Architecture

PRESERVING IDENTITY OF HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENTS IN SIBERIA: A CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Introduction: Currently, the projects related to the development of identical historical environments in Siberia, Russia, are predominately inconsistent. Yet there is an opportunity to find a more holistic approach to sustaining local heritage, which could address local cultures and identities through an understanding of how the location, as well as specific spatial and architectural practices, evolve. **Purpose of the study:** The study aimed to establish a theoretical and methodological framework for sustaining the local identity in architectural terms. **Methods:** According to the methodological recommendations of Groat and Wang, such methods as critical literature review and logical argumentation were used. **Results:** The research came to the conclusion that the city identity can be unfolded through two or more congruent layers of existence. This study deals with architectural heritage and society as two types of such layers. It suggests that the local identities of historical environments could be sustained by a combination of the following methods: 1) looking to the past, through analyzing the city's fabric and searching for "social traces" and semiotic meanings; 2) looking to the future, through using participatory design methods. This methodology should be further tested on specific historical environments in Siberia. The critical literature review will provide researchers and practitioners in the field with a fundamental theoretical framework.

Keywords

Architecture, philosophy of architecture, identity, heritage, participatory practice, sustainable development.

Introduction

Over the past century, Russia experienced two major political turning points. This, among other factors, has led to a systemic crisis of national cultural identity, including the rejection of the values of the past and fundamental cultural norms and concepts, and the erratic development of the historical architectural environment, which has been mirroring social processes. City-dwellers seem to lack any feeling of attachment to their environments, while the inconsistent development of the built environment and the resulting changes in the structure of social processes are becoming increasingly visible. International methodologies, such as, for instance, critical regionalism (Frampton, 1983), have highlighted the need to find local regional patterns and techniques with the potential to ensure the continuity of historical and cultural layers, create a sense of belonging and identity, and preserve the past in ways that guarantee cultural diversity and survivability. At the same time, the above methodology does not provide operational tools or answers on how to integrate new development projects into traditional social life. Nonetheless, there is an opportunity to develop a more holistic approach to sustaining local historical places, which would address local cultures and identities through an understanding of how the location and specific spatial practices evolve. It is currently argued in Russia that the preservation of cultural layers is one of the essential elements needed for nurturing national consciousness and a sense of national belonging (V. V. Putin). In this context, how can we enhance, or at least preserve, the complex city identity? How can we ensure the development continuity in historical environments while shaping the city identity? What issues exist within this field, what methods and tools? Thus, the purpose of this review was to explore the existing identity-oriented approaches to the sustainable development of historical architectural environments, in order to suggest a methodology or strategy that could potentially be applicable in Siberia, Russia, as well as to provide researchers and practitioners in the field with a fundamental theoretical framework.

Methods

We selected critical literature review and logical argumentation (Groat and Wang, 2013) as the primary methods of this study. The literature for the study was provided by the Scientific Libraries of the

Siberian Federal University and the University of Cologne.

Results and Discussion

The phenomenon of identity has been investigated by a large and growing body of literature around the world (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006; Castells, 2009; Krinsky; 2004; Torabi and Brahman, 2013). For Castells, identity is "the process by which social actors build their own meaning according to cultural attributes" (Castells, 2009). Fundamentally, identity could be unfolded through the "congruity" of two or more layers of existence, or two or more interrelated phenomena: "the feeling of having a close association or connection with something" (Oxford Dictionary). Researchers today tend to decode the city identity (Bold et al. 2017; Brand, 1995) by employing the notion of heritage: "The deeper understanding of the historically contingent and embedded nature of heritage allows us to go beyond treating heritage simply as a set of problems to be solved and enables us to engage with debates about the production of identity, power and authority throughout society" (Harvey, 2001). Thus, out of a variety of components within identity, this study will focus on "heritage", understood as a "process", which, in and of itself, already encompasses many layers, along with the dimension of time. Further decomposition of the notion of identity leads to the essential social component congruent with heritage. Many researchers decode the phenomenon of heritage through tradition (which encompasses both resilience and dynamics), through inclusion, and through "knowledge transfer" and "social traces" (Araoz, 2011; Dymitrow, 2013; Hewitt and Pendlebury, 2014; Lowenthal, 1998; Pendlebury, 2013; Pendlebury and Porfyriou, 2017; Riegl, 2011; Townshend and Pendlebury, 1999). Waterton and Watson (2015) argue that today's researchers of heritage are concerned with the problems of participation, which implies construction and engagement. Smith (2007) defines heritage as a cultural process: "Heritage is a multilayered performance... that embodies acts of remembrance and commemoration while negotiating and constructing a sense of place, belonging and understanding in the present". Orbaşli (2017) adds, "Thus, conservation is increasingly becoming a process of negotiation, as the management of cultural heritage becomes based on models of consultation and participation, that are intended to give those 'affected' by a site a 'voice'". In other words, scholars define heritage as a process that encompasses communication, negotiation, engagement, assembling, meaning creation, and knowledge transfer (Smith, 2004, 2007; Smith and Waterton, 2013; Waterton and Smith, 2010). In addition, heritage is now "judged under ethical and moral criteria" (Munoz-Vinas, 2012); this concept is also enshrined in the conventions and widely published (Australia ICOMOS, 1999, 2013; Drury and McPherson, 2008; Nara, 2015).

The focus of modern science on studying complex self-developing systems significantly restructures scholarly ideals and norms, transforming the ideal of value-neutral research (Styopin et al., 1996). These transformations of the general set of scientific principles, shifting from "Objective" or "Scientific" to "Ethical", also determine the transformation of the core ideas within heritage concepts. Thus, perceiving the heritage process as a self-developing system with internal ethics and a significant social component, researchers recommend searching for the local sustainable concepts of heritage as an organic and natural part of social reality.

Several authors have noted that the focus in architectural heritage studies has shifted to such concepts as engagement, meaning, and identity, which are relatively new in theory (Waterton and Watson, 2015). Thus, researchers who gravitate to collaborative heritage as a concept claim to observe the positive effects of community engagement in the heritage process (Drury and McPherson, 2008; Yung et al., 2016). However, Pendlebury (Pendlebury et al., 2004), one of the pioneers in the field of public participation in conservation, outlines significant controversies within the recent heritage policies. Indeed, the new concept destabilizes conventional heritage discourse: "The heritage debate has continued to flex and flow since the 1980s and has gained considerable momentum over the past three decades" (Waterton and Watson, 2015). Rather than introducing certain approaches and doctrines, it has created further division and arguments. Thus, the controversies around the notions of authenticity, national identity, the power-relational values, social cohesion, etc., as well as the critique of the commodification of the above, while yielding occasional stabilizing solutions, have not yet resulted in universal wisdoms. Moreover, "heritage has become a global concern with powerful new players who are now engaged in conservation practice and research" (Orbaşli, 2017). Dragouni (2018) argues that "there is still a long way to go until we can firmly argue that community participation has been truly and fully embraced in the field... Until then, there is an imminent need for on-going critical analysis of and reflection on the topic at both theoretical and practical levels". Discourse on the subject is still "young", although it does have many undeniably significant achievements, and is worth applying to different case studies.

When it comes to the existing research, potential sub-topics, and approaches relevant to the participatory heritage process, we note that studies are broadening in scope. As Orbaşli (2017) notes, "By the end of the twentieth century, however, conservation had clearly evolved in two separate strands: conservation as an approach and

conservation as a science". Waterton and Watson (2015) single out two perspectives within heritage research, one of which is based on approaching heritage as "operational practice" (operations management, including marketing, finance, human resources, hospitality, catering, and retailing), while the other perceives heritage as a form of "cultural practice" (sociological, cultural, social geographical and anthropological thinking). This subject is becoming more and more interdisciplinary, bringing in a wide variety of concepts (Barelkowski, 2009; Greider and Garkovich, 1994; Murzyn-Kupisz, 2013; Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek, 2013; Poulios, 2014; Stephens and Tiwari, 2015). Generally speaking, approaches have changed significantly. Research is currently: focusing attention on the largely vernacular historic cityscapes rather than on "grand, monumental" architecture; encompassing intangible components; and zooming in on local identities rather than valuing national significance. Finally, we are currently seeing a notable shift in heritage significance from "expert" evaluation to participatory evaluation.

However, the ongoing focus on democratization, human rights and social justice, control, power, decision-making, ethics, and so on remains relatively obscured in Russia. Generally, the subject of Russian heritage, let alone the heritage of Siberia, is quite poorly represented in international science, with rare exceptions (Deschepper, 2018). A review of the latest Russian academic literature has revealed the following picture. First, formal academia in Russia is strictly formalized and institutionalized, divided into disciplinary "tracks". Research dedicated to historical environments belongs to a track called "Theory and History of Architecture, Restoration and Reconstruction of Architectural Heritage", specifically the "Architecture" section, which is currently related to the "technical" field of studies. Consequently, interdisciplinary knowledge is a rare occurrence in formal Russian academia. Classical researchers of architectural heritage in Russia are usually busy with describing the past. Their studies are largely historiographic (Burdin, 2013; Merkulova and Merkulova, 2013; Meyerovich, 2016; Mishakova and Mikhaleva, 2014; Slabukha, 2016; Tsaryov, 2012), reviewing archives, dealing with notions of "typology", "styles", "method", "context", "composition", "visual integration", etc. (Dutsev, 2014; Samolkina, 2015; Stafeyev, 2015; Zaitsev, 2013), or investigating specific technical aspects. Some researchers study the semantics of traditional architecture and its elements, such as wood carving, decorative elements, etc., which, in their opinion, helps to reveal messages left behind by the societies of the past (Barabanov, 2013; Myasnikova and Volskaya, 2014; Sergeyev, 2000). Their insights have allowed for publishing extensive descriptions of the history of architecture and urban development

in Russia and Siberia. Siberian researchers A. V. Slabukha and V. I. Tsaryov, who wrote major works on the development of Siberian architecture, hold a unique spot in Siberian heritage research (Slabukha, 2016; Slabukha and Sayenko, 2016; Tsaryov, 2012). However, while investigating the impact or implications of heritage and architecture, and while rethinking heritage procedures or describing heritage practice, researchers tend to miss the fact that heritage is a socially constructed phenomenon with prescribed values. The concept of Siberian heritage is therefore not explicitly formulated.

Architecture researchers in Russia make some limited effort to break the disciplinary limits, by criticizing the existing approaches to architectural heritage or proposing new ones (Aidarova, 2012; Bal'zannikova, 2014; Bolotskikh et al., 2017; Chaynikova, 2018; Devyatova, 2016; Galeev, 2017; Gumenyuk, 2012; Lepeshkina et al., 2018; Markovich and Luchkova, 2011; Okhotnikova, 2019; Orlenko, 2017; Romanova and Malevich, 2013; Selivanenko, 2015; Viktorova, 2014); or by investigating the cultural effects of specific architectural phenomena (Dayub, 2009; Lobanov, 2010; Nazarova et al., 2017; Pavlova, 2016). Some researchers discuss the aspects of how socialist monuments and heritage are perceived in a post-socialist country (Nagornaya and Petukhova, 2014; Oganesyan, 1996; Ryzhkova, 2016; Snopek, 2013). Shulgin (2004) considers heritage as a factor of socio-cultural development. Sedov (2011) gives a comprehensive overview of the perception of the architectural monuments in Russia, while Pereslegin (2015) explores the formation and development of the bodies responsible for conservation and heritage protection, as well as their interaction with society. However, researchers usually state the problem and emphasize its importance, but rarely propose comprehensive methods for socially-oriented heritage processes or present a reading of the social connotations within the historical built space. One of the rare exceptions is a study by Solovyova and Anisimova (2014), dedicated to historical environments and the tools of their development and analysis in Vologda. A unique stance is expressed by Glazychev (https://www.glazychev.ru), who comprehensively researched the phenomenon of city environments, starting to question the participatory approaches to the formation of historical environments at the end of the 20th century. However, some Russian works from the last third of the 20th century still defer to the official system of heritage research and practice. At the same time, "unofficial", practice-based research appears more free, dynamic, and experimental. Archnadzor (http://www.archnadzor.ru/category/wise/), "Re-school" (led by Narine Tyutcheva), MARCH architectural school, and Strelka Institute in Moscow have started to gradually change the practice.

The "social" component in environmental

practice appeared as a theme within such tracks of Russian research as "Sociology" and "Culture Studies", which considered urban environments from their own disciplinary positions (Abysheva, 2005; Akhnayeva, 2004; Butakova and Sidorova, 2015; Chernetskaya, 1999; Chernyayeva, 2004; Donguzova, 1998; Fedorov and Ovcharova, 2012; Fedorova, 2016; Kaiser, 2010; Kogatko, 2007; Kostenko, 2004; Pomozova, 2012; Serikov, 2007; Smirnova, 2004; Soboleva, 2014; Suchorukov, 2002; Tsepelev, 2014; Zlotnitsky, 2008). Some researchers are exploring the new challenges of democracy and participation (Agapova, 2015; Donguzova, 1998; Obertas and Petukhov, 2015). One cannot overestimate the valuable contribution made by the thesis of sociologist Serikov (2007), who proposed a mechanism for managing historical centers as a complex socio-economic phenomenon, from an administrative point of view. Vilkovsky (2010) provided a comprehensive overview of the existing published theories on the sociology of architecture. However, the isolated positions of sociologists and culture studies experts appear insufficient for considering the complex heritage practice from an architectural point of view.

Thus, the subject of city identity could be elaborated on in research through understanding and analyzing the congruent layers of heritage as a process (reviewed in the temporal dimension), as well as by analyzing the heritage's social context and associated values. To summarize, various Russian researchers from different fields have tried to suggest possible changes in the approaches to Russian heritage. However, the prevailing themes are more technical, focused on the so-called "operational issues" (Waterton and Watson, 2015), while critical analysis from the cultural perspective, along with specific methods, is generally lacking, especially when it comes to regions with such unique development as Siberia. The general concept of Siberia's heritage is not formulated explicitly; the subject of possible sustainable heritage processes either has a limited presence in Russian literature or is absent from it altogether. Thus, we believe that it is necessary to research the possibility of sustainable, collaborative heritage processes in the Yenisei basin in Siberia, as the first step of a possible journey toward city identity construction.

Quite often in Russia, heritage monuments or buildings are perceived as separate entities. However, such monuments are usually part of a holistic urban fabric or environment, where all elements evoke the same feelings and have the same links with traditions, habits, and beliefs. "Places remember, and they do it through their monuments, architectural style of their buildings, inscriptions on walls, etc." (Hayden, 1995). Harrison's philosophy of "becoming", where the notions of place and life, in a broad sense, closely connect time and "living beings" into "generations of continuities in particular places" (Harrison and Rose, 2010), provides a better reading of heritage contexts. The Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) concept is an attempt to avoid the isolation of buildings, as physical objects, from their wider cultural environment, with its multi-layered history of meanings. Thus, a more "holistic" approach is needed to address the fragments of the spatial fabric in complex historical environments, which include intangible aspects and social traces.

Geographically, the number of researchers investigating the democratization of heritage is exponentially growing, encompassing representatives from different parts of the world (Amin, 2018; Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek, 2013; Paez et al., 2013; Salman et al., 2018; Yalegama et al., 2016; Yung et al., 2016). For instance, Maciuika (2014) showed differences in the approaches to reconstruction in various national and cultural contexts, according to ideological standpoints at a specific time and in a specific location. He used Asian cultures as an example: "Shinto religious tradition involves the complete reconstruction of the sacred Shinto Jingu Shrine in Ise, Japan, every 20 years". Waterton and Watson (2015) suggested that the role of non-Western researchers and the development of local heritage discourses is significant for this mission. Geographically, Siberia is not a part of Europe or the West – but what about culturally or mentally?

When it comes to time frames, the collapse of the Soviet Union is the latest significant change that radically influenced all aspects of existence in Russia (Charley, 2010). Architecture, heritage, planning, conservation, and design are no exception. According to Slabukha (2014), since the beginning of the 1990s, work on the identification and state protection of monuments has been paused, so that in Siberia, the status of heritage has been reduced dramatically, and some monuments and memorial places have been completely lost. In addition, as Tunbridge and Ashworth (1995) explained, "The present selects an inheritance from an imagined past for current use and decides what should be passed on to an imagined future". Thus, today's heritage is widely acknowledged as an agent of assembling multiple futures. Lowenthal (2015) argued, "Every act of recognition alters survivals from the past. Simply to appreciate or protect a relic, let alone to embellish or imitate it, affects its form or our impressions. Just as selective recall skews memory and subjectivity shapes historical insight, so manipulating antiquities refashions their appearance and meaning. Interaction with a heritage continually alters its nature and context, whether by choice or by chance". Harrison (2015) perceived heritage as an ongoing act of assemblage, which occurs in the process of discussing past values, guided or conditioned by the conscious, responsible outlook to the future.

Indeed, the heritage and identity of the future

are constructed in the present. Thus, the framework of heritage connotations from different periods, in combination with socially-inclusive methods of sense-retrieval, would widely inform the heritage process on the way to identity construction.

Conclusions

City identity can be unfolded through two or more congruent layers of existence, such as architectural heritage and society. Sustainable development of architectural heritage is a complex process (involving communication, negotiation, engagement, assemblage, meaning creation, and knowledge transfer), which expands beyond conventional heritage protection, and multiple bodies and stakeholders get involved in the journey toward sustaining the city identity. Heritage is a process that requires looking ahead and looking back at the same time. Considering the above, the human component can be integrated into the heritage process and sustained by a combination of the following methods: 1) looking to the past: analyzing the city's structures and forms, searching for social traces and semiotic meanings; 2) looking to the future: using participatory design methods. This could be achieved through an approach encompassing desk studies alongside with on-site surveys, fieldwork, and participation. This is still an emerging study subject, worth experimenting with at locations, especially in such unique regions as Siberia. Thus, all of the above can become a hypothesis to be tested out in specific Siberian environments.

This literature review has built a broad theoretical base and outlined a set of approaches that currently exist in the field. With that in mind, we aim to propose and develop research that would question the possibility of sustainable, collaborative heritage processes in Siberia, as the first step on a possible journey toward constructing the city identity. The research will propose a set of analytical tools for a preliminary design study on heritage and culminate with suggesting a methodology for establishing sustainable heritage processes and providing continuity and survivability while taking into consideration the critical evaluation given in this paper and the limitations discovered.

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СОХРАНЕНИЕ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ ИСТОРИЧЕСКОЙ СРЕДЫ В СИБИРИ: КРИТИЧЕСКИЙ ОБЗОР ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ

13

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Аннотация
В настоящее время проекты, связанные с развитием уникальной исторической среды в Сибири, в основном, противоречивы. Тем не менее, есть возможность найти более целостный подход к сохранению местного наследия, который мог бы учитывать местные культуры и самобытность через понимание того, как развивается историческая среда, а также через конкретные пространственные и архитектурные практики. **Цель исследования:** Создать теоретическую и методологическую основу для поддержания местной идентичности с архитектурной точки зрения. **Методы:** В соответствии с методологическими рекомендациями Грота и Вана использовались такие методы, как критический анализ литературы и логическая аргументация. **Результаты:** Было обнаружено, что понятие «городская идентичность» может раскрываться через два или более конгруэнтных «слоя». В данном исследовании рассматриваются архитектурное наследие и общество как два из возможных «слоев». Предположительно, локальная идентичность исторической среды может быть сохранена в процессе неразрушающего развития с помощью сочетания следующих методов: 1) обращение к прошлому посредством анализа структуры города и поиска "социальных следов" и семиотических значений; 2) взгляд в будущее с использованием методов соучаствующего проектирования. Было решено протестировать методологию на конкретных исторических условиях Сибири. Приведённый критический обзор литературы предоставит исследователям и практикам в данной области базовую теоретическую основу.

Ключевые слова
Архитектура, философия архитектуры, идентичность, наследие, партисипация, устойчивое развитие.