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URBANITY AND RURALITY IN THE COLOR CULTURE

ГОРОДСКОЕ И СЕЛЬСКОЕ В ЦВЕТОВОЙ КУЛЬТУРЕ

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Abstract. The research object is urban color as an independent cultural phenomenon, and its subject is a sociocultural context of urban coloristics. The paper presents a theoretical model of the structure of urban color, contains characteristics of formation and interaction mechanisms between the main components of the model and the analysis of a specific case proving and illustrating core principles of the basic theoretical model. A combination of two basic methods was used during the research. At the first stage a theoretical model of the structure of the urban color culture was built on the basis of document analysis. At the second stage the study was conducted with the help of case-study methodology. The sources of the research accounted for documents from the funds of archives, architectural photographs, artistic and graphical works, multicolored photo-postcards with cityscapes, documents regulating urban coloristics. The conducted theoretical and empirical analysis concluded that the key characteristic of the urban color culture is the splitting of urban coloristics into two parts — official and domestic. Each element of this dichotomous model possesses its own semantics and fulfills different social functions. The norms of urban mode of life (urbanity) are realized in official color culture. Its colors are historically changeable, progressive and subject to the so called color globalization. On the contrary, domestic color spaces represent the peculiarities of rural pattern (rurality) and possess marked territorial characteristics. Two components of urban color culture not only coexist compiling urban coloristics. They constantly interact and as a result of their interaction a certain color composition appears in urban space. Synchronic and diachronic layers of color field are easy to reconstruct. They rather precisely represent the character and disposition of social power, show the peculiarities of relations between individual and collective agents of social field, characteristic sign-symbolical codes, mechanisms of color representation and maintenance of color connotations. Together the components of urban culture form a stable system, a structure that should be taken into account while designing color compositions for modern cities.

Аннотация. Объектом исследования является цвет города как самостоятельное явление культуры, а его предметом — социокультурный контекст формирования городской колористики. В статье представлена теоретическая модель структуры городской колористики, дается характеристика механизмов взаимодействия ее основных компонентов и приводится анализ конкретного случая, подтверждающего и иллюстрирующего основные

принципы базовой теоретической модели. В исследовании применялась комбинация двух основных методов. На первом этапе теоретическая модель структуры цветовой культуры города строилась на основе анализа документов. На втором этапе использовалась методология кейс–стади. Источники исследования составили документы из фондов архивов, архитектурные фотографии, живописные и графические произведения, многоцветные фотооткрытки с видами городов, документы, регламентирующие городскую колористику. Проведенный теоретический и эмпирический анализ позволил сделать вывод о том, что ключевой особенностью цветовой культуры города является расщепление городской колористики на две части — официальную и бытовую. Каждый из элементов этой дихотомической модели имеет собственную семантику и выполняет различные социальные функции. В официальной цветовой культуре реализуются нормы городского образа жизни. Ее цвета исторически изменчивы, прогрессивны и подвержены так называемой «цветовой глобализации». Наоборот, бытовые цветовые пространства отражают особенности сельского уклада и имеют выраженные территориальные особенности. Компоненты цветовой культуры города не просто сосуществуют, вместе составляя городскую колористику. Они постоянно взаимодействуют, и в результате их взаимодействия в городском пространстве проявляется определенная цветовая композиция. Синхронные и диахронные срезы цветового поля хорошо поддаются реконструкции. Они довольно точно отражают характер и расстановку социальных сил, показывают особенности взаимоотношений индивидуальных и коллективных агентов социального поля, характерных знаково–символических кодов, механизмов цветовой репрезентации и сохранения цветовых значений. Вместе компоненты городской культуры образуют устойчивую систему, структуру которой обязательно нужно учитывать при разработке цветовых решений для современных городов.

Keywords: color, urban color, color design of urban space, culture of color, urbanity, rurality.

Ключевые слова: цвет, городская колористика, цветовое проектирование городского пространства, цветовая культура, городское, сельское.

Urban color analysis as an independent cultural phenomenon is a relatively new scientific discourse trend. As a rule, studies of culture focus on coloristics and color symbolism of separate urban objects — house, lodging, living space and its features (see e. g.: [1, 2]). On the contrary in the urban color description prevail empirical *regional* coloristics research, that present specific synchronic cuts of historical and natural color juxtapositions of a certain city and do not purport to explain the reasons for the resulting color structure (see e.g.: [3–5]). The focus of paper is to unite these two approaches and present a sociocultural context of urban coloristics, subsequently solving three main tasks.

Firstly, in many works (see e.g.: [6]) urban coloristics is understood rather indistinctly, as a kind of complex interior consisting of public and residential houses, outbuildings, infrastructure objects, engineering facilities, landscape architecture, that have certain color characteristics and together form a single color system with a fixed structure, mechanisms and content. That is why we focus on putting to rights the structure of urban coloristics and presenting its dichotomous model, distinctly specifying two main components — urbanity and rurality.

Secondly, research tasks also include examination of relations between two marked cultural forms. The formation and interaction mechanisms between urbanity and rurality in urban coloristics will be pointed out and described basing on previously conducted theoretical and empirical research [4, 5, 7–10].

Thirdly, one more research task will account for elaborate research of a specific case proving and illustrating core principles of basic theoretical model with the help of case-study methodology.

Material and method

A combination of two basic methods was used during the research.

At the first stage a theoretical model of structure of urban color culture was built on the basis of document analysis. The sources of research accounted for documents from the funds of Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI), Russian State Military Historical Archive, Saint Petersburg Central State Historical Archive, Smolensk Region State Archive, Archive of the Institute for History and Theory of Architecture (GTA Archiv, Switzerland), the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAI Collection, the Netherlands), as well as architectural photographs, artistic and graphical works, multicolored photo-postcards with cityscapes, documents regulating urban coloristics, color projects of European urban environment development, collections of programs and manifests, program statements of architects [11].

At the second stage a detailed study of a specific case proving core principles of basic theoretical model was conducted with the help of case-study methodology. The research was developed basing on the works of L. George [12], J. Hartley [13], A.W. Pettigrew [14], W. Schramm [15], R.E. Stake [16], R.K. Yin [17]. The essence of case-study method that is used in different fields of knowledge lies in the fact, that this type of empirical research is directed at detailed examination of peculiarities and complexity of a specific case, related to a certain class of phenomena. It provides an insight into a solution or a set of solutions, describes why these solutions have been applied, how they have been implemented and what the corresponding results are. The choice of case-study method for urban coloristics analysis was based on the recommendations of R. K. Yin [17, p. 3–26] and was justified by the fact, that in this particular case it was impossible to draw fixed borders between the event and accompanying social factors, there were a number of variables and information sources. The choice of study subject was based on the works of A. L. George [12, p. 43–68] and A.W. Pettigrew [14, p. 267–292].

Results and discussion

A. Theoretical model of structure of urban color culture

Many researchers rightly note [3–6] that complexity of urban coloristics structure is explained through a great number of its participants and heterogeneity of bearers.

Color is easy to use and very informative and that is why throughout history of urban development it has been actively used by citizens for *self-presentation* and *management of impression*, that, according to E. Goffman [18] they are willing to make on people around them. It is quite obvious that the first contact of a human being with paint was a contact with the skin (see: [19, p. 20]. Having learned how to *design* color space of the body while painting it, a human being began to cover different household utensils and tools with paint. Later people started to choose colors of their houses, fences, plants which they grew on their flower beds and balconies. Gradually, collective authors (social strata, professional, ethnic and age groups, different social institutions) appeared in urban color space together with individuals and managed to exercise greater influence on color characteristics of urban space. Color planning of single buildings was substituted for color planning of groups of buildings, then — color development of whole districts and even regions.

Nowadays the majority of urban population is *spoiled* with free color choices: citizens can choose the color of their clothes, home decorations and personal things quite freely. As a form of adaptation to *urban overload*, the mechanisms of which were experimentally studied by S. Milgram [20], citizens even have to delegate a certain part of their duties in color choosing. Modern citizens

do not participate in the choice of color for large urban objects (e.g. multistoried residential houses and office blocks or big infrastructure facilities). However, they make lots of decisions connected with color in their everyday life thus filling a city with certain colors and tones.

Representing a work of many generations, urban color text turns out to be multilingual, or rather, consists of numerous historically formed *dialects* of one architectural and town planning language. In urban environment color elements perform various functions: symbolic (they define, point out, advertise, attract, orientate), social (they show status or define property), commercial (they are used to increase cost).

At first sight, urban coloristics is composed of such a great number of participants and objects that systematic analysis seems absolutely impossible. However, a closer look helps to identify and oppose two cultural forms that radically differ both in participants and from the point of view of semantic and semiotic rules of their formation. We will define these forms as *official* and *domestic* color cultures.

Domestic color culture means a lay, nonprofessional participation level of citizens in urban color formation. It represents rurality, has distinguished territorial peculiarities and appears in distribution of one dominating tone or a group of tones on a certain territory (see: [3, 5, 21, 22]).

Historically, the choice and distribution of a certain dominating color on a given territory was dictated by the economical factor. As a rule, it was the color of cheap local natural pigment or the most popular construction material. For instance, in Umbria (Italy) it was the color of traditional local gray–yellow stone. In Oxford (Great Britain) it was the color of yellow sandstone. In Roussillon, a southern province in France located between the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean Sea, houses, streets and lanes have the color of red ocher. The Cyclades archipelago isles in Greece located in the South of the Aegean Sea are built with crystalline rocks and limestone. Houses and streets of Mykonos, Tinos and Santorini are plastered with lime and raw sludge — a cheap material obtained from marble that lies in front of the houses.

The described uniform color of urban space which often is so closely associated with an image of a settlement, that the name of a corresponding region is fixed in color explanations, is well represented by artists. Thus, a characteristic color image of Venice skillfully represented in vedutas of Canaletto and works of Shelley, Dickson, Browning, conveys the idea of a united chromatic space consisting of light reflexes caused by water, shining warm facade tones and white stone.

In order to understand the formation mechanisms and structure of urban coloristics it is important to realize the fact that in the course of time such natural materials and eco–colors in every culture always acquire some additional, symbolic connotation apart from strictly practical meaning. In this new capacity they are established in different cultural practices (language, rites, folklore, and mythology) and considered as an important attribute of *home*, native space. Due to this feature Ch. J. Häberle [21] suggested accepting the term *color homeland* to define revealed territorial peculiarities of urban coloristics and mark an unbreakable connection between *domestic* urban color with ethnic consciousness, identity and rurality. In art history works dedicated to urban coloristics there are many more different terms. J.–Ph. Lenclos, J. Prizeman, M. Lancaster define *chromatic individuality* of different cities and regions as *color geography* [5, p. 15]. F. Sacco and F. Rodolico highlight the connection between local coloristics and color pigments disposition and building stone types and use the notion *color geology* [3, p. 35]. K. Weichert fixes essential features of *local coloring* using the notion *color climate* [22, p. 192].

It should be noted that an *eco* basis of color dominants is defined not only by the absence of other toners. The basis of its wide distribution is formed by the principles of a different nature. Traditionally natural materials and eco–colors not only play the key utility role in practical activities (they are used in building, household items production, etc.) but also hold a specific position in ideological practices of different kinds. This idea can be confirmed by the fact that objects of both

animate and inanimate nature always played an important role in the system of religious beliefs, and sacred characteristics were assigned to basic natural materials.

In this respect, a uniform chromatic basis represents a reliable means of delimitation dividing *home* and *alien* space. A home color image acquires a stylized and familiar form where neither details nor qualitative characteristics play any significant role, while a correlation and collocation of color patches in a common structure are of importance. In culture this color image symbolizes connection with homeland, maintains territorial identity and that is why it possesses a remarkable stability.

The official color culture is based on absolutely different principles (see: [3, 23–25]). It is formed by influential social agents that can be both individuals (e. g. monarchs) and collective ones (e. g. church, civil movements). Possessing huge resources, they express certain ideas in urban space through color (e. g. emphasize their social status and dominance).

As a rule, coloristics of official spaces consists of standardized colors of dominating architectural movements and styles of a certain epoch. Consequently, the dominating values of a corresponding historical type of culture are transferred to the meaning of color symbols.

For instance, in the epoch of absolutism heyday city centers were associated with monarch power and their coloristics was filled with different tones of yellow. This color metaphorically connected with the image of *the Sun King* represented in European culture quite a stable symbol with a fixed meaning. Yellow meant gold, and gold was regarded as a symbol of Divine. According to N. V. Serov's opinion [25, p. 450], sunny yellow and white tones of classicism metaphorically highlighted the value of Empire achievements. It is known that yellow was the official color of buildings in the Austro–Hungarian Empire and there is a yellow color tone called *Schönbrunn Yellow* after the name of a famous castle in Vienna. The so called *Turin Yellow* or *Piedmont Yellow* is a color imitating a widespread type of local sandstone which has a distinctive yellow tone. It historically dominated in the Turin palette in the range from light to dark and in different combinations with other tones could be met in every street almost completely pushing out all other colors in urban space [3, p. 32–46]. The majority of state buildings were yellow in Russian towns and cities as well, including Saint–Petersburg (for instance, Hermitage was yellow before the repaint); that is why Dostoevsky created an image of *yellow Saint–Petersburg*.

A sharp change in the paradigm of color culture took place in industrial cities. At that time urbanity was symbolically connected with the idea of progress and a new strategy was chosen for official places of a new epoch. It was the strategy of a natural material color. As a result, urban objects became almost colorless and achromatic. Color obtained a number of negative connotations such as inconstancy, impermanence, emotionality and even ability to cause illusions and mislead. Color was regarded as deception, as a means that does not convey the truth, but on the contrary falsifies it to a greater or lesser degree. It was considered as a silly amusement, childish game for which society could not have enough time.

Finally, in modern cities the color related to urbanity demonstrates all characteristics of a mass–consumption product. As a result, in order to attract and provoke interest among potential consumers, completely new signs begin to appear in architectural communication.

E. Heller [26] described in the book on color psychology the principle of *creative color*, that is one of the prevalent color signs in the modern urban culture. The mechanism of *creative color* is based on the idea of *impossible* colors: a thing that is always blue is colored using a different tone; a thing that has never been blue obtains this very color [26, p. 44]. According to this principle, the more is an individual distance towards a product with an unusual blue color, the faster it will be accepted and acknowledged [26, p. 45].

An important feature of postmodernism color spaces is that colors become subtle and *recede to a pastel color range*. It is difficult to argue with the statement of J. Baudrillard in the book *The*

System of Objects [27] that we are living in a *pastel kingdom*. The colors which now dominate in clothes, vehicles, bathroom furniture, household appliances, and plastic products — they are not *real* colors, represented in pictorial art as a life breath, but muted ones. No wonder that in postmodernism we deal not with colors, but with more abstract notions such as *tone*, *shade*, *brightness*, *deepness*.

In general, the *official* color is an important marker of urbanity. It is historically changeable, progressive and subject to the so called *color globalization* [23, p. 208]. Coloristics of official places is often similar in completely different cities. In urban districts designed according to these models there often raises a peculiar feeling, which was denoted as *placelessness* by K. J. Synnes and R. C. Akre [28]. This feeling is characterized by the inability of a person to distinguish one city from another according to external features.

As a result of such a dichotomous splitting of urban color structure, a kind of *background* and *image* are formed in urban space with the help of color. This structural principle represents a product of interaction between urbanity and rurality and possesses a remarkable stability. Both capitalism and state socialist modernization did not destroy, but, on the contrary, even more clearly outlined this split.

The background color is a collective work of a number of domestic culture bearers who usually manifest conformism in the choice of color for urban objects.

Such a strategy is typical for the owners of urban residential houses.

Numerous local coloristics studies (see e.g.: [7, 8]) show that the majority of private house owners living in a city change the color of their buildings quite seldom and such being the case, they rely on tradition while choosing a new facade color and often prefer local pigment color or the color of the most wide-spread local building material. Such trend is visible even where there is no strict limiting of traditional color change.

Thus, J. Cramer [7] presented the results of his examination in 1983–1986 of more than a thousand buildings in the South of Germany. His research showed that coloristics principles of half-timbered buildings persistently existed in the local color palette from the Middle Ages for more than three centuries, confirming the rule of historical coloristics constancy.

Sh. Iijima & T. Inagaki [8] noted a persistent cultural tradition in color designing of streets in different districts in Ghent, Flanders (Belgium). Despite the dominance of unpainted stone (mainly made of sandstone or shale) or brick buildings in old districts (Graslei, Korenlei) and prevalence of painted facades in a new district (Weldstaat), all three districts were characterized by the same colors.

Formation of urban fabric background is the result of altruistic behavior of citizens. Pondering over the reasons of success of humans as a biological species, E. O. Wilson in the book *The Social Conquest of Earth* [10] presented conjecture that the main driving force and reason that eventually allowed humans to flourish was the change of positive competition for cooperation and substitution of a kin selection for a group one. If during a kin selection individuals sacrificed themselves for the sake of their relatives and people with the same genes thus helping themselves as well, then during a group selection humans began to demonstrate altruism and readiness to sacrifice themselves for the sake of other members of a social group who had no gene connections with them. Wilson suggests that the establishment of secured permanent home bases became the motivation for rapid development of sociality. When several generations began to live together and practice division of labor they started to act altruistically towards each other. This tendency is quite obvious with insects — ants, bees, termites as their social life appears and develops in camps, nests, ant hills. Consequently, humans as a species were formed with the help of multi-level selection — both individual and group, and their mentality comprises altruistic and selfish dispositions. At that, both selection types work sometimes alternately, and sometimes simultaneously. In the situation when

living conditions are prolific and stable and the profit of being a part of a group is not sufficient, then selfish behavior begins to dominate and separation from groups takes place. When survival and successful reproduction demand belonging to a certain group we see the domination of altruism and conformism in the society. According to the eusocial theory or *genuine sociality* of E. Wilson, in advanced societies a city becomes a kind of *nest* and place of common habitation, where multi-level selection characteristic of social life is materialized in architecture. Created for protection and joint survival, historical cities maintained a strict control over planning and development of their structure. History knows numerous examples of altruism prevailing over aspiration to hierarchy and it was realized through the creation of ideal cities based on high philosophic and artistic principles. Clear selfish impulses in urban architecture revealed themselves with the growth of individual wealth and power. However, modern cities acquired a dominating tendency of strict organization requirements necessary for their survival. As a result, many cities nowadays have their own distinctive visual appearance which is based on the idea of esthetic unity of space.

The main mechanism of background formation is *mimicry* (cf. [9]). Mimicry is an action, device or way of direct imitation, which is often used for copying nature or its representation. Social mimicry model structurally resembles natural mimicry. It includes three main elements: imitator object, prototype object and operator that can be represented by an individual, small or large social group. In social mimicry a human being often acts not as an imitator, but tries to make the product of his activity look like something else. Thus, the structure of social mimicry develops and includes not three but four components. This complicated structure is peculiarly realized in architecture. Mimicry is understood as a close formal resemblance of one architectural object (imitator) and another architectural or non-architectural object (prototype), *which deceives* an operator. Mimicry takes place when the operator starts to assign the characteristics of the prototype object to the imitator.

Due to a variety of prototype objects, the social mimicry in architecture falls into several types. For instance, in case of camouflage mimicry an imitator copies form (camouflage homomorphism) or color (camouflage homochromaticness) of the existing natural environment. Vernacular (lat. *vernaculus* — *local*) mimicry, unlike the camouflage one, imitates form (vernacular homomorphism) or color (vernacular homochromaticness) not of natural objects, but of products of a certain culture. This type of mimicry represents an effort to *insert* a building into the existing architectural context adding elements characteristic of a given cultural tradition. Considering architecture as a particular language, buildings in each separate region will represent a kind of dialect of this language. A dictionary of an architectural area fixes certain unique signs that more or less differ from universal elements of architectural language.

An important contribution to the understanding of mechanisms of architectural mimicry was made by the methodologies of J.-Ph. Lenclos [5] that suggests using natural colors in design and B. Lange [4], which connected with the studying of historical context of urban space. A number of studies including these ones confirm the existence of a certain *color dictionary* in every culture that includes natural and cultural environment tones of a given region and demonstrates a remarkably high frequency in the decoration of buildings by common citizens.

Formation of color pattern implies a completely different principle. A figurative color represents a product of official culture. That's why in urban space it performs an opposite function and serves to highlight the most important and status objects. As a result, the main principle of its choice is visual exposition. To highlight means to make something visible, noticeable, directly marking a certain feature. An exposition is defined as exposure, a set of specifically organized objects considered as beautiful, attracting and interesting.

Thus, structurally urban culture represents a dichotomous model with two clearly defined and opposite main elements — domestic and official color culture. Domestic color culture represents

rurality and the official one is the marker of urbanity. These components not only coexist compiling urban coloristics. They constantly interact and as a result of their interaction a certain color composition appears in urban space. City is a complex field for color experiments. But the mechanism of color image formation here resembles one that is used in painting (e. g. still-life paintings of G. Morandi [29]) or photos (cityscapes of T. Struth [30]). In all cases we deal with the same objects but different color accents which create an intense and accurate image. Research of K. Gerstner [31] and G. Minah [32–33] showed, that among all color effects the contrasts of light and dark, contrast of extension and contrast of saturation play the key role in defining figurative status of color in urban space. Spatial effects that appear as a result of opposition between warm and cool, light and dark tones and color planes with different saturation and size are also of great importance.

B. Case-study: Smolensk coloristics

Following the recommendations of A. L. George [12, p. 43–68] and A.W. Pettigrew [14, p. 267–292] for determination of a case-study object, Smolensk — one of the oldest cities in Russia, situated 400 km to the south-west from Moscow on the upper course of the Dnieper, was chosen in order to conduct a detailed examination of the interaction between urban and rural culture in urban coloristics.

Panoramic pictures of the most typical cityscapes were made for the research. Each cityscape was photographed several times under different air and light conditions, from different distances using several camera lenses with the focal distances of 35, 110 and 200 mm. After that the pictures were intentionally defocused. As a result, there appeared a blurred color field with a rather distinct illustration, made of background color and color dominants.

A color triangle of Natural Color System (NCS) was used to obtain precise values of urbanity and rurality colors. Firstly, the characteristics of a background color were evaluated. Then the marked dominating tone (x) was taken for the center of a circle inscribed in a triangle, the distance to the nearest triangle side being its radius. Colors inside the circle (Ax) were listed as background and considered as color context. Following the suggested principle, the inscribed circle had a maximum radius with the dominating color label S 3333. The circle with this center was tangent to all three sides of the triangle. If the radius was smaller, in order to proceed with the calculations around the circle was drawn a smaller triangle the sides of which were parallel to the bigger one. Between background tones filling the circle (Ax) and three corners of the triangle, figurative colors were situated (F) divided into the zones of whiteness (Fw), blackness (Fs) and chromaticness (Fc).

Calculations of values of color dominants made for Smolensk (*Figure 1*) proved the proposition of G. Minah that the principles of figurative color choice always will be the same for the majority of cities. Color accents of Smolensk were situated in spaces between the circle and the corners of the inner triangle — zones of whiteness, blackness and chromaticness correspondingly. Similar figures had been previously obtained by Minah for Rome, Seattle and San-Francisco [33].

Subsequent comparison of obtained color dominants and background coloristics with location and type of urban buildings showed, that dominating colors are the colors of administrative, public and industrial buildings. The color of non-durable and small objects generally does not have any essentially impact on the urban color. The background color is generally formed on the basis of residential architecture with different number of stories. The most important material is the color of urban private buildings that defines the main characteristics of domestic color culture.

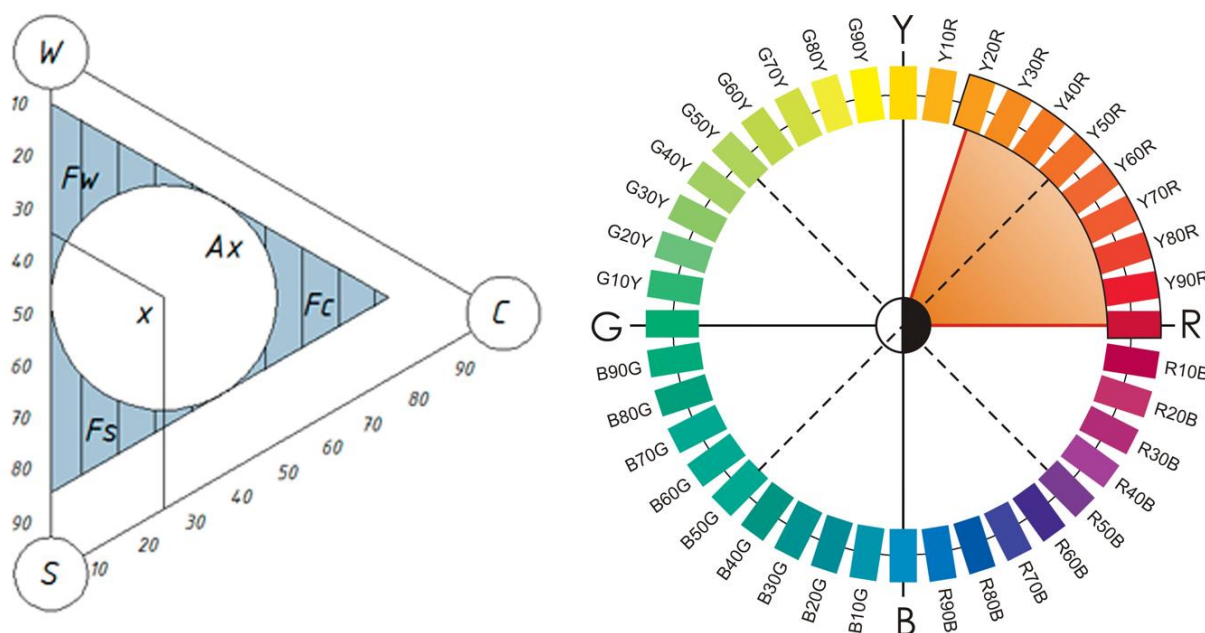


Figure 1. Calculations made for Smolensk

In Russia this type of residential architecture always played a significant role in urban structure. Town mansions became wide-spread in 1950s due to the most favorable conditions for individual building: availability of loans, assistance in purchasing of construction materials. In the appendix to the plan of renewal and reconstruction of cities, a number of projects dedicated to private residential houses building in vast districts were suggested.

Examination of photo materials has shown that the character of mansion building environment changes slowly. The appearance of great majority of private residential houses has scarcely changed during their lifetime. Among town mansions one-storey houses with the total square of 40 m² definitely prevail (68%). Houses built at a later point in time have two stories (29%), more rarely — three (3%). 39% of houses have wooden facades, 20% — brick, 6% — plastered and only 3% are paneled with siding. In decoration of the rest of buildings (32%) combinations of different materials are used, the most popular are wood and brick (11%), wood and plaster (10%), brick and siding (5%), brick and plaster (3%), wood and siding (2%).

In the course of interviews with the owners we've got to know that the main mechanism of formation of urban fabric visual identity is chromatic and morphological mimicry of different types. While choosing color and material of their buildings, they rarely address professional architects and rely solely on their own taste. As a result, decoration and forms are based on completely different rules in comparison to official architecture and use different semiotic principles, demonstrating lay, nonprofessional participation level of citizens in urban fabric formation.

Despite absolute freedom of citizens in choosing the design of external walls, the coloristics structure of buildings demonstrates a remarkable frequency of one and the same strategy. Its main element is the basic facade color, in choosing of which the majority of owners retain tradition of imitation of local pigments and the most popular types of local construction materials (first of all, wood) even though there are no strict rules regulating coloristics of buildings in the region. Facade colors forming a single entity in urban space have the same tone and are located within 80° arc of a

NCS–system circle, between Y20R and R. Palette tones vary between $s = 20$ and $s = 50$, $c = 10$ and $c = 40$ (Figure 1).

In the color structure of a building the facade color plays the role of background with different color accents on it. Quantitative examination of buildings allowed us to note several typical color images of a house (Figure 2). Every image has a stylized and recognizable form where neither details nor qualitative characteristics play any significant role, while correlation and configuration of color spots in the whole structure are of importance.

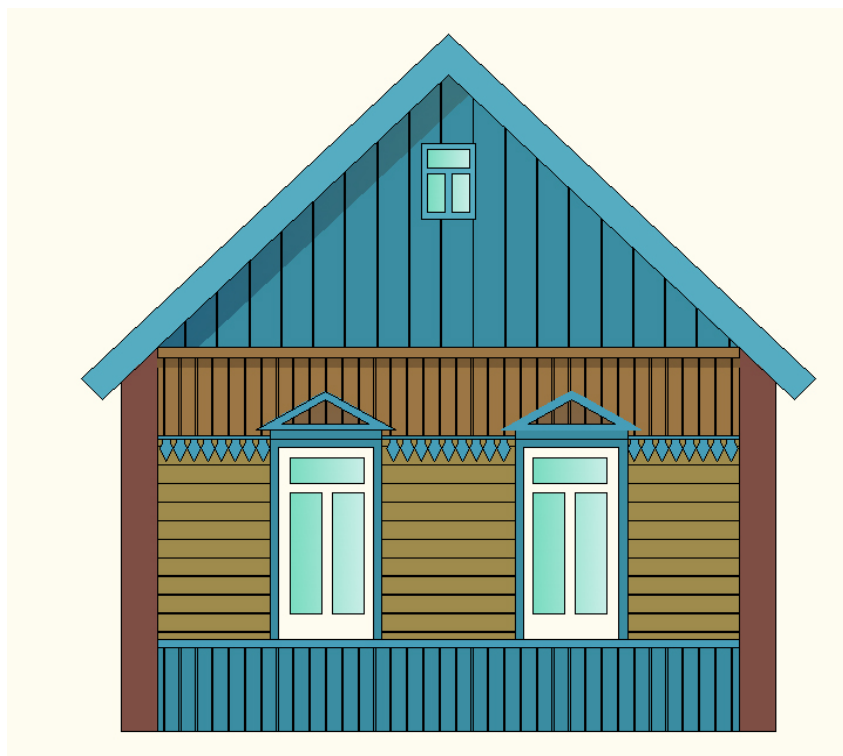


Figure 2. One of typical color images of a wooden house in Smolensk

House elements generally form a contrast to the main color. The most popular decoration colors are white (42%), light-blue (27%), red (15%), green (13%), and yellow (9%). Less popular are orange (4%), blue (2%), grey (2%), violet (1%), and black (1%). The whole percentage rating exceeds 100% as some elements of different houses are multi-colored and possess not one, but two, three or four additional colors. The number of color combinations accounts for 23, 9 of which are unique (were noted only once). The most wide-spread color combinations of decoration elements in mansion architecture are white-green (6,7%), white-red (8,2%) and white-light blue (about 16%). Almost all wooden houses have grey roofs. Colored roofs — red or green — are usually noted in two- or three-storied brick houses.

The analysis of photo and video materials allowed marking changes in color pattern [24, 34]. In the course of research, it was stated that *color constellations* changed no fewer than 5 times during the history of the city and every time dominating colors were the colors of buildings owned by the most influential social agents and expressed their power and force.

At the beginning of city history on the background of soft wooden tones dazzling-white spots of stone orthodox churches appeared, the number of which accounts for at least thirty buildings in XII–XIII centuries. Urban color space of that time possessed a closed structure. The silhouette of

Smolensk resembled a pyramid and the importance of color images was highlighted by their location.

The role of red color in the color appearance of Smolensk significantly increased during Lithuanian and Polish periods (XV–XVII centuries). The Poles converted a number of churches into Catholic cathedrals for the sake of latinisation of the population. However, Russian churches were not reconstructed, but only redecorated on the basis of the early baroque style, which was in fashion at that time [35, p. 30] or just repainted in red color. Color transformation of buildings endued them with the characteristics of Polish architecture and was to impart Smolensk an image, typical for Polish cities.

After the restitution of Smolensk within the borders of Muscovite state in 1654 (the final restitution took place in 1667 according to the Truce of Andrusovo) the Russian appearance of the city began to restore, numerous orthodox churches, cathedrals and monasteries gradually acquired back their traditional light color.

The next significant change in color pattern took place in XVIII–XIX centuries. During the reign of Catherine the Great the infrastructural development of two public centers — Verkhne-Sennaya square and Blonie took place in classicism style which by that time turned to be an official style of state culture and, as a rule, used two colors — yellow or green for facades and white for order or decoration. In the epoch of Alexander I the color norms of classicism were reduced to a strict system. The palette of architectural colors was regulated by specific decrees. Paint samples were sent to building sites on special wooden plates while observance of painting rules was controlled by the police. Due to these decrees all houses on central streets of Smolensk during the classicism epoch became restrained and united in color. Strict color regulation of a great number of central buildings emphasized monarchical power.

One more shift in color dominants took place in the Soviet era. Struggle against religion in 1930s led to mass destruction of cult buildings, which played the role of color dominants. Old color accents were replaced by buildings—symbols of new culture — House of the Soviets, numerous Palaces of culture and industrial objects, which were planned to become new *cult* buildings, were located in particularly significant places and considerably showed up in color against the background of other architectural constructions.

Thus, during the history of city development a number of *color constellations* changed each other given the same and permanent background, namely the dominants of ancient architecture, Lithuanian and Polish periods, Russian Empire epoch, Soviet architecture, which substantially differed from each other in location as well as content, every time signaling about the changes in social structure of the population.

Conclusions

The conducted theoretical and empirical analysis of urban coloristics structure allows drawing a number of important conclusions.

Firstly, the splitting of urban coloristics into two parts — official and domestic — should be considered as one of the key characteristics of urban color culture. Each element of the dichotomous model possesses its own semantics and fulfills different social functions. The norms of urban mode of life (urbanity) are realized in official color culture. Its colors are historically changeable, progressive and subject to the so called *color globalization*. On the contrary, domestic color spaces represent the peculiarities of rural pattern (rurality) and possess marked territorial characteristics.

Secondly, two components of urban color culture not only coexist compiling urban coloristics. They constantly interact and as a result of their interaction a certain color composition appears in urban space. Formation of visual identity of city fabric and, consequently, the maintaining of territorial identity is achieved with the help of background architecture. Background is the basis of

city fabric, a peculiar matrix that defines urban dominants and gives them an opportunity to stand out. In urban space the background consists of repeating forms and color tones representing a kind of arithmetic mean of their sum.

Thirdly, presence of these two elements in the structure of urban coloristics makes it a convenient tool to perform a rapid change in urban space perception. It takes place due to the change in correlation between background and image. The same urban objects comprising city fabric are able to form new compositions.

Changes in urban color image are certainly connected with a long lifetime of architectural objects. Rapid urban growth turns them into *monstrous* piles of buildings, inside of which daily urban routine flows. More and more generations live in the streets which had appeared centuries ago. Citizens cannot get rid of the existing architecture. However, they can use this aggregated architectural material as a basis for expression of new ideas with the help of color. Having enormous resources, collective authors *edit* city with the use of color. They can *lay* on urban landscape geometrical or highly stylized figure patterns — color constellations and super figures.

As a rule, the authors working in urban space use color symbols with the meaning intelligible for other citizens. They are taken from a certain catalogue formed in the course of a long cultural development. This *cultural archive* contains previously used and approved color signs with a well-known impact. They provoke a planned reaction to the used color image.

As far as citizens (social groups and individual social agents) use color symbols in their communication, define control zones over territory and resources (mark the territory) and express different connotations with the help of color markers, every new culture type inevitably leads to the formation of a new image and color dominants change in urban space.

Generally, synchronic and diachronic layers of color field are easy to reconstruct. They rather precisely represent the character and disposition of social power, show the peculiarities of relations between individual and collective agents of social field, characteristic sign-symbolical codes, mechanisms of color representation and maintenance of color connotations. Together the components of urban culture form a stable system, a structure that should be taken into account while designing color compositions for modern cities.

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