

UDC 304.444

CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSERVATION OF A HISTORIC CITY

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Citizen's participation in the conservation of a historic city is an important component of any urban heritage strategy at any stage of its implementation. Individuals and communities may contribute to the preservation of cultural diversity in urban areas and gain cohesion and facilitate self-identification at the same time.

In the perception of most modern people, cities represent the context of daily life and activity, the place of social and economic interaction, the unique atmosphere of experience and feelings. The historical city stands among them as a place of expression of their historical memory, an example of quality space, the core of sustainable development processes.

The discussion about preserving the heritage of historic cities began as a discussion about the preservation of architectural monuments in urban space. First of all, it was associated with the birth of modern national states in the 19th century - the historical monument became a way of glorifying national traditions. With the advent of the industrial revolution and industrialization, which paid particular attention to the spatial, architectural transformation of urban space, the problem of protecting urban monuments has become particularly relevant. However, the historic city was not considered a heritage system. Only monuments as symbols of traditions were considered important: cathedrals, palaces, gardens and statues. The historical city as a category of heritage in the modern sense was determined much later, at the end of the turn of the 19th-20th centuries.

Although the main role in preserving heritage was assigned to professional urban planners, architects, and conservatives, remarks about the importance of the role of a city dweller in preserving urban heritage can be traced back to the 19th century. The forefather of modern heritage theories, art historian Alois Riegl (1858-1905), the author of the idea of heritage interpretation through the theory of values, spoke of collective responsibility for the preservation of heritage [6]. Biologist and urbanist Patrick Geddes (1854-1932) viewed the city as an organism in evolution, where physical and social components interact in a complex network of changes and traditions; he suggested exploring urban settlements and their inhabitants in conjunction with their attitude to their heritage [7].

Cultural heritage has the potential to encourage participation, integration and cohesion in society. It has traditionally been identified, maintained and protected by culture professionals, which has resulted in a situation where local communities often have little responsibility for their own assets. In order to eliminate such a problem, they began to include the mandatory participation of public groups and interested citizens in measures for the protection of urban heritage. First of all, such requirements were developed in recommendations developed at the international level.

For the first time, the role of a resident in preserving the cultural heritage of a historic city at the international level was designated in the Recommendations on the Preservation and the Modern Role of Historic Ensembles (1976), developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [1]. Since the document places equal responsibility for preserving the heritage of the state and its citizens, it determines the participation of a citizen as a partner of state institutions in the protection of historical and cultural objects. The document considers the various participants: groups and individual participants, the participation of owners, residents and users of heritage objects - as well as acceptable forms of civic participation: the creation of advisory groups; representation of owners, residents and users, in their advisory function, in decision-making bodies, in directing and carrying out work related to protection plans, or in creating public corporations to participate in their implementation; the creation of voluntary groups for the protection of non-profit associations.

Washington Charter of the International Council on Monuments and Sites [2] pointed out the importance of attracting residents of the entire city for the success of its preservation, since any protection measures primarily concern them, which means that any plans to protect the historic city should be coordinated with local residents. The search for common goals between local communities and professional groups is the basis for the successful preservation, revitalization and development of historic cities.

As the first group of mechanisms for preserving a historic city Recommendations on Historical Urban Landscapes of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2011) name the civic engagement mechanisms that should empower the citizens the definition of the core values in urban areas; setting goals and coordinating the conservation of their heritage [3]. These tools should promote intercultural dialogue through understanding the history, traditions, values, needs and aspirations of communities, as well as through mediation and negotiations between groups in situations of conflict of interest.

It should be noted that civilian participation in one form or another is a natural phenomenon and a mandatory component of any heritage conservation program at all stages of the process - planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation - in the European Union and the United States of America. Current scientific developments at these regions today are aimed at consolidating and optimizing the procedural interaction between communities and agencies. The recent document on the topic developed in European Union is European Quality Principles for Cultural Heritage Interventions [8]. It stems from the works of an expert group assembled by the International Council on Monuments and Sites. The main objective of the document is to provide guidance on quality principles for all stakeholders directly or indirectly engaged in EU-funded heritage conservation and management. Many Asian countries denote the problem of lack of civic participation and the negative consequences of such a problem. Many scientific developments are aimed at appliance of European and American models of public participation in Arabic countries and countries of Southeast and East Asia, their evaluations and features of application in different conditions.

Considering the activities of the population in the field of culture with a heritage orientation, the two typological groups are distinguished: the passive majority and the active minority.

The role of the first group, which, as a rule, constitutes the majority, consists of mostly passive perception of culture: they show interest in the heritage, they are visitors to events. However, even taking a passive attitude towards the heritage of their city, the bulk of the population associates its identity with the place of residence - the historic city. In their daily activities, the "spirit of the place" is expressed in one way or another. This connection with the place may be explicit or hidden, but it does have an impact on the existence of the person. At the same time, for a separate individual, the problem of realizing oneself as a part of a historical city may not be deeply significant and be of an unconscious or non-reflexive nature. At the same time, for himself and for others, he is aware of himself as a representative of this city and perceives it as an integral element of his own personality [4].

The second group of the population is more active. It is focused on certain types of activities, such as the restoration of monuments, the environmental movement, participation in folklore groups, the work of restoring crafts and trades, as well as the organization of holidays, festivals, fairs and other events. In other words, this group of the population is focused on active participation in the development of the environment of its own settlement [5]. This group has an internal desire to do something for their environment. And although the desire to preserve the object of heritage may be evoked by external influence, the real motivation and necessity of action must be present from the beginning. Therefore, the active participation of citizens in the preservation of the heritage of their city cannot be initiated from the top down. It works only on a bottom-up basis.

When considering civic participation in the process of planning and making decisions regarding the heritage of a historic city, individual citizens and community groups are seen as opposed to the members of organizations whose professional functions include heritage protection, such as museums, specialized educational institutions, research institutes, authorities, etc. When it comes to public participation, it's not a generic term. These can be representatives of small and medium-sized private businesses, owners, residents or users of urban heritage objects, individual citizens interested in heritage, for example, local historians, volunteers, public associations, as well as social groups united not formally but by any principle. These can be groups with similar social status or profession, religious or ethnic groups united by geographic principle - residents of one district, representatives of various political parties, people united by common interests [9].

Individual citizens and social groups may be involved in the process of preserving urban heritage in various ways. One of the most common typologies of public participation was developed and presented in the book "The Participatory Museum" (2010) by Nina Simon [10]. She identifies four forms of possible public participation that are relevant not only for museums, but also for the entire heritage sector.

Contributory projects, where participants are invited to provide limited and specified actions and ideas to an institutionally controlled process. They are involved in a consultative process, that usually occurs when mandatory participation is required. Collaborative projects, where participants are "invited to act as active partners

in the creation of institutional projects that are originated and ultimately controlled by the institution". Such projects offer a wider range of tools for interaction and ways to interact, based on genuine partnership. Co-creative projects, where community members work together with institutional staff members from the beginning to define the project's goals and to generate the programme based on community interests. They imply delegation of responsibility not only to plan but also to allocate resources and carry out decisions. Hosted projects, where the institution provides a portion of its resources to present programmes developed and implemented by the public. Such projects put the community completely in charge of the process and the institution authorities and other experts act as equal partners.

It seems that establishing citizen's participation in urban heritage conservation calls for positive activities both from the administration and from civil society. The initiating institution should be active by arranging opportunities for citizens to participate and by supporting the initiatives of the civil society. Communities and individuals should be proactive, creative and well organized in order to be effective.

There is a wide acknowledgement from academicians and heritage practitioners that the involvement of local community may bring long-term benefits to the people who live in an affected environment. Certainly, there are plenty of benefits to be gained by the community through participation.

Benefits of the citizens participation in the process of urban heritage conservation are experienced by communities themselves, agencies and institutions involved. Beside many other, it has both cultural and social effects. Public participation helps the conservation of cultural diversity, as more genuine and accurate information can be gathered from the community. Certainly, this is because the community is tangibly living and experiencing the situation daily regarding local heritage matters. Though many objects of urban heritage being taken under protection in the past years they stay meaningless to the local communities, as when it comes to culture increase in quantities does not mean increase in qualities. The public involvement helps revitalize values of urban heritage for the communities through education. Having to present their interest to the conservation agencies and authorities may help communities gain cohesion, integration and self-identification.

Public participation has always been an issue in conservation of the vast urban heritage of Polotsk. Devotion to the cultural heritage is a noticeable cultural feature of Polotsk citizens. It is formed in the process of reciprocal penetration of the old and the new, introduction of eternal values into the modern cultural application. Each generation is looking for their own interpretation of the past and draws new ideas from it.

The general strategy of conservation of Polotsk urban heritage was outlined in the Project of the model of preservation of Polotsk cultural heritage, defining the major priorities, criteria and directions of protection of Polotsk cultural heritage [11]. It involves a great deal of citizens' participation making it a vital element of the conservation strategies that both would work for the benefit of both citizens and conservation agencies. It includes measures of more intensive public participation, such as increase of educational and training work, development of voluntary societies of friends of famous monuments, creation of the youth programs of heritage protection, restoration and archaeological groups. Access to the knowledge, joy of revealing cultural heritage should become attractive as a factor strongly demanded for creative self-realization of private people and communities. The document states that it is necessary to use all the possibilities for combination of monument protection with the development of related cultural traditions. So, the strategy proposed by the document is based on the balanced and harmonic relations between needs of society, economic activities and preservation of historical environment. It should lead to the acknowledgement of common responsibility for the preservation of heritage and decrease the level of vandalism towards the heritage objects.

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Linguistics, literature, philology

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