

Anthropogenic Space or Urban Environment: Psychological Researches of the "Context" of a Modern Person Everyday Life

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Abstract—The article reviews several trends of local researches on the analysis of psychological features of the urban environment influence on the psychological well-being of a person. Psychology of the urban environment and the social psychology of the city could be marked as areas of psychological aspects analysis as a part of "man-city" interaction system. Within this system there are defined number of factors that have a stressful effect on the mentality. A number of researches have focus on the examination of possibilities of the subject to assess the space of the city as a resource for "transforming" an anthropogenic space into an urban environment. As an example of above trends, the research of subjective assessment peculiarities of the urban environment architecture using methods of experimental psychosemantics and the psychological representation of everyday life spatial-objective environment research is given.

Keywords—*anthropogenic space; urban environment; psychology of urban environment; social psychology of urban environment; stress inducing factor of the urban environment; cognitive urban planning; "potential" of the urban environment; experimental psychosemantics; psychological representation of the urban environment; location-situation; spatial semantic differential*

I. INTRODUCTION

The research of the person's perception characteristics of the urban environment appears relevant, but acquires various "shades" in the definition of the subject of research, depending on various factors: the branch of psychology which guides the research of phenomena; methodological paradigm which offers theoretical assumptions and methodological tools; situational factors that determine the

interest of researchers to the study of the urban environment [1]. At present, one could acknowledge steady interest of various scientific professionals who explore the idea of a comfortable environment organization for a person, towards the actual urban philosophical, sociological, and, amongst others, psychological aspects of a "friendly", "convenient", "comfortable" urban environment creation. The analysis of psychological research in the field of interaction of man and the urban environment allows one to select several trends of mentioned surveys [2].

II. STRESS INDUCING OF A CITY AS AN ANTHROPOGENIC SPACE

The most global perspective of the modern interaction interpretation between the man and the urban environment is the influence of anthropogenic factors on the mentality, with an assumption about the predominantly "difficult" and "deficient" nature of this interaction which has adverse consequences for various aspects of the psychological well-being of modern man [3]. The keynote of this research is the definition of the thesis about the "stress inducing" of the urban environment for the subject. An example is visual ecology. The subject of visual ecology used to be various "pressing" factors of the urban environment, for example, "increased geometrizing of the environment", "disproportion of architectural forms on a human scale", "visual noise" as conditions that ensure the "alienation" of a person from the environment, and requiring correction by structural urbanists [4]. In his analysis of the urban environment various factors, which affects the work of the mentality. M. Falikman, notes "... Megapolis is not commensurate with a person. Huge distances separate the city dweller from home, from work,

from friends, with whom it would be nice to spend the evening, and from relatives, who could throw the children for a while to spend this evening with friends. And sometimes the place seems to be at stone throw, but circumstances intervene, most often denoted by the words "the city jammed." And the one who wants to be in time everywhere is forced to fuss, even if it is contrary to his mental outlook" [5].

A thorough factors clustering, which are "disproportionate" to the needs of the subject, but inherent in the modern urban environment, is realized in the modern social psychology of the city, which subject is the urban environment as a "condition", "factor" "... of the subjective qualities formation of a person (group) manifested in human activity (groups) interacting with the city" [6]. A detailed analysis of the urban environment "stress- factors" addressed to the research carried out in the form of an independent branch of ecopsychological survey - the "psychology of the urban environment", which also analyses the phenomena of "geometrizing of the environment", "transport risks", "migration problems", and "crowding" "Informational-dynamic overloads" and others. [7] The marked areas of related and psychological researches aimed on the influence of urban environment factors on a person, to the greater extent, focus on the "stress inducing", "unfriendliness", "disproportion" of the urban environment for the subject and are aimed primarily at assignment of these factors influence in cognitive, emotional-evaluative and behavioural modes of subject's mental activity.

III. POTENTIAL OF URBAN ENVIRONMENT FOR THE SUBJECT

The other view on the problem explanation of the urban environment perception is the research, focused on the "resource" aspect of the interaction between the urban environment and the subject. There are attempts done to implement those "opportunities" that the subject "finds", "generates" while everyday interaction with urban environment and "uses" to acquire psychological well-being. One could name cognitive urban planning as an interdisciplinary trend connecting the phenomenon of anthropogenicity with resources of the human mentality. In his works, concerned to the theoretical and methodological foundations of the cognitive approach to urban life modelling, urban philosopher S.V. Pirogov, gives no reference to the topic of "anthropogenicity" in its classical, epistemological version, but he integrated approaches that implement the "ontological" discourse in psychologizing of anthropogenic factors of the urban environment [8].

Another close methodological basis for the analysis of anthropogenic factors influence on the mentality is the option of conceptualizing the impact, including anthropogenic factors (terrorist acts, destruction of equipment and buildings due to technological accidents, fires in the environment of human life, etc.) influence on the mentality, developed in modern extreme psychology. It is necessary to clarify that the "anthropogenicity" of the environment becomes the context of research in extreme psychology referring to "... the extraordinary, non-everyday situation of human

existence ..." [9] [10] This "anthropogenicity" is considered as a "situation", which extremality is associated with a certain transitivity - from everyday being to non-everyday life, to the extremality itself, requiring the subject for the "mentality work" to "redesign" *raison d'etre*. The "active" mode, which connects the subject and the situation by "generating" new meanings, experiences, and value formations marked as the important one but not of the "reactive" interpretation of extremality. The most significant moment for the researcher in the "ontologization" of extremality concept is the statement about the heterogeneity of semantic structures, which generation and structuring is determined by the extreme situation. M.Sh. Magomed-Eminov formulates the thesis that not only "catastrophic extremity", but also "not catastrophic extremity" and "routine" or the everyday background of "heterogeneous life worlds" "launches" the psychological mechanism designated by the researcher as "mental work", associated not with "adaptation", but with "action" of the subject aimed to create a space of own identity [11]. A modern illustrative example of this universal psychological mechanism "application" relative to the urban environment representation could be the research of the townspeople's perception of the urban environment, which will be done in the tradition of experimental psychosemantics and will be aimed to detecting common patterns and individual characteristics of the perception and semantic evaluation of urban architectural objects. Results of the research define the "complexity and multi-levelledness" of urban architecture perception process, which consists both in the reflection of the basic properties of architectural forms and in the semantic, value-based assessment of the architectural structure [12]. The historical "predecessor" of such a viewpoint for a relationship operationalization in the system "person - urban environment" is the research of objective and subjective factors in the citizens' attitude towards urban landscape elements which is implemented in the form of experimental psychosemantics [13].

In foreign environmental psychology, analysis traditions of human activity to "transform" space into a "place" are associated with the explanation of the "place" construct. There are three main trends formed in a while: cognitive, affective and behavioural. Together with this a conceptual apparatus there was developed, where named constructs such as "place attachment", "sense of place", "place identity" are usually used as key elements. The explanation of ordinary environment space as a "psychological resource" is in nascent stage in local psychology, and there are relatively a few researches on the phenomenon of "place".

The fundamental position of the "generative" character of the subject-environmental interactions, operationalized by V.I. Panov in the modern local ecopsychology. This provision ontologizes the nature of the relationship between the subject and the environment, including the urban environment, fixing the theme of the "generating" intention possibility, "... where all of each elements (subjects) of the system act for the others as a facilitator of their joint transformation" [14]. This approach allows one to turn to the search for mechanisms of the perception of urban

environment, and to highlight those aspects of the analysis that operationalize the “resource” nature of the urban environment for humans.

In the format of this approach, the research of the psychological representation of the everyday’s life spatial-objective environment was implemented in the laboratory of ecopsychology of development and psychodidactics [15]. The main theoretical position of the research became the thesis about the analysis unit of the spatial-objective environment psychological representation - “place-situation”, which was defined as the minimum unit of reflection in human consciousness of the world’s picture at each time point, where the place characterizes a certain part of space, and the situation - temporary aspects of this space existence. In addition, the level (sensual and value-semantic), component (formal and informative) and parametric (structure, size, dynamics, strength, pragmatics, aesthetics, ethics) “elements” of the “place-situation” construct operationalization were marked. As a result of the empirical validation of the developed theoretical model, it was found out that the ratio of the selected levels, components and characteristics of everyday life spatial-objective environment psychological representation could be different, and determined as environmental (type of environment) and individual psychological factors (gender, age, psycho-typical features) [16]. The analysis of urban environment representation characteristics on the basis of the developed theoretical model gave the possibility to obtain information, ante omnia, on the thesaurus of the site-situations; secondly, about the thesaurus of descriptors (adjectives), by means of which respondents rate indicated places; thirdly, about possible combinations of descriptors during the process of different location-situations assessing, evidencing different “typological” variants of representation of the urban environment, which we defined as “resource” (dominance of the formal component), “optimal” (harmonious ratio of all components) and “deficient” (lack or weak expression of any of the representative components). As a result of an empirical research with a large number of methodological tools involved which are traditional for ecopsychological practice (method of ranking places, method of free description of places, method of associative experiment, etc.) the author developed a spatial semantic differential (SSD), which allows to determine the features of psychological representation as the urban environment, and everyday’s human life spatially-objective environment in general. Using this methods, the data was received, ante omnia, on the peculiarities of city’s residents psychological representation of various places in the city; secondly, a comparative analysis of representation characteristics of the urban environment with the natural environment was done, together with the living environment and with other “contexts” of everyday life of citizens; in the third, environmental and individual psychological factors that influence the qualitative features of the representation of the urban environment and determine the type of representation of the urban environment (resource, optimal and deficient) were identified.

IV. CONCLUSION

The analysis of some modern local researches of relationship in the “man - urban environment” system allows us to mark several interpretational points of view. The “vector” of understanding problem is associated with the focus view on the “deficient”, “stressful” factors of the urban environment as an anthropogenic space, which have a destructive effect on the psychological well-being of the subject. Another “vector” is a number of researches that pay attention on a differentiated “palette” of meanings that are “generated” by the subject in the process of interaction with anthropogenic space, thereby “transforming” this space into an urban environment filled in with different places for the modern man life [17]. The examination of psychological representation of the subject of the urban environment makes it possible to single out, on the one hand, fixed by the subject characteristics of the spatial-object urban environment, which are certainly significant for him, on the other hand, focus on the “adaptability resources” of the subject, that allows him “to generate” these meanings in order to gain psychological well-being in everyday life space.

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