PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN CITY BUILDING: CASE OF THE ARKHANGELSK REGION

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Abstract. The technocratic approaches to city planning are replaced by integrated urban development in the contemporary society. Management-wise, urban design is a complex matter which involves a large number of stakeholders. Most important, modern city development requires the residents to become active participants of the decision-making process. The article aims at presenting the process of urban planning in the Arkhangelsk region, the north-west of Russia. City planning approaches of the Arkhangelsk region government are undergoing transformations. The residents' community has started a negotiation process with the municipal government to grant a say in urban planning. However, the communication process is not easy. On the one hand, communication channels are defined and functioning. The citizens use the Internet and mass media to learn about the authorities' plans and actions. The risen community awareness has put forward first collective action in the region. On the other hand, there is still much to be done. This research is evidence-based and analyses the results of a survey among the Arkhangelsk region residents highlighting the ways the community can impact the urban space planning, as well as the relationships between the municipality administration and city dwellers on the issue. Though an extensive public inclusion needs significant time and effort, the findings show that certain changes have been started.

Keywords: urban planning, city development, comfortable living, municipal government, social inclusion, public participation, decision-making process, Arkhangelsk region.

Introduction

Today, more than half of the world's population live in cities, which puts the necessity for a thought-through city development to a new level. It goes without saying that comfortable for life cities do not emerge momentarily. They are meticulously planned by a whole range of experts, beginning from civil and design engineers, project managers, architects to environmental planners and surveyors. Evidently, urban development is bound to take considerable time and finance. It demands integrated efforts and diligent actions' alignment

between organizations, institutions and individuals. The complexity of the mission expands the respective scope of action and/or decision-making powers as well as the financial and human resources to initiate, moderate and implement the necessary processes in organizational networks and decision-making structures. Creating serviceable cities that are inclusive, salubrious, resilient, and sustainable — relies on intensive policy coordination and well-planned investments.

In a democratic society, an integrated urban development replaces technocratic planning approaches (Lee 2003; Hassan 2011; Coelho 2021). Urban development theories of the XXI century privilege people and their human experience as the central driver for ideal place concepts. Bottom-up approach which implies vast-scale public engagement is a prerequisite for favorable conditions and governmental financial support, accompanied by the according applicable regulations of task distribution and financing models in a multi-level legal system. Individual interest in their living environment upgrade is as critical as governmental approaches and architect talent (Nicholls 2016). Human energy and citizens' initiative, personal perspective and yearning for new life meanings are the main drivers for the authority and public cooperation.

The given study focuses on the urban development process in the Arkhangelsk region, the north-west of Russia. The cities of the Arkhangelsk region — Severodvinsk, Novodvinsk, Kotlas, Koryazhma — formed around manufacturing entities in order to meet the state's transportation and industrial needs. The regional center Arkhangelsk city has a long and rich history, which can be traced in many geographical and cultural artefacts constituting the area. Historically, the process of Arkhangelsk growth has been somewhat complicated with different, sometimes incompatible architectural approaches shifting each other. The present-day city development plan follows an intensive building strategy that pursues the idea of demolishing old structures and constructing modern housing on these sites. The chosen strategy places an array of questions for the city government, allocating the municipal resources and arranging the placemaking process.

Communication between the city residents and municipal government, so important for the modern urban development, is the research topic of this article. As communication is getting more and more value for city growth, it is vital to clarify its manifestation in the cities of the Arkhangelsk region. The present study will highlight 1) communication tools available for the residents, 2) communicative public inclusion, and 3) control leverages accessible to the citizens of the region and dependable on successful communication with the city government. We will also focus on the existing dwellers' perspectives on city growth in the Arkhangelsk region. Such ideas should define the positive

urban changes potential. The findings should both demonstrate the degree of public participation in urban development and the features of successful city growth as they are perceived by the residents. Altogether, in this research we will place the current situation of the Arkhangelsk region cities development in the context of modern trends of urban planning.

Theoretical Background

Social Construction of a City

The city, as a space for human interaction, is a popular research topic. The city of the XXI century is a socially constructed space (Misoczky & Oliveira 2018; Unlu-Yucesoy 2016). A. Giddens in his theory of structuration represents the city as a delimited from the inside scene of action in which various social interactions unfold (Lamsal 2012). This means that city's boundaries are not determined by geographical or administrative categories but by a person's sense of belonging to a given territory (Zieleniec 2018). In addition, a city is a kind of space that has a certain functional content and material, architectural content (Wolfrum & Janson 2019). Each city has a specific spatial structure (Almusaed & Almssad 2020). It is created in the process of transforming natural land-scapes, social and spatial relations, the movement of social objects, institutions, spheres of urban life (Radina 2015). The structure of the city emerges through the division of the territory into planning areas, functional zones, which are united by a system of transport highways. The transport system of the city, various communications, and facilities in conjunction with the engineering systems of life support constitute the urban planning framework of the territory, which serves as the basis for the development of a functional zoning scheme.

Today, urban space is researched in a tight bond with human activities. City space is looked at as the environment for human potential realization. Fundamentally, urban space quality is defined by the ability of cities, on the one hand, to be the center of the creative forces of society, to accumulate and fulfil their creative potential and, on the other hand, to build appropriate settings for each person joining different forms of city life (Akhiezer 1989: 29). Social facts become primary in the mission of city space planning. So, the process of urban development is connected with the task of making cities comfortable for a human. Social needs are prior to the city's physical appearance, its industry, markets, communication and traffic routes (Mumford 2001). A smartly organized city is the one comfortable for life. Citizens' satisfaction with their living conditions in a particular city space is the indicator of a successful city, or urban planning. The livability and sustainability of a place is at the same time

a goal and assessment criteria of the urban development policies and governmental potency.

The city is an entity that promotes culture's accumulation and development through elaborate interactions, redundancy and variety (Kennell 2010). A man makes the key element of culture and society. An individual's aim is their self-improvement, and the latter is only possible through interactions with other people. The full value of a man's development is dependent upon the quality of the city's environment, its education and culture (Comunian 2011). Involvement in the city space means citizens' active and intensive interactions. It also presupposes a persons' relations with the environment itself and those objects that form this space (McKenna 2020). Citizens' social activity, their active participation in the city's life and usage of public places represent the main indicators of the involvement in the city's space (Kirkhaug 2016). The degree and mode of an individual's involvement in the city's social space derives from the features of the city's environment, a person's social activity and their local identity (Drannikova 2018). All this advances residents' participation in the planning of their living space to the level of high importance.

A modern city is, actually, an outcome of individual spatial decisions that interact with each other (Healey 2007; Kenny 2014). These spatial decisions should be multifaceted, thoroughly balanced, and far-reaching as their outcomes impact large masses of city inhabitants. Urban planning is a tool that allows to formulate medium-term and long-term tasks of urban development, increase the efficiency of budget utilization, distribute economic development within a certain area to achieve social goals and create the basis for cooperation between local authorities, private sector and the public (Reyes Plata 2019). In the framework of the sociological understanding of the city, the concept of urban space comes as a product of the interaction of two units: city and person (Tonnelat 2010). In this union, there are such components as material artefacts (architecture, buildings, design) and immaterial phenomena (human living experiences in the city, motivations and identity markers of the city dwellers). The first part is represented by the city itself, whereas the second one is transmitted through the social factor and personal manifestations. In his research, V.L. Glazychev acknowledges the nature of urban planning and exploring the interconnection of the physical organization of urban space with ideological positions, economic and management rules (Glazychev 2018). The scientist notes the importance of tying together social, economic, geographic and urban planning.

Speaking about city planning, it has always been a political issue. For example, many researchers sought the solution to the undemocratic, exclusive nature of city zoning (Trutnev 2003; Einstein 2019; Galič & Schuilenburg 2020;

Whittemore 2020; Khmelnitskaya & Ihalainen 2021). Henri Lefebvre, in his emancipatory concept of "the right to the city", advocated the possession of the citizens of the main role in all decisions concerning the city (Terentyev 2015). He pointed out the need for residents to participate in the life of their city. It is only via the personal involvement a man realizes himself as a part of the enterprise. The townspeople are able to change and improve their city. The "right to the city" implies not only the right to participate but also the right to appropriate the urban space, that is, the availability of open spaces for citizens. Thus, Lefebvre's vision rooted in Marx's theory and articulated in 1960-ies, became an inspiration for the modern-day approach to urban design and, eventually, the concept of a smart city [Purcell 2014; Galič & Schuilenburg 2020].

Smart City Concept

Today's research on urban planning is primarily conducted within the framework of a smart city theory. Knowledge-based, smart urban building has become a kind of a new methodology of urban development by the end of the XX century (Sabatini-Marques 2020; Vasilenko 2020; Vershinina 2020; Holubava 2019; Husár 2017). The approach appeared as a reaction to the economic challenges of the neoliberal world, financial limitations of urban growth, political and governance gaps (Mundada 2020). Smart city building is rooted in scientific knowledge, experimental data, and concrete evidence. As the methodology of smart city development is aimed at the enhanced safety, sustainability, and investment, it requires intelligent management, professional expertise, digital transformation, and broad-spectrum connectivity (Huang 2021). Decision-making of smart city building is tied up with the technology and locational awareness. Speaking of the connectivity, the communicative nature of the smart city building methodology demands real-time information exchange without obstacles, easy networking, and responsiveness.

Smooth communication in a smart city is associated with accessibility, integration, and coordination, which today are cemented in IT (Haidine 2016). Information technologies and communications make a digital infrastructure of a smart city parallel to the physical infrastructure of buildings, roads, transportation, etc. High-speed internet, autonomous mobility, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, applications are the "smartness" characteristics of a modern city wired for increased efficiencies, reduced costs, and enhanced quality of life. The citizens, municipality and other city actors acquire massive useful information at their disposal. The availability of up-to-date information on the city services, Internet voting, tools for direct communication with relevant local government representatives — speak of the smart city methodology as a democratic way of urban development and highlight its attractiveness for public (Jo 2019).

Open communication via IT allows for a new city governance. The smart city governance with its connectivity and extended communication allows for increased public participation in urban planning and management. In spite of the occasional accusations in technocracy, the smart city methodology proposes efficient state management, targeted local governance and effective educational strategies (Vasilenko 2020; Karvonen 2020; Coelho 2021). Theoretically, there is a clear orientation on public inclusion and human capital integration. However, to function to the citizens' advantage, ICT need to be citizen-centred and user-friendly. At the same time, there is extended evidence, that smart cities are not always inclusive or bottom up (Paskaleva 2021; Ma 2018; Yigitcanlar 2015; Yigitcanlar 2019). To work well, smart city technologies presuppose digitally educated citizens and perfectly functioning technologies, which is not always attainable (Aurigi 2020; Lam 2018). Researchers also notice that the success factors of smart cities are rather hard to assess (Paskaleva 2021; Tomičić-Pupek 2019).

One of the most challenging problems to tackle is the one of governance. Political stability and vision, transparent and participatory decision-making are not easy to achieve even with all the ICT. Community trust and support turn out to be the central problem factors here (Yigitcanlar 2015). Researchers agree that community-based type of smart activities seeking bottom-up, socio-technological inclusive approach that produces non-planned forms of citizen empowerment in urban governance is the form of a smart city governance that would mitigate all the problems associated with technocratic solutions and lack of sustainability and equity (Harris 2015; Alizadeh 2018; Mondschein 2019; Hui 2021). Engaged community planning values local context and takes control over investments, urban design, and administrative culture.

The degree of community engagement in the urban governance process differs significantly. B. Bajracharya and S. Khan (Bajracharya, Khan 2019) point out three levels of community inclusion:
1. information sharing
2. community consultation
3. active participation.

The given levels are differentiated depending on the governance functions that are transferred from the city managers to its citizens. So, the first level only includes the informative aspect of community participation and is one-sided, the second level implies the exchange of ideas between the residents and city management, the third level allows for active engagement of the community in the development and delivery of the city building projects. Full inclusion of the community is an ideal goal. There are not so many cities in the world that are qualified as highly developed smart cities (Akimova 2019).

However, such a goal is not easy to achieve in the periphery. Researchers claim that the community participation is a complex phenomenon that is not sufficiently studied (Fu 2020).

Australian sociologists I. Mateo-Babiano and G. Lee (Mateo-Babiano & Lee 2020) point out the following indicators of smart city planning:
— safety and accessibility,
— nature and particularly trees,
— water in all its healthy forms,
— shelter and a place to rest,
— playful space and activity.

Combining the two sets of rules for smart city planning, we can state that building the city of the XXI century incorporates both the process of active participation of all city stakeholders and the result of their activities — a sustainable, resilient, economically successful and comfortable for its dwellers city.

Modern City Governance and Public Participation

Pondering the weighty responsibility of city administration in city planning, the researchers argue, that as a governance tool, placemaking can be a pathway for social inclusion justice and creating a voice for the voiceless, through government policy and programmes. Yet it can also be a party to the disputes brought about by the impact of placeless architecture in public places. Strategic placemaking is an example of a policy-led, strategic approach to creating places (Mateo-Babiano & Lee 2020: 23–30). This strategy can be built as the process of the citizens' empowerment. Ultimately, the public involvement phenomenon builds on the belief that those influenced by the decision have a say in the decision-making process. The expected outcome is that the public opinion will impact the accepted city-planning policy. There is a growing expectation on local governments to share the field of responsibilities in regard to place with other stakeholders, i.e. city dwellers (Fincher, Pardy & Shaw 2016).

Public participation includes all stages of the city development process. Defining public participation in urban planning, M. Nursey-Bray (Nursey-Bray 2020) highlights the following verbs as the yardsticks for taken measures: inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower (Nursey-Bray 2020: 87–88). The researcher accentuates the importance of balanced and objective information for the public. According to the scientist, it is vital to:
— help the communities in their acknowledgement of the problem and understanding the options for its solving;
— get public perspective on the problem diagnosis;
— discuss the options for the problem solving;

— communicate with the public during the whole process in order to guarantee a consistent intake of public interests;
— collaborate with the city dwellers through the whole duration of the decision-making process, such as negotiation of the alternatives and final solution;
— pass the final decision-making to the public.

The comfort of public participation and non-compulsory social activity are directly tied to the quality of city planning and its correspondence to the population's wants. Urban design is an interdisciplinary three-dimensional planning tool. The three dimensions include: 1) land use, 2) infrastructure, 3) and community planning system in creating, strengthening, reinforcing, and sustaining great and strong urban societies and their places (Tonnelat 2010). Accordingly, urban planning practice is indispensably political in interfacing private and public interests as well as their domains. However, traditional, centralized and top-down urban planning, which is still current in many European countries, does not yet recognize the significance of genuine citizen participation (Horelli 2013: 12). In Russia, certain changes have been initiated through scattered projects in separate cities, especially in megapolises (Gamurak 2019: 59). Our research tells of the initial phase of smart city planning process in the Arkhangelsk region, north of Russia.

Method

The data used for this paper came from a field sociological study, including a mass survey in the cities of the Arkhangelsk region between June 2018 and August 2019. The survey aimed at studying the perceptions of the Arkhangelsk region residents regarding urban development. The data obtained as a result of the survey were processed using a statistical analysis software package IBM SPSS Statistics. The research involved the main cities and towns of the region: its centre, Arkhangelsk, and Severodvinsk, Novodvinsk, Kotlas and Koryazhma. The general population of the mass survey consisted of adult residents of the cities listed above — 527 279 people. The sample population was 783 people. The sample was quota, representative of gender, age, and place of residence. Participants were recruited through research into local stakeholders, current contacts, and common city dwellers. They were chosen according to their residence in the Arkhangelsk region, or likelihood of being affected by the project (such as being a student planning to reside in the Arkhangelsk region). The questionnaire developed for the mass survey contained 37 questions that were suggested to the respondents in a textual form. The interviewers talked face-to-face with the interviewees at versatile public venues like concert hall recreations, administrative facilities, schools and hospitals with the control of age

and gender quotas. The results of our study include the percentage of the answers that were given by the respondents. The number of the refused interviews was not considered in findings. The survey questions referred to the following issues:

- attitude to the city,
- evaluation of comfort of the city environment,
- dynamics of comfort of the city environment (positive and negative changes for the last 2–3 years),
- comfort environment as an ideal construct (characteristics, objects, distinctive features etc.),
- comparison of the city of residence with an ideal city in terms of comfort of the city,
- subjects of comfortable city environment (authorities, managing organizations, population, contractors, etc.),
- evaluation of their activity in realization of comfortable city environment, resources for comfortable city.

The survey questions included those of people's relationship and experience tied to their residence in the region, the use of city infrastructure, what they think city planning should be or will be like in the future, and how they think the city planning will impact the region growth. We also asked for a general opinion on urban development, what they consider greatest challenges and assets.

In spite of the fact that the survey was public and aimed at gathering an extensive feedback from various population layers, we have to admit there were city residents that had no chance of being included into the sample. People with an active citizen position and considerable communicative resources had no difficulty answering the research questions. However, there are always city dwellers that prefer an introverted life style and lack connection with the public society sphere due to multiple reasons. Those residents stayed outside the research scope and manifested an essential limitation to the study.

In addition to the survey, we collected and analyzed documents tied to city development (such as reports, news articles, maps, master plans, letters to city officials). We also had informal conversations with Arkhangelsk residents regarding their views on city building.

To a large extent the questions of the survey focused on clarifying the degree of the residents' awareness of the city planning processes in the Arkhangelsk region. Information levels regarding city building are demonstrative of public communication provided by the city management. In this research, we aimed at studying the communication of the city dwellers and city government. As has been stated above, communication between the two mentioned parties is critical for urban development. That is why we believe it essential to understand

1) the level of citizens' informativeness of urban development processes at the places of their residence and 2) communication tools used in the cities for this purpose.

Results and Discussion

The Arkhangelsk region is a suburban part of Russia, even if it has a considerable impact for the state in terms of its industrial assets. Speaking of its urban development level, we have to acknowledge that it is rather modest. A visitor from Moscow or Saint Petersburg would definitely notice a lack of attractiveness and so-called cozy atmosphere that are created with the help of lightning, comfortable leisure spaces, washed sidewalks, etc. Life quality in the Arkhangelsk region falls behind many millionaire cities of Russia. Low budgets have always been the reason for leaving things as they are. So, the concept of a smart city that presupposes serious monetary support, has taken its own form here. IT technologies, dashboards and sensors cannot make the core of the smart city concept here because of their cost. However, the communicative nature of Arkhangelsk development planning, city dwellers' awareness of the changes, citizens' initiatives in urban building are the aspects that allow for speaking of the smart city development concept as a methodological principle of the Arkhangelsk region development. Below we are going to share the results of our research into the changes happening in city planning of the Arkhangelsk region cities related to the modern trends of urban development and the concept of smart city.

Communication Tools Available for the Citizens

One of the main issues that arise in relation to communication between the city management and residents is communication channels. When the residents were asked about the possible ways of communicating public opinion to the city government, they highlighted the use of the media (54,3 %), the administration website (49,5 %), special websites for calls and initiatives of citizens (43,2 %), rallies and pickets (39,8 %), etc. (Fig. 1). The necessity to simplify the ways of communication between the authorities and citizens was an often-mentioned topic of discussion. One of the ideas suggested by the respondents is the use of *the expert community of opinion leaders*. Regular monitoring of opinions of the city population in various municipal districts was also noted among the possible solutions.

Communicative Public Inclusion

It is, definitely, vital to have the access to communication with the city government. In this respect, communication tools available for the city dwellers
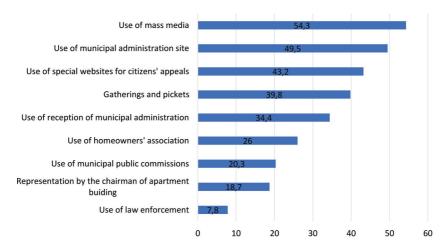
Figure 1. Communicating public opinion to the city government

are indispensable. Another fundamental criterion of public participation in the city building process is the manifestation of the communicative opportunities, i.e. the residents' enthusiasm to contact those officials responsible for the urban development. The overwhelming majority of city dwellers are sure that it is necessary to convey their opinion on urban problems to the authorities. However, 38.3% of the respondents did not ever try to initiate such communication (Fig. 2). It means, they never tried to express their personal opinion on their own. Law suits or other targeted public demands are almost out of question. Most common means of communicating used by the townspeople, are rallies, mass media, administration websites and websites for appeals and initiatives.

It is noteworthy that in Arkhangelsk, in comparison with the other cities of the region, the media are not so often used to convey public opinion (11,9 %). In Severodvinsk, both the media (22,9 %) and the website of the city administration (18,1 %) are more often used. In small towns even fewer people tried to convey their opinion (46,5 %). If we compare the answers of men and women, we do not see any special differences, except men more often called the reception of the administration. Age differences are also not significant. At the same time, we noticed that middle-aged population uses the city administration website more often than other age categories.

Control Leverages Accessible to the Citizens of the Region

Communication is one of the features that is integral of the development process. Another critical issue that defines public inclination to communicate
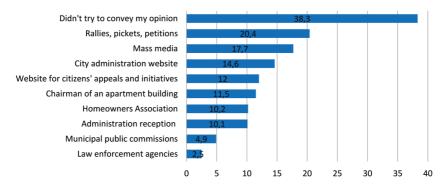
Figure 2. Means of informing the authorities about their opinions
used by the respondents

with the city managers are the real levers of influence accessible for the public. What can people do to change the city, apart from mere talks, from the residents' perspective? The survey has revealed such options as:
1) the participation of citizens in public hearings (39,5 %),
2) citizens' control of the contracting organizations' work progress (38,3 %),
3) placement by the city administration of detailed information in the media and on the Internet (37,8 %) (Fig. 3).

The townspeople believe, they should take part in the development of project documentation for the improvement of urban space. According to this perspective, the citizens are the direct users of the urban environment; therefore, their opinions should be taken into account. The control over the decisions implementation is what the residents demand.

The reality differs from what the residents would like to have in terms of their influence on the city development plans implementation. The diagramme below presents the actual actions of the dwellers towards urban building. A significant part of the respondents does not do anything to control the actions of local authorities in solving urban problems (38,4 %). Almost half of the respondents get acquainted with the information posted by the city administration in the media and on the Internet. Rarely do city dwellers participate in public hearings, study reports of city officials, and put forward their own initiatives (Fig. 4).

It is also remarkable that Arkhangelsk residents participate in public hearings much less than the residents of other cities in the region (15 %). It is uncommon for them to put forward initiatives (8,8 %). At the same time, residents of Severodvinsk are more active in this relation (21,2 % and 19,6 %,
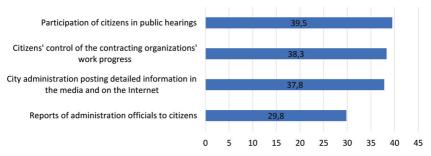
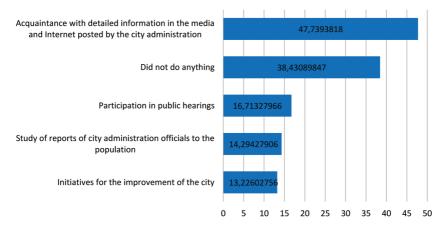Figure 3. Residents' demand of control over the changes

Figure 4. City decision controls used by respondents

respectively). It can probably be explained by a special attitude of the town-speople and the authorities in the monotown built around state-owned enterprises in the Soviet times. Comparing the answers of respondents by gender, we can say that women more often than men get acquainted with information in the media and the Internet (52,5 % vs 41,6 %). However, they less often participate in public hearings and put forward initiatives. Young people, who are considered the most active part of the population, in fact, more often than other age groups do nothing to control the decisions of the city authorities (47,2 %). Middle-aged population is a more active age category in relation to the use of various means of control. More than half of the respondents (54,2 %) get acquainted with information in the media and the Internet. With an increase in the level of education, respondents more often seek to control the decisions

of the authorities, including the participation in public hearings (21,2 %) and putting forward initiatives (19,2 %).

Latest Developments of the Two Largest Cities in the Study

The case of Zarusye park is an illustrative example of public inclusion into the city building process. The park was built in 2018 under the programme for creating a comfortable urban environment. Construction of parks is one of the most desirable initiatives Arkhangelsk residents mention during the interviews. Nevertheless, Zarusye planning caused numerous unpleasant questions. In the process of construction, most of the living trees were cut down. In addition, the public was dissatisfied by the quality of work. Overall, the city public expressed multiple doubts about the implementation of the project.

A similar case happened during the construction of the Maysky park in 2019. The city dwellers were given the opportunity to participate in the planning process. One of the possibilities referred to the choice of tree species to plant in the park. However, Arkhangelsk government faced certain challenges. The activists protested about the restrictions concerning the choice of tree species and the number of trees planted in the park. This case could be considered a specific communicative victory of the citizens. The city administration had to come to an agreement with the opposing activists.

One of the most recent cases highlighting the communicative process in urban building is related to the design of one of the largest Arkhangelsk city districts, Solombala. The city administration took part in public negotiations on landscaping a square named Solombala. The discussion of the new master plan of Arkhangelsk, designed for the future until 2040, took place in an innovative fashion. The draft general plan was posted on the portal of the region draft regulatory acts. All the comments and wishes of the Arkhangelsk residents could be sent electronically to the regional portal. The citizens wrote to the Ministry of Construction and Architecture of the Arkhangelsk Region, leaving an entry in the registration book for the visitors of the project exposition. That was one of the first working opportunities for common residents to have a say in urban planning.

In 2020, there happened several conflicts over the structuring of urban space. The events in the center of Arkhangelsk (Vodnikov lane), can even be called dangerous, as several wooden houses were set on fire. The residents themselves and a number of media outlets believe that these events were a means of clearing the territory in the city center for the construction of multi-apartment residential complexes. One of the local construction holdings was blamed as the customer of the fires. According to the authorities, the construction holding was not interested in setting the houses on fire. However, the towns-

people did not believe this. After the residents of the affected quarter went to a spontaneous rally, the city administration had to react. The authorities agreed that in the affected place, according to the general plan, no residential complexes could be built. The administration claimed that in the distant future, after the resettlement of the old wooden houses, a new school would be built.

A lack of trust towards the local construction holdings was also demonstrated in Severodvinsk, the second largest city of the region. One of the construction companies proposed building up a green area (as a different perspective puts it, "wasteland") on the shore of the lake, the so-called "100th quarter". The project involved not only the development of multi-storey buildings, but also recreational areas and public spaces. However, many residents of Severodvinsk did not agree with the development of this space. Their requirement was to keep the territory park-like. The dwellers used various means of expressing their point of view, including rallies and appeals to the authorities. The issue turned out to be so scandalous that it was brought forward to a local referendum.

The described case demonstrated a great degree of organization and a collective action of Severodvinsk residents. We cannot but compare Severo-dvinsk residents' actions with those of Arkhangelsk residents who did not initiate any control measures in a similar situation. In the city center (the intersection of Pomorskaya Street and Troitsky Avenue in Arkhangelsk), the green zone was given over for the construction of a museum storage and a business center. Residents of Arkhangelsk started pickets in defense of this park, disseminated information through social networks but could not save the green zone.

Residents' Analysis of the Urban Development Prospects

As it was pointed out earlier, our survey included open-ended questions aimed at revealing the personal opinions on the improvement of urban space. The general idea was to elicit the residents' views on the desired prospects of city growth. Usually, open-ended questions cause a minimal level of response as compared to the rest of the questionnaire. However, in this research, the vast majority of respondents presented their answers, some of them being rather lengthy. This definitely indicates the importance of the denoted topic for the population. After analyzing the answers, we may conclude that a major part of the citizens feels the city administration lacks knowledge and experience in such matters. The respondents often consider the experience of Kazan or the cities of Belarus. A suggestion of inviting modern urbanists from capital cities to the Arkhangelsk region for the engagement in the local expert community has been articulated.

According to the respondents, the urban design approach needs to be modified in the Arkhangelsk region. It needs to become wholistic and thought-

through. This refers to the construction of sidewalks and playgrounds as a part of general territory planning. Parking lots should go together with benches and appropriate lighting. When repairing roads, the pedestrian crossings need to be located in the places convenient for people, not randomly. The condition of the roadway always raises complaints, but within the framework of our topic, it is remarkable that respondents suggest planning sidewalks within the urban space. In modern Arkhangelsk there are still sections of streets without sidewalks, with wooden (often rotten) pavements, with destroyed curbs, spontaneously turned into parking lots. The administration's attempts to separate the carriageway from the sidewalk often come down to the installation of rails. Citizens offer to remove these "fences".

The other suggestion relates to the necessity of taking into account the direction of pedestrian and car traffic, the number of cars parking on the territory, sidewalk equipment and driveways above the level of lawns. The lawn can be protected from transport by bushes between the road and the pedestrian path (this will also protect pedestrians from dirty splashes). Also, given the growing popularity of a healthy lifestyle, it is necessary to consider bicycle paths along roads and sidewalks when structuring urban space. Concurrently, the swelling number of cars requires a revision of the urban space in order to organize parking spaces. The format of underground or multi-level parking lots next to social and commercial facilities seems to be a sensible way out.

Expectedly, the respondents paid significant attention to the recreational areas of urban space. Parks, children's and sports grounds, public leisure facilities should be designed in every micro-district. The imperative of maintaining the beaches and embankments of the city in good condition was also formulated. This is due to the fact that the Arkhangelsk region is historically associated with the Dvina river and White sea. The water facility and its nearing area play an impressive role in the structure of the city space. Considerable attention of respondents was drawn to the problem of organizing places for walking domestic animals, which appeared rather unexpected but fair. Indeed, when structuring urban space, it is necessary to organize closed areas for dog walking. This will remove the problems of landscaping the city and aggressive animal behaviour.

Conclusions

The research has highlighted the common approaches to modern urban planning. The Arkhangelsk region is just at the beginning of transformations towards smart city development. The Arkhangelsk region cities, as well as many other Russian cities, experience a lack of planning and technical facilities essential for the solution of issues connected to speedy urbanization — parking

lots, pedestrian facilities, and leisure time grounds. Finding sustainable solutions to urban challenges requires cooperation across the various sectors of society, as well as in divergent research fields and innovation. Management of urban development involves a wide range of actors in network structures, such as the municipal government, civil society, and the private sector. Community engagement is a comparatively new approach to urban planning and requires a serious adjustment of the existing municipal governmental patterns. Definitely, city management will undergo a deep transformation process to meet the needs of contemporary urban planning and design growth strategies that perform well in the complexities of a suburban Russian city.

The conducted research allowed to trace the features of the present-day developments in the planning of the Arkhangelsk region cities. We focused our study on the communication process happening between the city dwellers and governmental structures. Three main aspects were pointed out for the analysis: 1) communication tools, 2) communicative activity, and 3) control leverages accessible to the citizens. Answers to the general open-ended questions aimed at to eliciting the residents' views on the desired prospects of city growth, were a meaningful part of the research. The collected data let us draw a number of conclusions:

- Citizens understand the benefits of using the media and Internet resources to pass their opinions to the city authorities, including their view on the structuring and improvement of the urban environment.
- Urban residents singled out effective measures of direct influence and expression of their word: participation in rallies, filing petitions and appealing to the city administration.
- However, a significant percentage of the townspeople do not engage in such activities, showing a certain inertia.
- Means of controlling the actions of the city government also remain underexploited. The townspeople only declare the importance of participating in public hearings and studying the reports of city officials. In fact, the participation is limited to reading the information that the city administration publishes in the media and Internet resources general.

Drawing conclusions, we can state that today, the Arkhangelsk municipal government has started to realize the necessity of enabling people regardless of social background, age, gender, religion — to participate in civic life. The paramount concern is the contentment of the citizens. This includes considerations of potentiality in terms of the environment applicability and the effects of socio-economic services. Modern cities are in the position to solve the current social, economic, environmental and cultural challenges through integrated strategies and by the involvement of their citizens in policy-making.

The Arkhangelsk region is at the very beginning of this challenging yet indispensable road. The first steps have proved to be laborious and took serious effort on behalf of the public. However, citizens' concern and active participation have already brought the problems' negotiations to fruition. No doubt, there is still much to be done. The prospects of the Arkhangelsk region development are still rather vague and need careful consideration. More work is anticipated in the direction of building communication channels between the city government and residents. Speaking of research, further studies need to be produced related to the productive mechanisms of such communication.

Acknowledgements

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ОБЩЕСТВЕННОЕ УЧАСТИЕ В ГОРОДСКОМ РАЗВИТИИ: НА ПРИМЕРЕ АРХАНГЕЛЬСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ

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Аннотация. В современном градостроительстве на смену технократическим подходам приходит интегрированное городское развитие. С точки зрения управления городской дизайн — сложный вопрос, в котором участвует большое количество заинтересованных сторон. Прежде всего современное развитие города требует, чтобы жители стали активными участниками процесса принятия решений. Анализируется процесс градостроительства в Архангельской области, Северо-Запад России. Градостроительная политика правительства Архангельской области претерпевает серьезные трансформации. Сообщество начало переговорный процесс с муниципальным правительством, дабы обеспечить жителям право голоса в городском планировании. Однако процесс общения между администрацией и гражданами довольно неоднозначен. С одной стороны, каналы связи определены и функционируют. Граждане используют интернет и СМИ, чтобы узнавать о планах и действиях властей. Повышение общественной осведомленности в регионе послужило триггером первых коллективных действий в области градостроительства. С другой стороны, многое еще предстоит сделать. Исследование основано на фактических данных открытых источников и анализе результатов опроса жителей Архангельской области. Результаты опроса позволяют определить, каким образом сообщество может повлиять на планирование городского пространства, а также на взаимоотношения между администрацией и жителями городов по этому поводу. Хотя широкое вовлечение общественности требует значительного времени и усилий, очевидно, что определенные изменения уже начались: имидж малой родины стал центром внимания жителей Архангельской области.

Ключевые слова: градостроительство, развитие города, комфортная жизнь, муниципальное управление, социальная интеграция, участие общественности, процесс принятия решений, Архангельская область.