally and romantically caused.

A great problem is a bad state of preservation of many market squares in the historic towns of Galicia. Most of them have undergone farther transformations in the second half of the 20th century, more precisely, they were been deliberately destroying, e.g. the market squares in Hrymayliv, Husiatyn, Deliatyn, Rava Ruska, Rozdil, Sokal, Ternopil, Uhniv, Chernovohrad are nowadays totally lost. The well-preserved objects are the market squares in Berezhany, Buchach, Horodok, Drohobych, Ivano-Frankivsk, Pidhatsi, Sambir, Striy, Shscyrec and some else. The others have fragmented and deformed in different ways structures, remaining the most attractive for development town areas. And all actual development processes have one thing in common that can be described as an interferentce phenomenon (a complicated and multifaceted phenomenon, which can be interpreted as the violation of one communication system under the influence of another. In our case we apply this notion to architectural space, recognizing its communicative and cognitive functions). That causes the grass-roots appearance of overscaled, disproportional and malformed buildings while the scientific approaches to solve that issue are not clear.

Narrative environment edification. The output of the study to the narrative level makes it possible to justify the design solutions for valuable architectural and urban space. The

narrative approach stems from the understanding a historic urban object as a document and an inexhaustible information source. And the main postulate of the approach is that architecture is a powerful means of communication. It allows to use all possible tools flexibly to disclose the cultural value of the object not only for experts but for non-specialists too, especially local residents, attracting them by using the visual language of architectural space to study and understand the history of a place, educating patriotism and responsibility for its development in such a way.

Ecological conditions creating. This aspect is usually ignored in the studies of historic urban objects and the problems of their regeneration. Therefore, ecological problems of a valuable historic urban object are just as important as ecological problems of an ordinary one and we are not to forget that any urban space is first of all an ecosystem where a human lives. So the aim is to create the most comfortable and ecologically clean environment. However in the market squares in addition to the typical environmental issues a conflict between the ecological approach and the need to preserve a historically formed urban space arises. Town parks arranged on the territory of 56 of about 100 investigated market squares in historic towns of Galicia in the second half of the 20th century (e.g. in Busk, Hlyniany, Horodok, Komarne, Mykolayiv, Mostyska, Novy Yarychiv, Pidhaytsi). That was a special method to block visual connections of market squares spatial compositions. The use of greening in such a way allowed to cover the market square space up, even if it had well-preserved historic buildings and planning structure at that time.

Economic strategy development. There is traditionally a great interest to economic problems, but deep research from the perspective of regeneration was not carried out in this field. The powerful economic potential that versatile cultural heritage of the historic towns gives is not used unfortunately, as well as the town-forming role of the heritage is not yet understood. The economic problems on their own go beyond our actual study but should be clearly outlined and included in the list of regeneration issues.

Public relations development. One of the most complicated problems of regeneration is the lack of understanding the value of cultural heritage in general and the value of historic built environment in particular. That can be described as a global crisis of culture in the Ukrainian society that have various ostents and deep roots. The methods of development and economic activities in the historic architectural environment in Galicia indicates that several decades in which the heritable tradition of urban systems evolution was interrupted, haven't passed without consequences. This fact is clearly illustrated by the situation when disharmonious objects destroying spatial composition and architectural character of historic market squares are the churches newly emerged directly in these areas on the initiative of local communities (e.g. in Mageriv, Nemyriv, Pidhaitsi, Pidkamin), and neither the community nor the priests do not think about what the market square has always been. While it's been a place of market itself, the road usually passed across it, and people were executed here etc. – it's not too scrupulous choice of a church location. Therefore, the de-

velopment of public relations is called to solve several main objectives: to raise the overall level of public culture, to arouse the interest in the town's history, to encourage individual and public initiative as well as the sense of responsibility for their urban space transformations.

Conclusion

The notion of regeneration in the Ukrainian restoration concerns valuable in terms of cultural heritage urban objects and is aimed actually at reconstructing of their lost parts and also at the adapting of these objects to the town's life. As mentioned above, this aim should be much expanded and mean the preservation of the whole cultural heritage of an urban object as well as its sustainable development. Studying the market squares in the historic towns of Galicia the following directions of the research of their regeneration issues are suggested: transport problems solution; architectural and urban space solution; narrative environment edification; ecological conditions creating; economic strategy development; public relations development.

ENDNOTES:

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