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**THE CITY AS THE OPTIMAL ORGANIZATIONAL FORM OF  
THE CULTURAL FIELD**

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**Abstract**

In the article it is proposed to consider the city in the philosophical and cultural aspect within the framework of the ethnic energetic concept of the cultural field. The city is presented as the intersection of Culture and Nature, initially opposing each other; as a special urban environment; as a special cosmos (orderliness) and the centre of the cultural habitat. It is shown that in the process of long-term historical and cultural development, the city turned out to be the most optimal form of existence of a cultural habitat, since it represents the most comfortable and stable structures of organization, management and functioning of human communities that really support and develop their culture. A well-grounded assumption is put forward that it is the urban form of the cultural field that will be taken as the basis for the development of the space of the Universe by mankind. As a unique social and cultural integral organism, the city has its own anatomy, physiology, and an energetic cultural field that determines its soul. The culture-centric function of the City is emphasized, in the life of which cultural innovations and projects are implemented. A hypothesis is proposed about the transformation of historical and cultural forms of ethnogenesis in the urban cultural field, the formation of “quasi-ethnic groups”, along with the transformation of traditional ethnic groups, the development of subcultures and various kinds of social and cultural communities based on religious, political, aesthetic and moral ideals and ideas.

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*Keywords:* City, quasi-ethnos, cultural field, cultural area, social and cultural organism



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## **1. Introduction**

The cultural field is a key concept of the ethno-energy concept of culture (Kravchenko, 2017). The main idea of this concept is that a person, initially being in Nature, creates a Culture, i.e. a special habitat, social and cultural habitat, significantly different from Nature. It is in Culture that a person is formed, exists and develops as a person, differing from other animals not only by reason, anatomy and physiology, but also by the ability of self-realization in a special sensual and spiritual sphere and the creation of an artificial cultural environment.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Today, the philosophy of the city is associated primarily with the philosophy of architecture (Gens, 2017) or even a dehumanized material environment (Shaw, 2018), that, from our point of view, indicates serious problems in the development of the philosophy of the city, as such, initially tending to identify not the visual-material, but the spiritual and humanistic essence of the city. The undertaken studies of the city in culturology (Gornova, 2013) only indicate the specifics of the existence of culture in the city, dwelling on the statement of the complexity of the social and cultural urban reality.

The article proposes a philosophical and cultural study of the city in the aspect of the ethnic energetic concept of the cultural field, while it should be noted that:

1. the cultural field can be represented in various research angles (as a cultural habitat, a field of energy tension; the sphere of various forms of cultural dialogue, etc.);
2. the city is a culture-centric phenomenon;
3. the cultural field, directly related to the creative activity of man, is not limited to the urban environment, but at the present stage of human civilization, the city is the optimal form of the cultural field.

## **3. Research Questions**

Realizing the scope of the topic raised, the following issues will be considered:

1. the formation of the urban environment in the cultural habitat;
2. the city as an integral social and cultural organism, endowed with a soul, in the aspect of dynamic spiritual ties of citizens in a tense cultural field;
3. polyethnicity and cultural diversity of modern cities in the aspect of the ethno-energy concept of the cultural field.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The phenomenon of the city in several aspects of the ethno-energy concept of the cultural field is considered.

## 5. Research Methods

### 5.1. The city as a key part of the cultural habitat

The cultural field is viewed through the lens of opposition to Nature, as a cultural habitat, i.e. a certain material environment isolated from nature and artificially created objects, in which the activities of cultural subjects are carried out (Kravchenko, 2017).

The city is created as a special limited territory of Culture in the natural landscape; it emphasizes the opposition of the artificial human habitat to Nature, as the natural habitat of animals. By Nature, we mean that part of the universe in which the life of a person, as a biological and active being, can be realized. It can be considered as a special “cosmos” within our planet Earth. According to Pavlenko (2010), “cosmos is a concept of ancient Greek philosophy, which expresses the idea of the world as an ordered, rationally organized, animate whole. Space is opposite to chaos as an indefinite, formless state of the world” (p. 315).

In this aspect, the cultural field interacts with Nature. So, the weather often determines the character of the city (foggy London, sunny Barcelona, windy Melbourne, etc.).

The city, embedded in a certain natural area, forms a unique urban environment, which is determined, first of all, by artificial (architectural, sculptural, technical and artistic) objects, and not natural (with the exception of those that have undergone a purposeful transformation or interpretation). The architectural and, in general, the visual side of the urban environment is the basis of the anatomy of the city. It is in this sense that the Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset (2000) called culture “supernature”. He wrote that “a person creates new, favourable (for himself! - V.K.) circumstances and ... exudes himself from supernature, adapting nature as such to his own needs” (p.201).

The researchers of “local civilizations”, from the 19th century onwards, emphasized the importance of ancient cities. In particular, Spengler (1998), showed a turning point in the formation of high historical cultures - a change in the space in which culture exists: prehistoric (primitive, aboriginal) culture was born and developed in nature; a great, developed culture was formed in the city when it became a special world that determined its own landscape, dynamics, history and the main dominants of human lives. “All great cultures are urban cultures. /... / World history is the history of an urban man” (Spengler, 1998, p. 92).

Centuries and millennia passed from the first cities that marked the fact of the settlement of primitive tribes, outlining the first boundaries between Culture and Nature (as previously the vegetable gardens of cultivated plants were fenced off from wild nature), until the appearance of the majestic ancient cities-civilizations (Sumer, Egypt, Mohenjo-Daro, etc.). And then the culture developed in ancient, medieval, Old Russian, Eastern, New European and many other cities of the world. Each city, regardless of size, was a special Cosmos.

At the same time, the cultural habitat of a certain people does not coincide with the totality of its urban cultures. Nomadic cultures, rural folk culture (folklore, everyday life, traditions, rituals, etc.) are of great importance, in modern and contemporary times - the culture of castles, noble and landowners' estates, country suburbs, etc. However, the “points of growth” of the cultural field show the centripetence of all cultural processes, the concentration and development of their results in cities.

In the near future, mastering the boundless Universe, a person will be not just in a spaceship, but, uratively speaking, inside his Culture, an artificially created environment, striving, on the one hand, to

expand the understanding of the Cosmos, and on the other, to adapt the still unknown areas of the Universe to familiar to him ideas and living conditions (terraforming planets, agriculture and industrial production in the conditions of new astronomically bodies - not only planets, but also satellites, asteroids, etc.) At the same time, of course, humanity is now ready for self-transformation, recognizing the inevitability of survival and adaptation to unprecedented living conditions.

It is no coincidence that Tsiolkovsky (2002) planned to begin the development of the solar system with the formation of cities, first in the orbit of the Earth, and then on the Moon. In 1929 in his work “The Goals of Astronautics”, the scientist described in detail (taking into account the realities of his time) the prototype of the modern orbital space station (glass-metal ball), a spacesuit for spacewalk, as well as the features of weightlessness and ways of survival and work of people in unusual conditions.

The project of the first human settlement on the Mars is presented today as a modern city oriented towards complete self-sufficiency (Petranek, 2016).

## **5.2. Formation of an artificial urban organism**

Developing Spengler’s ideas, the Russian urban philosopher Grevs (1923) viewed the city as “the highest concentration of cultural life of a given type or era” and as “the most saturated cultural nest” (p. 4-5). Antsiferov (1926) wrote that “the city gives us the most expressive image of the culture of its time. /... / Everything accumulated over the centuries is merged in it in a single, integral form” (p. 13).

In the aspect of our research, it is important that the special “physiological” and social and cultural organism of the City is the focus of diverse energies. Its functioning is provided by the administrative and economic management structure, which forms the basis of the physiology of the city. From the point of view of energies, electrical, magnetic, light and other “bodies” occupy an important place here.

The cultural field of the City appears as a special energetic field of interaction and functioning of human emotions, experiences and feelings of the citizens. In comparison with the fields of natural and technical energies, these are cultural and emotional correlations, special energetic interactions, mutual influence and counteractions of people that unfold in the cultural habitat. These are direct cultural tensions, direct and active energetic dialogues of a person with other people and culturally significant subjects and objects, and not just the physical stay of human beings within the city.

The energetic aspects of considering an integral urban organism lead to the most important problem - the formation of the concept of the soul of a city and its understanding, first of all, from the point of view of the sources of formation and the engines of development of the city as an integral organism. Antsiferov (1926) considered the “soul of the city” as “a historically formed unity of all elements that make up the urban organism as a specific individuality” (p. 26).

In the aspect of the ethno-energetic concept of the cultural field, the city appears as a special kind of “being”, “society-organism”, and the inhabitants are its “cells” (by analogy with the philosophical prototype of Leviathan state of Hobbes (2020)). Social groups are the “tissues” of the urban organism. It can be imagined that permanent residents form bone, muscle and conjunctive tissues; dynamic citizens and visitants form the hematopoietic and lymphatic system; the city administration is its brain and functional systems, spiritual or spiritually material objects act as a heart, and symbols of religious, ideological, aesthetic or moral solidarity of citizens act as a soul.

So, in ancient Greek Athens, the Parthenon was the visual symbol (heart) of the city, the soul of which was Pallas Athena, the widely recognized goddess.

In antiquity, a different understanding of the city soul can be noted. In the project of Callipolis, the ideal city of Plato, the heart of the city turned out to be philosophers, at the same time governors-administrators, and spiritual leaders of the citizens. They considered the soul of the polis to be the highest eidos of Good, striving to really embody it in the life of the city.

The heart and soul of ancient Beijing was the Secret/Forbidden City (Imperial Palace, Gugong).

In Paris, right before our very eyes, the heart of a medieval city (Notre Dame Cathedral) burned down and the heart of the new European Paris (Eiffel Tower) was finally established. The soul of Paris in the 19th and 20th centuries was apparently Montmartre, the haven of the creative bohemia that determined the development of contemporary art throughout the world.

A megacity, in which direct personal communication is levelled, as the basis of the emotional and energetic dialogism of residents, is a city that has lost its soul. A city like a soulless biotechnotronic monster with a tendency to self-destruction turns out to be a dead-end path for the development of an urban cultural field. The revitalization of the megacity is the development of socio-cultural and humanitarian programs in the administrative regions, the stimulation of active interactions among residents, the creation of creative projects to strengthen the spiritual unity of citizens and various communities and organizations.

### **5.3. Transformation of traditional ethnogenesis in the cultural field of modern cities and the problem of polyethnicity and cultural diversity of cities**

In this article the cultural field is considered as a unique energy and living environment of human groups, which is formed and exists, first of all, due to the bioenergy of each member of this group and various energy interactions within a variety of groups, formed mainly on the basis of individually creative and social and cultural initiatives.

Following Gumilev (1993), the traditional ethnos is considered as a special sphere of existence and interaction of various energies in specially structured human groups. Gumilev (1993) wrote that an ethnos is “a group of people naturally formed on the basis of an original stereotype of behaviour, existing as an energy system (structure), opposing itself to all other groups, based on a sense of complementarity” (p. 540). Before the emergence of developed cities, ethnic groups were “born” as a result of a “passionary impulse” and then formed due to the redistribution of the energy of the drive and energetic interaction between people, first of all, manifested in emotions, experiences and feelings. As Gumilev (1993) emphasized, the formation of the ethnos was closely connected with the natural landscape; the scientist insisted on the importance of the “local development” of each ethnic group (pp. 503-504). At the same time, ethnic systems are fundamentally different from groups of animals in the natural environment; and the relationship of ethnic groups with nature has a completely different character, compared with life in nature of other living organisms.

However, with the emergence and development of cities, leading to a natural mixing of representatives of different ethnic groups, both the life of individual ethnic groups and the interactions between them change strongly.

People in the city, in a certain sense, are no longer entirely natural creatures, more precisely, they are natural objects that have undergone careful cultural processing and exist in an artificial / cultural environment according to special rules; at the same time, in comparison with other natural beings, they possess greater degrees of freedom and relieve themselves of responsibility for violating natural laws.

In the conditions of the urban cultural habitat, with its powerful technical, social and cultural energies, we note the formation of “quasi-ethnic groups” as special socio-cultural communities reflecting the bioenergetic interactions of people pursuing common cultural goals and carrying out relevant culturally significant activities of the city. So, in the cultural field of a modern city, previously non-existent “quasi-ethnic groups” appear, the formation of which was impossible in natural landscapes (downshifters, metrosexuals, hikikomori have been already considered in the article (Kravchenko, 2021, p.55-60)).

The existence of traditional ethnic groups, nations and nationalities in the city is also undergoing significant transformations. In the cultural aspect, the polyethnicity of modern cities is considered as an opportunity for intercultural interactions (Forde, 2019). In the concept of the cultural field, ethnicity itself is presented to us as a set of many ambiguous cultural situations leading to its internal transformation. In the modern polyethnic, multinational and dynamic ethno-energy field, symphonic polyphony of individual cultures is gradually forming as a complex unity of urban culture.

## 6. Findings

During the study, the following results were obtained:

1) In the observable history of culture - from ancient civilizations to modern times (and a possible space future) - cities are a culture-centric phenomenon located on the borderline of two cosmoses - Nature and Culture. In the cultural field, considered as the cultural area of a specific culture, a special culture-intensive and organizing significance of the urban environment is revealed.

2) The city is formed as a single social organism with its own anatomy, physiology and soul. In the aspect of the ethno-energetic concept of the cultural field, the city appears as an association of interacting people, a complex animated mega-organism; at the same time, the special role of the “soul of the city” is read precisely in the aspect of the direct energetic dialogues and polylogues of the citizens.

3) In the tense cultural field of the city, special combinations of cultural and psychological factors are revealed, primarily related to the emotional sphere of representatives of traditional ethnic groups, quasi-ethnic groups, various communities of citizens based on common cultural goals, carrying out the actual culturally significant activities of the city; factors that determine the dynamics of the state, actions and interactions of an individual and various communities, as subjects of culture, in the symphonic unity of urban culture.

## 7. Conclusion

In this article, the ethno-energy concept of the cultural field has shown itself as an effective and multifunctional tool in considering the city as an object of modern philosophical and cultural research. The culture-centric significance of the city was revealed, which allows structuring the cultural field itself,

revealing its various forms, for example, ethnocentric in the natural landscape and optimal (polyethnic) in the urban environment.

The variety of energy and socio-cultural interactions of ethnic groups, quasi-ethnic groups, subcultures and various forms of associations and confrontations of citizens constitutes the essence of special scientific problems and tasks for further researches of the urban cultural field.

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