



PAPER • OPEN ACCESS

Right to the city: youth's view to live in the city

To cite this article: N L Antonova *et al* 2020 *IOP Conf. Ser.: Mater. Sci. Eng.* **962** 032076

View the [article online](#) for updates and enhancements.

 <p>The Electrochemical Society Advancing solid state & electrochemical science & technology 2021 Virtual Education</p> <p>Fundamentals of Electrochemistry: Basic Theory and Kinetic Methods Instructed by: Dr. James Noël Sun, Sept 19 & Mon, Sept 20 at 12h–15h ET</p> <p>Register early and save!</p>	
--	--

Right to the city: youth's view to live in the city

N L Antonova¹, T I Musaev², P O Antonova³

¹Chair of Applied Sociology, Ural Federal University named after the first President of Russia B.N. Eltsin, 19 Mira str., Yekaterinburg 620002, Russia

²Chair of Planning and Landscape Architecture, Ural State University of Architecture and Art, 23, K.Liebknecht str., Ekaterinburg 620075, Russia

³Chair of Applied Sociology, Saint Petersburg State University, 13B, Universitetskaya Emb., St Petersburg 199034, Russia

E-mail: n-tata@mail.ru

Abstract. The article represents possibilities and problems of realization of the right to the city of youth in Yekaterinburg. According to the H. Lefebvre' concept, the article states that the next generation is aimed at appropriation of surrounding environment through changing it. By using questionnaires, there were 750 students and working youth interrogated, as well as there were 25 standard interviews with young citizens. The research results showed that young people mostly prefer cultural or recreational usage of urban spaces during the stability period. Youth as an active and dynamic social community acts as a carrier of protest sentiments. These moods become actual in cases of realizations of any administrative decisions directed to privatization of public spaces or affecting the interests of young generation. Materials suggest that the period of transition from consumption to appropriation and changing of urban spaces is observed. The Do-It-Yourself movement is becoming the instrument of Transition.

1. Introduction

The city is always the centre of scientific attention for many decades. Appealing to the analysis of the right to the city by the young generation realization is determinate by the following circumstances.

Firstly, at the moment there is more than a half of the world population living in cities. That means that relevant questions of the city life nowadays not only depend on the city authorities and political agents, but they also are becoming important for all citizens as subjects of civil society [1].

Secondly, youth as a socio-demographic group is opened for innovations. Its sociocultural appearance is determined by the level of involvement in social production and consumption, different kinds of activity. The city as the youth's environment now is the most important scene for behavioural practice and interactions of youth generation, satisfying a wide range of needs and interests.

Thirdly, Sverdlovsk region is one of the most urbanized subjects of Russian Federation. Youth makes up 22.3% of its population. At the same time, young generation of the massive Ural industrial centre is politically and civically engaged. For example, during May 2019 we were able to see the process of fight between the active part of the citizens and the authorities of the active part of citizens. Most of them were young people, who were fighting for preserving one of the city's parks, were our local authorities planned to build a new temple of Saint Ekaterine.

About two thousand citizens has come to assert their right to the city, the right to use its space and change it. The city youth is not only the force that changes city in account to its sense of comfort and



meaningful needs. The young generation feels enough power to integrate into its city ideas needs and ambitions. The city youth does not simply accept the city space where they grew up and currently live, but also customize it, taking into consideration their ideas of comfort and fulfilling essential needs

The above provisions demonstrate that the young generation is able to be an active builder of the city's space and realize their right to the city, its consumption and transformation according to its own need and requirements.

2. Materials and Methods

Modern views on the city and its future are complex and depend on fundamentally different concepts, which were developed decades ago and are being used nowadays [2-8] Nowadays these concepts are changing. One of the most important questions in urban planning is the role of citizens in planning of city's space and realization of right to the city [9-11].

The city in its final form of perception is a set of systems interconnected directly and indirectly. It is subject to change and often these changes are a phenomenon of reaction to the social reality. Trends in economics, culture, politics - everything affects the city. Every generation faces the new reality and has to solve fundamentally new problems After all, the most important thing is whether these changes are favorable for the city and its inhabitants or are harmful.

According to R. Park, E. Burgess and R. McKenzie, the city is one of the most consistent and successful attempts of the human to transform the world [12]. The concept of right to the city offered by H. Lefebvre [13], is one of the most demanded in the modern world.

Accepting the city as a place to live, its citizens become not only a consumer but also a creator of the city space/right to the city implies the right of citizens to use city's space [14]. It is a constant and active process of its appropriation [15]. The right to the city's space implies its usage by people and social groups in daily life: the right to live, to play, to work, to imagine, to characterize and to occupy [16].

According to P. Marcuse, the right to the city is a right to shape and transform the social processes in the city [17]. J. Friedman and G. Wolff think that social behaviour of citizens and their involvement in planning of city's environment is a necessary component of its control [18]. At the same time, it is possible to see a competition for rights and resources in a big city but not a development of mutual support and solidarity among different social groups on their way to the comfortable city environment [19; 20].

Our research, that had Yekaterinburg's youth as the object, was provided in 2019. The aim was the analysis of young generation's perception of the city as a place to live.

There were interviewed 750 young people aged between 18 and 30. Students and working youth are 47% and 53% of the respondents respectively. The questionnaire contained 30 questions. In general, there were 40% of the respondents were male, and 60% - female. All respondents are represented in equal shares in all age groups.

The students are doing their degree in leading universities of the region: in Ural Federal University, Ural Institute of Management, Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration of President of Russian Federation, Russian State Professional Pedagogical University, etc. 2/3 of them are doing a humanitarian degree. The working youth is engaged in the spheres of finance, education, law, mass media and advertising. Most of them has a bachelor's degree. The results were processed using SPSS.

With the standard interviewing method there were interviewed 25 young citizens. Among them 12 were students, 13- workers. There were interviewed 10 male and 15 female people. We made a guide interview, which contains 10 questions. Average duration is 35 minutes. Materials were transcribed and summarized in accordance with the research task.

3. Results and discussions

The research materials show that the ideal city, in the view of the young generation, is a city with excellent architecture (57.2%). Modern youth is characterized by visual consumption of urban space.

«*The city should attract people, first, with its architecture. I want to look at houses, buildings, structures and feel satisfaction from the fact that I live in this beautiful city*» (female, 29, working). According to K. Lynch, a city should be considered comprehensively (complete landscape), as it is closely linked to people's feelings [21].

27.5% of respondents note such characteristics of an ideal city as rich history and the presence of attractions. Interviewees also identified the ideal city through the prism of traditions that are reproduced in the urban space and are associated with a rich historical heritage: «*... it is important to be in a city with traditions, a special spirit, history ...*» (female, 22, student). Thus, the city right is claimed by the young generation in the context of its visual and emotional consumption.

38.6% of youth believe that the ideal city should realize the right to receive an interesting job. For every fifth respondent, the ideal city is determined by the demand for professional skills and competencies that the respondent possesses. 25.9% of young people believe that the ideal city is an economically active centre attractive for investors. «*... for me, the ideal city is a financial, economic, innovative centre, I will be comfortable here, here I can become myself ...*» (male, 27, working). The right to the city in this case is transformed into the right to the appropriation of social ties and relations, the implementation of status and professional intentions and aspirations.

One of the indicators of an ideal city is the ability to realize leisure and recreational needs. The most significant for young people are the presence of cultural centres, theatres, cinemas, shopping centres, as well as parks and squares (green areas). In this approach, there is a focus on cultural consumption and pastime: the city right as a right to cultural leisure. «*... in an ideal city there should be shops and cafes with a pleasant audience, such places allow you to feel included in the urban rhythm ...*» (female, 19 years old, student). In our study conducted in 2017 (n = 200), a positive characteristic of the place of residence, youth identified a sufficient number of cultural and entertainment centres that provide various opportunities for the implementation of all functional leisure activities [22].

At the same time, for every fifth respondent, the ideal city is a calm city in which life and everyday practices do not have intense dynamics. «*... I want stability and a quiet life, "without straining" and running around ...*» (female, 21, working). The study showed that only 5.3% of respondents are interested in political and social activities. In conditions of stability, the young generation does not seek to participate in urban life and become a subject of production of urban space.

Nevertheless, such passive approach can be transformed into active participation, up to protest forms of behaviour. This happens in conditions of an attempt to privatize public places by the city administration, business and other structures. According to our research, 3/4 of the respondents indicated the presence of favourite places for walking and meeting with friends and relatives in the city space. These are public areas accessible to any resident of the city: the Iset-river embankment (52.2%), the central square (20%), Weiner pedestrian street (17.2%), the square by the Drama Theatre (15.6%).

Public places identified by respondents, are located in the central part of the city and make up the backbone of social life. Here social ties and relationships are formed and reproduced, the needs and interests of different social groups are realized. «*The center for me is the place of activity: meeting with friends, coffee houses, concerts, walking. It's scene with different people as actors. All the ways lead to the center*». (male, 26, working). «*I go to work every day and choose the way through the central square. It's longer and I have to walk but I obligatory try to go through the central square. So I feel the spirit of the city*». (female, 27, working).

Another problem area in the central part of the city is spot development. This is the most conflict situation, which has the most significant unpleasant consequences for residents and creates the most conflicts for the administration, since the alienation of yard territories takes place, the conditions of insolation and aeration of the existing environment worsen, the anthropogenic load on the territory increases, and the existing artistic-figurative structure of the urban environment is violated.

The work of J. Jacobs emphasizes the connection between the territorial landscape of the city and the system of social interaction between different social groups included in the urban space [23].

Respondents said that point building violates the overall visual landscape of the city. «*I have a very negative attitude to urban infills. I can't understand how the city management gives a permission to build, for example, a residential building with 30 floors, which blocks the sunlight for all around buildings. This is unacceptable, it spoils the view of the residential area and the city as a whole* » (female, 27, working).

The initiative of young residents of the city in conditions of stability is manifested in the implementation of "small affairs" – Do-It-Yourself. The results of the survey showed that young people are guided by the development of the space «around themselves». «... *I'm taking part in a clean-up, I clean the yard, the playground with the neighbours ...*» (female, 24, working); «... *in the courtyard, young people arranged garden art, I also participated, I pass by and I really like new view*» (female, 20, student); «*We, with my friend, bought some flowers and decorated the entrance in our house, it was very beautiful and it was nice to go in. The neighbors thanked us for creating comfort in the house*» (female, 21, student).

Such initiatives show that the young generation, claiming city right, seeks not only to consume the existing space and the objects located in it, but also to produce a new space through its appropriation. This is the essence of Do-It-Yourself. Changing local places of residence also gives rise to innovative forms of interaction, forming new social relations between citizens, based on complicity and mutual assistance [24-26]. The right to a city, therefore, is the right to change oneself by changing urban space [27].

4. Conclusions

The results of the study led to the following conclusions. The younger generation is aimed at cultural consumption and the consumption of entertainment in the city: visiting cafes / restaurants, cinemas, museums, exhibitions, concerts. However, in conditions of «imposing» management decisions affecting the needs and interests of citizens, protest behaviour and «protection» of public spaces, monuments, houses, etc. are activated. Thus, there is a transition from the appropriation / consumption of the urban environment to its production and various activities, including the development of Do-It-Yourself.

We can observe the development of the principles of a new urbanism: the initiative and activity of the young generation, aimed at transforming the urban environment, occurs “near the house”. You can fix new clusters - the practice of small affairs, transforming the space around the daily life of specific individuals. In general, the current designers are faced with the task of ensuring the transition from the development of the urban environment as an engineering improvement of the city to the creation of a set of measures to create a comfortable environment considering the particular person's needs.

References

- [1] Frantzeskaki N, Dumitru A, Anguelovski I et al 2016 Elucidating the changing roles of civil society in urban sustainability transitions *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* **22** 4150. DOI: 10.1016/j.cosust.2017.04.008
- [2] Lawhon L L 2009 The Neighborhood Unit: Physical Design or Physical Determinism? *Journal of Planning History* **8(2)** 111132. DOI:10.1177/1538513208327072
- [3] Masoumi H E 2013 Neo-Traditional Neighborhood Design Concepts Based on the Urban Form of the Historical Cities of Central Iran *International Journal of Sustainable Society* **6(3)** 264 286. DOI:10.1504/IJSSOC.2014.065856
- [4] McCann E J and Ward K 2010. Relationality/territoriality: Toward a conceptualization of cities in the world *Geoforum* **41(2)** 175184. DOI: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2009.06.006
- [5] Miller M 2002 Garden cities and suburbs: at home and abroad *Journal of Planning History* **1** 0612. DOI:10.1177/153851320200100102
- [6] Russo A and Cirella G T 2018 Modern compact cities: how much greenery do we need? *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* **15(10)** 2180. DOI:10.3390/ijerph15102180

- [7] Sharifi A 2016 From garden city to eco-urbanism: the quest for sustainable neighborhood development *Sustainable Cities and Society* **20** 0116. DOI:10.1016/j.scs.2015.09.002
- [8] Vernet N and Coste A 2017 Garden cities of the 21st century: a sustainable path to suburban reform *Urban Plan* **2(4)** 4560:DOI:10.17645/up.v2i4.1104
- [9] Bagirova A P, Notman O V and Veress J 2017 Methods of integrated assessment of megalopolis's micro-districts on the basis of residents' opinions *Economy of Region* **13(4)** 11381150. DOI:10.17059/2017-4-13
- [10] Koblowski W and Van Criekingen M 2014 How "alternative" alternative urban policies really are? Looking at mobility of participatory budgeting in Poland through the lens of the right to the city *Metropoles* **15** 0112
- [11] Wu F 2017 Planning centrality, market instruments: Governing Chinese urban transformation under state entrepreneurialism *Urban Studies* **55(7)** 13831399. DOI:10.1177/0042098017721828
- [12] Park R, Burgess E and McKenzie R 1967 *The City* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press)
- [13] Lefebvre H 1996 *Writings on cities* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers)
- [14] Purcell M. 2002 Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant *GeoJournal* **58** 99108. DOI:10.1023/B:GEJO.0000010829.62237.8f
- [15] McCann E J 2002 Space, citizenship, and the right to the city: A brief overview *Geojournal* **58** 7779. DOI:10.1023/B:GEJO.0000010826.75561.c0
- [16] Fenster T 2005 The right to the gendered city: Different formations of belonging in everyday life *Journal of Gender Studies* **14(3)** 217231. DOI:10.1080/09589230500264109
- [17] Marcuse P 2009 From critical urban theory to the right to the city *City* **13** 185197. DOI:10.1080/13604810902982177
- [18] Friedman J and Wolff G 1982 World City Formation, an Agenda for Research and Action *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* **6** 309344. DOI:10.1111/j.1468-2427.1982.tb00384.x
- [19] Balzarini J E and Shlay A B 2016 Gentrification and the Right to the City: Community Conflict and Casinos *Journal of Urban Affairs* **38(4)** 503-517. DOI:10.1111/juaf.12226
- [20] Blokland T, Hentschel C, Holm A, Leuhn H and Margalit T 2015 Urban citizenship and Right to the City *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* **39(4)** 655665. DOI:10.1111/1468-2427.12259
- [21] Lynch K 1960 *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The M.I.T. Press)
- [22] Abramova S B, Antonova N L and Pimenova O I 2019 Attractiveness of a City as a Factor of Territorial Mobility in Student Estimates (on the Example of Ekaterinburg) *The Education and science journal* **21** 97123. DOI:10.17853/1994-5639-2019-1-97-123
- [23] Jacobs J 1961 *The death and life of great American cities* (New York: Vintage Books)
- [24] Cloutier G, Papin M and Bizier C 2018 Do-it-yourself (DIY) adaptation: civic initiatives as drivers to address climate change at the urban scale *Cities* **74** 284291. DOI:10.1016/j.cities.2017.12.018
- [25] Finn D 2014 DIY urbanism: implications for cities *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability* **7(4)** 381398. DOI:10.1080/17549175.2014.891149
- [26] Talen E 2015 Do-it-yourself urbanism: A history *Journal of Planning History* **14(2)** 135148. DOI:10.1177/1538513214549325
- [27] Harvey D 2003 The right to the city *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* **27(4)** 939941. DOI:10.1111/j.0309-1317.2003.00492.x

Acknowledgments

The reported study was funded by RFBR and Sverdlovsk region, project number 20-411-660012.