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# Territorial (re)branding as a factor in the sustainable development of the city

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**Abstract.** As of this date, territorial branding is a key tool to increase the attractiveness of the territories of cities, districts, settlements. By dint of branding, the competition between territories for resources – financial, economic, labor, demographic – is intensified. Territorial branding is a marketing strategy to increase the competitiveness of cities, regions, settlements, revealing the potential of the selected territory and, thus, expanding its capabilities and creating a basis for sustainable development of a city.

Presently, the main achievement of territorial branding is to stimulate the social activity of citizens. Growing interest from different social and age groups of population to creation of an urban brand contributes to sustainable development of cities. The authors consider territorial (re)branding as a multidimensional design algorithm including architectural and design solutions as a single strategic concept. The indicated approach to the formation of a comprehensive concept is a sequence of proposed procedures performed in a certain order, according to the following requirement: predesign analysis; creation of the conceptual model of development; implementation of design documentation; the formation of a high-quality visual-perceived environment of the urban area.

**Key words:** territorial branding, territory rebranding, sustainable urban development, identification of urban spaces, urban development, city planning.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The existing practice of territorial branding considers the territory as a place with unique resources. Generally, the potential of a territory is related to its geographical location. But even a unique location today does not play a dominant role in the global urban hierarchy [1]. The main trend of territorial branding is specialization and global division of territorial functions of cities, eventually giving territories an opportunity to determine their potential and paths to increase the well-being of urban communities. Therefore, it is a strategic necessity to return to the revision of territorial branding decisions in order to provide the meaningful urban identification in a long term. In fact, this implies a rebranding of the territory based on constant monitoring of citizens community wellbeing dynamics, which can be illustrated by the example of the cities of Indonesia [2]. To date, the positive effect of territorial rebranding has been successfully tested in European megacities, such as Barcelona in Spain [3], Randstad in the Netherlands, and Rhine-Ruhr in Germany [4], Brisbane in Australia [5], and Ontario in Canada [6]. A generalized result of the rebranding of these cities is a meaningful approach to urban planning at the local government level, subsequently leading to the successful development of the city. The importance of architecture as a factor in the sustainable development of cities, in the



context of territorial branding, is illustrated by the example of the city of Bitola in Macedonia [7]. The possibility of using the term of “architectural and urban branding” has been theoretically proven in [8]. Also, the connection between territorial branding and architecture has been discussed in detail in the article by Joko Maratowski [9]. According to Maratowski, an integrated approach combining architecture and design of the urban environment can not only promote the city as a trademark, it can also contribute to increased civic engagement. Therefore, territorial branding can improve the quality of urban space, emphasizing the existence of the city as a cultural center of human civilization.

### *1.2 Status of a problem*

Today, the identification of a place in Russian cities is a serious problem. The example of Brisbane (Australia) [5] illustrates the importance of various approaches to creating uniqueness within a city – revealing its core and periphery. Moreover, the full development of a territory depends primarily on its status and image [10]. Accordingly, determining the status and improving the image of a territory is the primary task of territorial branding. Such a task in its nature is similar to a social research [11] and is the main supporting idea of an integrated approach to branding. Russian megacities have vast territories with standardized mass housing of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, which raises the question of inevitable renovation of such areas in the future. Moreover, the monotony of architectural and planning decisions blurs the status of these territories. This is a vital problem for medium and large cities with up to one million inhabitants, with limited budgets. The need for sustainable development of such territories in the future is especially relevant. The other problem is the lack of integrity of design decisions in architectural and design practice, the integrity being the most important aspect of territorial branding [12]. The design of the architectural environment of mass housing areas is currently reduced to the design of playgrounds. The design of facades, the improvement of the horizontal surfaces and landscaping is almost completely disregarded and requires special attention.

## **2 Materials and methods**

### *2.1 Thematic justification*

The territorial branding approach and the use of complex architectural and design solutions makes it possible to create a full-fledged living environment in the urban space, effectively leveraging urban development factors. Urban development factors can be described as a set of socially active potentials of the territory [8. P. 7]:

- natural (effective communication with the city’s natural assets, environmental protection);
- labor (improving the quality of education and labor organization);
- scientific (research and development capabilities);
- educational (advanced training of specialists, development of effective teaching methods);
- investment (competitive qualities of the city, the creation of programs to attract investments);
- innovative (support for modern technologies).

In order to leverage these factors, the territorial branding methodology should follow an accurate algorithm of pre-project analysis and project approach steps, which will allow it to leverage the full potential of city territory and ensure its sustainable development.

### *2.2 Objectives of the research*

Based on the integrated project approach, the territorial branding in this case will stimulate the development of the city and act as a method of urban marketing [13]. The following project algorithm can be used when developing the proposed methodological concept: pre-project analysis, to better understand the essence of the problem, to study in detail the source data, and to explore analogues in similar subjects; systematization of data available for the selected territory; determination of the problem field for the territory; stratification of the territory based on the data on its status; setting goals and objectives for the further development of the territory, using its identified potential; identification of status and design of the territory [14-17]. This will require maximum accumulation of architectural

and design solutions based on the data obtained. Open presentation and demonstration of design solutions will reveal the essence of the development and promote the increase in the welfare of social communities. Such design algorithm will combine all the significant aspects of territorial branding and will ensure the sustainable development of the territory.

### *2.3 Factual material of the research*

Modern trends in territorial branding are related to new technologies and innovations [18-22]. We will focus on the integrated architectural and design aspects of territorial branding, identifying the main instruments of architectural and compositional design, fundamental to the general concept of territorial rebranding. Consider the main compositional architectural and spatial characteristics of urban spaces that are not used today as architectural solutions to improve the quality of the visual identifier of urban space. These are as follows:

- identification of architectural stylistics – quantitative and qualitative identification of prevailing architectural stylistics of a branded urban area;
- the formation of the urban silhouette – definition of dominants and visual directions – the memorable roughness of the border between the building and the sky;
- the creation of an architectural landscape – identification of tiers by determining the number of vertical and horizontal divisions of the architectural occupancy of urban space;
- the formation of architectural expressiveness – creation of height differences and multiple tiers architectural solutions in the construction of branding territory;
- improvement – creation of a barrier-free environment and the priority of pedestrian traffic in relation to the area of landscaped coverage.

Information and graphic facilities are the basis of the city's environmental communication. Graphics forms the urban identity, imposing semantic prints on urban surfaces, and thus creates a specific image, identity of the place. Modern trends in territorial branding originate in innovative formats for creating the architectural environment of cities. The main tools used in territorial branding for preparation of design projects:

- 3D Still Life images – over the past two years, more and more 3D-design projects have started to appear. Watching the success of leading 3D-artists, such as Peter Tarka or MVSM studio, we can safely assume that 3D-still life images will become even more popular in the future. This is especially true for collaborations in logo design and product placement [23];
- Vivid & Bright Colors/Gradients – in recent years, many designers have returned to the use of gradients again. Everything suggests that this trend will continue, becoming more versatile. We expect a lot of innovations related, for example, to the use of bright and vibrant colors in combination with various textures. Gradients 2.0 will please our eyes with the effects of double tone [23];
- Flexible 3D/3D-capabilities – over the past two years a real breakthrough has occurred in the field of 3D-design. The line between reality and fantasy becomes increasingly blurred. It is likely that over time, 3D-design will use more and more natural forms and movements that are simply mesmerizing. A great example is the forms and movements characteristic of a fluid in nature [23];
- Adding Depth to Flat Design – adding depth to a minimalistic flat design with realistic shadows. This will create the effect of three-dimensional space, almost indistinguishable from reality. This effect can be enhanced by arranging objects on different layers and ensuring their interaction with each other through a change in both sharpness and blur [23];
- Urban installations – it has recently become fashionable to design urban open spaces with the help of installations. City installations are part of the modern trend in urban design;
- Media installations – light projection installations on the surfaces of urban buildings and structures.

The above instruments constitute the main practical part of the multi-aspect design concept of territorial branding. However, sustainable urban development is only possible in conjunction with the marketing component. Today there is a methodology for responsible design, which can increase the interest of citizens in the design decisions carried out on their territory of residence and boost their social activity.

### 3 Results and discussions

The architecture of urban spaces is the framework for creating a unique urban environment. The existing architecture of urban areas forms certain visual associations related to identification of urban areas. It should be borne in mind that urban areas differ sharply in social living conditions, saturation with infrastructure, and landscaping. Socially significant public places in a city are characterized by a large number of citizens visiting them, and by intensity of the human flow. However, the main part of town consists of depressed social areas with monotonous and dull architecture. Thus, the architectural and environmental heterogeneity of urban areas is formed against a background of existing fully formed development. Taken together, different parts of a city act as the image of a whole city. Most of these urban areas have a negative connotation and will require their rebranding.

The lifestyle of citizens is determined by architectural and spatial visualization. The visual environment is shaped by architecture and contributes to a conscious choice of living in the city. It is the architectural context that determines the prospects for development of living environment in a city's districts. Architectural monotony and dullness directly correlate with dullness in a life of an average resident of peripheral dormitory districts. The disconnection between communal and industrial territories forces a citizen to perceive them as the area of temporary residence, alienating such territories from urban life. City centers, on the contrary, allow people to diversify their leisure activities. Here, architectural diversity changes the visual context of the city in space, helping a viewer to relax, and creating positive emotions of psycho-perception.

A city as a socio-cultural entity is geographically segregated. In most cities, there is a striped pattern of territories with different social status. Over time, residents develop a certain visual and psychological attitude to a certain territory, based, among other things, on compositional elements of the architectural environment, which are characteristic of a particular urban area. Citizens distinguish between architectures of different urban areas by their visual characteristics. Thus, the architectural environment acts as a constructor of the social identifier of the urban area. Therefore, it is architecture that reveals the positive potential of human achievements, acting as the main visual background. Fragmentation of a city territory by social status directly correlates with the architectural parameters of a given city territory. Urban areas with social housing have very specific architectural characteristics.

#### 3.1 Meeting the challenge

The proposed architectural and design principles of territory rebranding are a complex concept. On the one hand, this approach is supported by a sequence of analysis and project activities, and, on the other, ensures clarity of the conceptual model that reflects structurally both functions and their quantitative indicators. Moreover, this approach provides the interconnection of architectural and design solutions as creative and project activity. Architectural and design context of the area will create a visual background for the psycho-physiological relaxation of the viewer and will serve as a basis to form a territorial brand.

### 4 Conclusions

The rebranding of urban spaces on the basis of proposed architectural and design concept offers a wealth of tools for the integrated sustainable development of existing city districts. The topic of urban reorganization is closely related to the social activity of citizens, which, today, is an important factor in improving the quality of the architectural environment. Today's trend is socially responsible design of urban environment. According to this approach, different districts of a city shall receive equal starting opportunities, making it possible to determine the identity of each individual urban district.

The competition among residents of urban areas for creation of better living conditions will increase. At the same time, the economic aspects of development of architectural and spatial environment of residential areas of the city will be placed into the hands of its residents. Thus, the intensity of the vital activity of regions will correlate with their social activity, ensuring sustainable development of the city.

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