

Sustainability: necessity, ideal morality, or a natural phenomenon?

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INTRODUCTION

A notion of sustainability and sustainable development is actively discussed worldwide since the times of the Bruntland's Commission Report and the Rio Declaration. However, little or even no attention is paid to the issues of *cultural* development in this context. There are many evidences and no clear reasoning of this phenomenon. Thus, it might be possible to assume that deep in their mind creators and supporters of the sustainable development movement do not find the issue of culture important enough for human survival, or anticipate that welfare itself calls forth cultural implications. Somehow or other these hidden reasons lead to the same result – in the context of sustainable development culture is not defined as an object of any special care or, in the best case, is regarded as marginal in the mainstream of human life.

Though such a restricted attitude ties culture to a rather narrow area of life, on the other hand, it assigns to culture an exclusive and elitist position, which results in a limited access and consumption of culture. Monument preservation is a typical example of such an activity. Discussions on cultural continuity lead to a dead end in this context, where artifacts are 'dear antiquities' and not a part of common everyday life.

From the point of view of cultural anthropology and sociology, culture is not regarded as an attractive, but not essential "arts-and-pleasures" of human

beings. It is defined as the ways of life and the environments of social groups, an essence that gives a group its own structures and creates its unique cultural identity. Inheritance, preservation, maintenance, and transference to next generations create the very nature of any culture. The physical environment of the group's life is an inseparable structural and structuring part of its culture. Urban conservation attempts to turn the conservational movement into this direction. Heritage conservationists and cultural anthropologists see the positive role of sustainable development. However, this is not true for the *visé versa* situation yet, because conservationists still lack factual arguments of the same range and weight that are common to sustainable development.

What arguments should be used for urban conservation, and what universal tools for operation might be developed? This article is an attempt to define the concept of cultural sustainability, to indicate how it is possible to apply this holistic and interdisciplinary approach to urban conservation, and to propose a community profiling as a tool for situation analysis, helpful for a successful operating of urban preservation policies. Along with the other aspects, this is based on the author's findings, regarding an identification of the actual place of culture in the contemporary concepts of development in general and sustainable development in particular, as well as of the position of urban conservation in concepts of sustainability.

TWO APPROACHES TO CULTURE

Place of culture in the concept of sustainable development

The World Commission on Environment and Development gives a typical definition of sustainability. It states that “sustainable development – means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (1987). The Agenda 21 gives a similar definition, based on the Rio Declaration: “development today must not undermine the development and environment needs of present and future generations” (The Agenda...).

However, what do needs mean in this context? At a first glance, the given definitions cover human development as a whole. Nevertheless, at a closer view we see something different. Let us take some examples. First, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, in its program for indicators for sustainable development, based on the Agenda 21, limits the concept of sustainable development to three main categories – social, economic, and environmental (the fourth category is an institutional one) (Whitaker, 1998). Second, issues on the cultural category (*i.e.* on heritage conservation) were added to the Agenda 21 at the last moment, therefore they look a bit marginal in the context of the entire document. Third, we see a similar approach in many European documents such as the European Local Agenda 21 (The ICLEI’s...), the Charter of European Cities & Towns Towards Sustainability (Aalborg Charter) (The Charter...), the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign (The European...), or in texts of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) (The International...), etc. Fourth, The European Union has prepared special requirements on integration and legal harmonization for post-communist countries, but in this context paid minor attention to cultural issues; this is clearly visible in the Lithuania’s EU Accession Programme (the National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis) (Lithuania’s...). Finally, culture is usually omitted or put on the margins of national programs on sustainability in various countries as well. Lithuania is not an exception.

What is wrong with culture that it is positioned somehow outside sustainability? There are many reasons, but let us mention just a few essential to the subject:

- Culture is a sphere of national identity. Every state, nation, or ethnic group reacts rather painfully to a critical interference to this sphere from outside. Therefore, official international activities try to avoid this issue as much as possible.
- Every culture is different and has different relations to its own past and future and to cultures of

other peoples. Therefore, it seems difficult to establish common rules that would be equally applicable to specific cultures.

- Culture is declared a sphere of freedom. This connotes that any culture needs to be supported, activated, and left on its own for the sake of its free development. From this point of view, any regulations on cultural development would be harmful to cultural creativity.

That is why proposals to insert cultural issues into the concept of sustainable development often meet scepticism as regards their adaptability, and even rationality of such cohesion. This aberration and scepticism are rooted in our concepts on the place of culture in a broad context of human development. Two major and worldwide spread concepts may be defined as the *institutional* approach and the *anthropological* approach.

Institutional approach to culture and a popular concept of sustainability

We may define the abovementioned attitude as a *popular* and *institutional* approach, because, first, it is recognized and appreciated worldwide and, second, it is represented and promoted by high level international, regional, and national organizations and institutions such as governments, etc.

The institutional approach has European roots. According to it, culture is something that stands aside of everyday life, creating a range of elitist and/or leisure-time activities. The Local Sustainability European Good Practice Information System on the Internet (The Local...) gives a very *typical* definition – “Quality of Life is composed of several aspects including: material living standards, public health and safety, access to education, health care, fulfilling occupations, opportunities for personal development and advancement, community, *culture*, social life and recreation, environmental amenities and aesthetic qualities”.

This approach is a typical ‘truth by definition’, *i.e.* an ascription based on formal instrumental agreement on what *culture* is. Isolation of culture from the mainstream of life is expressed, for example, by:

- Spheres of influence of ministries of culture in many European countries, including mainly arts, language and heritage fields.
- The very name of the UNESCO, *i.e.* the Organization on Education, Science and **Culture**.
- Legal and institutional separation of cultural and social programming, or physical planning, including housing, nature protection, etc.
- Popular concept of sustainability, as mentioned above: it is reflected in programs on various levels, starting from the UN and ending in local urban management activities.

This approach is more typical for countries with a centralized and government-based regulation of cultural issues. In fact, it acts against sustainability by dividing human activities into 'cultural' and 'non-cultural' and thus cutting the cultural aspect from the common day-to-day life patterns.

Place of urban heritage in the institutional approach

Heritage is often added to those marginal 'cultural'. That is why quite often we can find architectural and even urban conservation issues combined with matters of copyrights, contemporary arts, or leisure time activities¹. Sometimes urban conservation is located a level higher – in territorial planning and programming. In this case, however, conservation problems and needs more often than not are rather 'added' to these plans, instead of being integrated with other issues of human environment. In other words, interest in urban conservation is rather declared than implemented, by giving a required specific legislative, economic and social background only to isolated conservation areas, and not including its issues into the wide context of sustainable development of human settlements. The type of heritage conservation that develops under this approach is in fact 'museological' – orientated towards unique *landmarks*, even if they are named 'conservation *areas*'. However, such a conservation of masterpieces is not very helpful in the preservation of cultural identity and in supporting the cultural continuity of communities.

Anthropological approach to culture and sustainability

Yet, there is a different approach to culture, represented by cultural anthropology. It declares a holistic concept, which identifies culture with the whole-

ness of manifestations of society and defines it as "a set of rules or standards shared by members of society, which when acted upon the members, produce behaviour that falls within a range of variation the members consider proper and acceptable". Society in this context means "a group of people who occupy a specific locality and who share the same cultural traditions" (Haviland, 1999).

The New Encyclopædia Britannica defines *culture* as "behaviour peculiar to *Homo sapiens* together with material objects used as an integral part of this behaviour; and consisting specifically of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, ceremonies and so on" (The Concepts..., 1991). Further on the Encyclopaedia identifies culture as an environment: "*Culture is man-made environment*, continuum of things and events in a cause and effect relationship; the function of this external, man-made environment is to make life secure and enduring for the society of human beings living within the cultural system; thus culture may be seen as the most recent, the most highly developed means of promoting the security and continuity of life, in a series that began with the simple reflex" (The Concepts..., 1991).

In recent decades the concern in environment is rapidly rising. This shift has its evidences in a wide range of newly developed branches of sciences or scientific perspectives, such as ecoaesthetics, the environmental ethics, geographical philosophy, ecologic psychology, topophilia, social political theories, taking into account the environmental impact on social and personal development, finally generic environmental philosophy. The newly emerged concept of the *ecological beauty* refers not to 'pretty natural views', but to the structural and functional rationality of the ecosystems.

However, anthropological approach to culture is by no means a pure academic concept. On the contrary, we notice similar attitudes to culture in a variety of social contexts, for example, in:

- Growing tendency to preserve environment of day-to-day life: popular, vernacular heritage, areas and landscapes, etc., not only monuments and landmarks.
- Grassroots movements of local communities worldwide.
- Administrative tendency to join developmental and cultural (especially heritage conservation) issues under one structural umbrella as Ministry of Environment, Life Quality or similar, as well as to promote generic cross-institutional programs, etc.

The anthropological approach is able to establish links between various human activities, interests and across generations on the basis of sustainable human development. That is why it gives very strong

¹ Radzicki (Radzicki...) gives two typical examples of this concept – *Sustainable Seattle's "Indicators of Sustainable Community"* list and *Truckee Meadows Tomorrow's "Quality of Life Indices"*. The first document defines the following fields: environment (13 indicators), population and resources (8), economy (10), youth and education (5), health and community (11), and mentions neither culture nor cultural heritage. The second document gives a developed classification covering: population (1 indicator), land use, housing and transportation (4), economy (4), environment and recreation (6), education (4), health (10), human services (2), public safety (3). Cultural issues are defined as *Culture and Information Resources* and include 4 indicators: cultural activities offered, cultural education offered at schools, facilities used as community recreation and cultural centers. Cultural heritage is classified as a separate field, however, having only one indicator – a number of historic preservation programs.

arguments for advocacy of urban conservation. Heritage conservation that develops under this approach seeks for continuity of traditions and respects evidences of common everyday life; it is related to preservation of living historic units.

This tendency towards cultural sustainability is more typical of the countries having strong traditions of local self-governance and community's self-identity. Its worldwide development has been started only in the recent decades, therefore is not a mainstream yet. On the other hand, this approach continues to gain in popularity and strength.

ROOTS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Fair opponents of sustainability, especially in regard of cultural heritage, use to ask the same question: "Why *should* we preserve and sustain, although humankind *never* did this before?" However, this question can be reversed and returned to them as: "Why should we *not* preserve and sustain, although humankind *always* did this before?" In fact, the principle of sustainability is nothing new on the Earth. Moreover, it is rooted deeply in human culture and nature. Yet we have forgotten it during some last ages of modernity and 'progress', thus it might be useful to remind ourselves these roots once again (see Fig. 1).

Necessity

Today we often define sustainability as the necessity *i.e.*, as our obligation toward the Future: "Sustainability means – developing to meet present needs, without affecting the ability of future generations to develop to meet their own needs" (Grieve, 2001). This concern created the background of the Bruntland's Commission Report and all other succeeding documents. Such an aspect of sustainability is too widely known to detail it here.

Ideal morality

Yet, it would be useful to remember that a tendency for sustaining was always present in human societies. We notice its traces from the oldest times and in various cultures. In philosophical, religious and customary ethics, sustainability is expressed as ideal morality – in the principles of poverty, simplicity, and chastity.

In religious systems, we meet their patterns in Buddhism, Zen, and Taoism. They are extremely important in Christianity. Here we notice a strong fluctuation of the trend during ages. It starts from eremites of Early Christianity, and then goes through medieval Catholic monastic orders, especially mendicant, begging orders of St. Francis, St. Dominic and relevant common movements. It ends in some ideas of the Reformation and the Protestantism, later the Baptism and so on. We find them in the Orthodoxy as well.

In European philosophy, these principles of ideal morality are widely represented. We meet them in Ancient Greece, in the philosophy of the Stoics with their formulation of the goal of life as the "rational selection of the things according to nature", and with their master Epictetus, who led a life of exemplary contentment, simplicity, and virtue, practicing the morality which he taught; then the Sceptics with Pyrrho or the Cynics with Antisthenes, who taught by a similar example of poor life, intending to bring men back to their original simplicity in life and manners... In the Middle Ages we have William of Ockham who said, "It is vain to do with more what can be done with fewer". This formulation is known as the principle of 'Ockham's Razor' or the Doctrine of Simplicity. Ockham's Razor is a hypothesis based on an aesthetic and ethic idea, which was and still is quite fruitful in various fields of human activities. The similar ethical approach was popular enough in the religious and secular philosophy of the New Ages. It remains on the contemporary agenda of Ethics as well. As regards customary ethics, we have many examples on preferences of the mentioned principles in folklore – fairy tales, proverbs and similar.

In all the cases, these ethical principles were rooted in the Divine or the Natural Order of the Universe, that is why they were evaluated as the basis of ideal human behaviour.

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Natural phenomenon

The question of sustainability of natural development is perhaps as old



Fig. 1. Roots of sustainability
1 pav. Tvarumo šaknys

as the humankind is. It is myths where we first meet a discourse on the Natural Order in the context of the Nature of the Universe, its structural Unity and of the Universal Law that governs everything. Some ancient religions, especially the Eastern ones, express these ideas as Reincarnation or Life Cycle. In fact, all them are ideas on Sustainability of the Universe. Ancient Greek philosophers developed the Principle of Absolute Law that governs the Universe and admits of no exceptions, so human behaviour has to be nothing but admittance of the superiority and rightness of this Law. Christianity somehow stopped this discourse by drawing a clear line between the nature of the humankind and all the other world. Yet, in the Middle Ages we have some exemptions of the Rule such as St. Francis. The discourse relived in the Renaissance and the New Ages. Now it was based not only on philosophy, but on science as well. In our days we have studies in depth based on a cross-disciplinary approach, for example studies of systems and especially of *self-organizing and living systems* in physics, biology, psychology, social sciences, informatics and cybernetics. The natural and social laws defined by these studies are very similar to the principles of the modern concept on sustainability.

Self-organizing systems

The theory of self-organizing systems argues that a self-organizing system is not an organism that changes its structure as a function of its experience and environment, but rather a *system* consisting of the organism and the environment taken together (Heylighen...). The concept of autopoiesis, proposed by Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, defines living systems as self-producing units which accordingly (self-) maintain their essential form (Whitaker, 1998).

In his theory of systems view of life, Fritjof Capra defines the following laws which rule self-organizing systems (Capra, 1982):

- **self-preservation**, which refers to the fact that self-renewal processes are regulated in such a way that the overall pattern of the organism is preserved;
- **metabolism**, which defines the process through which “living organisms, being open systems, have to maintain a continuous exchange of energy and matter with their environment to stay alive”;
- **dynamic stability**: “a high degree of nonequilibrium is absolutely necessary for self-organization (...). At the same time, these self-organizing sys-

tems have a high degree of stability (...). The stability of self-organizing systems is utterly dynamic and must not be confused with equilibrium. It consists in maintaining the overall structure in spite of ongoing changes and replacements of its components”;

- **homeostasis** – system’s existence in a state of continual fluctuation, even when there is no disturbance: “fluctuations play a central role in the dynamics of self-maintenance. Any living system can be described in terms of interdependent variables, each of which can vary over a wide range between an upper and a lower limit. All variables oscillate between these limits². Such a state is known as homeostasis³. It is a state of dynamic, transactional balance in which there is great flexibility”;

- **ability to adapt**: “the ability to adapt to a changing environment is an essential characteristic of living organisms and of social systems”.

Capra defines these qualities of living beings as a pair of complementary dynamic phenomena that are essential aspects of self-organization: “Self-maintenance that includes the processes of self-renewal, healing, homeostasis, and adaptation, and self-transformation and self-transcendence, a phenomenon that expresses itself in the processes of learning, development, and evolution (...)” (See Fig. 2, 3).

Contemporary sciences have found that the phenomenon of self-organization is not limited to living matter but occurs also in certain chemical systems, it can be noticed even in astrophysical structures. In other words, sciences start to define these principles as some General Law that governs not only life but also the whole Universe. They are perfectly appli-

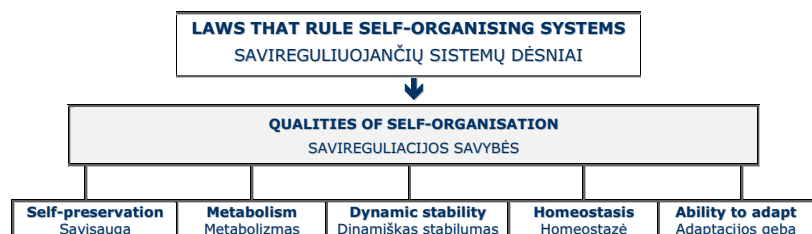


Fig. 2. Laws that rule self-organizing systems and qualities of self-organizing systems

2 pav. Savireguliuojančių sistemų dėsniai: savireguliacijos savybės

² These limits may be defined as the scale and rhythm of the system: they are a factor of physical and chemical processes; allometry defines the relationship of behaviour to size of an organism; this relationship is studied by human sciences as well.

³ In the context of sustainable development ‘homeostasis’ is defined as a key ecosystem concept where feedback loops keep the overall system much the same, while elements within it alter considerably (change within stability) (Glossary...).

cable to human societies as well and can be used as the framework of sustainable development.

The old and the new

From the point of view of the self-organizing systems' theory, the main indicator of well-being and vitality of such a system is its *preservation–innovation ratio*. On this basis, societies may be classified as:

- *Homeostatic or sustainable societies*, which are preservation-oriented. They are cautious about changes and try to control them. Each innovation has to be checked and tested for its sensibility. Only in the case of positive evaluation it has a chance to be adopted. This approach is deeply rooted and still vivid in many religious systems, especially non-western, in traditional societies, and in general in every place where the priority of customary ethics does exist. Up to the end of the 18th century this had been applied even to European Fine Arts, otherwise being an innovative activity. In 1793 Johann Georg Sulzer (Sulzer, 1793) gave the following definition of the *New*: “If a well-known thing or well-known thought is the most suitable in order to achieve some specific aim, it would be wrong and even harmful to replace it by something new (...). We need novelties only where old things lack vitality or strength. The New is not the Aim, but just one of the means”.

- *Innovative or non-sustainable societies*, which are change-orientated. They seek for changes *per se*; the New is always attractive to human beings. Yet, when novelty, otherness, change turns to become a criterion of the quality of life, society loses its social

perspectives and points of reference. Then it is very difficult or even impossible to define innovation's coherence with a respective socio-cultural context and to evaluate its workability there. That is why traditional societies did not support this approach. Yet, innovation is a typical value of the 20th century's Western civilization (though modern development has started some ages ago; and periods with similar tendencies happened in earlier centuries as well).

DEFINITION OF CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY

Qualities of culture

In order to define cultural sustainability, we have to point out some specific qualities of culture that are relevant to the subject.

Culture is sustainable

Culture as a phenomenon of human life must have roots and common support in order to survive and be transferred from one generation to another. It must have common understanding and appreciation in order to fulfill its destination. Social phenomena that do not have these features cannot be defined as cultural traits of a society. Culture is contagious, *i.e.* its elements may diffuse from one people or region to another. Innovations are a stimulus for cultural development, but they may lead to acculturation as well. In order to survive culture needs to maintain the state of homeostasis. If innovations overweight the scale, different culture starts to develop in the same place.

Culture is social

Human beings, like other social animal species, live in societies and each society possesses culture of its own. A socio-cultural system is the culture possessed by a distinguishable and autonomous group (society) of human beings, such as a tribe or a modern nation. It is based on collective thinking which created a world of culture and values. Moreover, this world became an integral part of human natural environment. In the process of creating an abstract inner world, modern societies started to ignore the latter quality. Yet the reality of life still is here, and if people do not change it for better, they somehow change it for worse.

Culture is heritage

The basis of a socio-cultural system is enculturation – the process by which society's culture is transmitted from one generation to the next (Haviland, 1999). That's why cultural anthropology and socio-

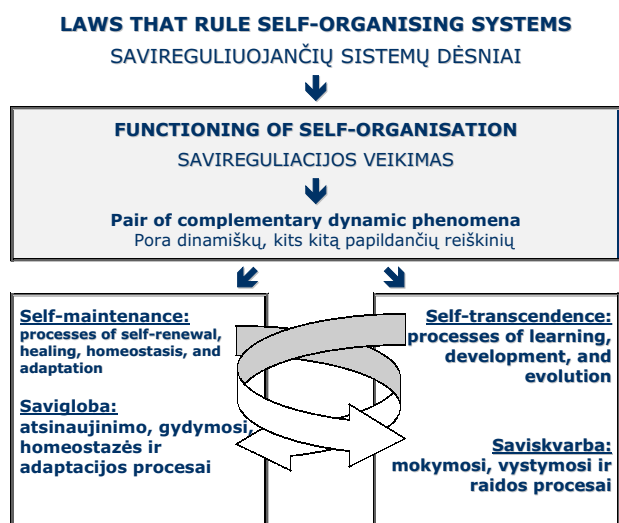


Fig. 3. Laws that rule self-organizing systems: functioning of a self-organizing system
3 pav. Savireguliuojančių sistemų dėsniai: savireguliacinės sistemos veikimas

logy have quite a lot of definitions on culture, which identify culture with heritage (including traditions), indicating that innovations, *i.e.* contemporary creations are just a particle in the body of culture (see, for example, (Kroeber..., 1952)).

A definition of cultural sustainability

The anthropological concept of culture makes it possible to define the notion of cultural sustainability. The Context Institute (In Context...) gives a few simple definitions on human sustainable culture, such as “a good life for all life that can be passed on to everyone’s great, great ... grandchildren” or “a culture (or society) that is meaningful and satisfying to its members today and that does not need to destroy or deplete its environment in order to be that way”. Yet, the authors indicate that our present global society is, by these definitions, neither human nor sustainable, and that there is no broad understanding or consensus on how to get from where we are to a human and sustainable way of life.

On the basis of anthropological approach to culture, earlier notices on the roots of sustainability (see Section 2) and the latter definitions we may define *Cultural Sustainability* as a the *cultural development of human societies*, who:

- *Aim to live in harmony* with natural and cultural environment,
- *Respect the values* of the past and the future generations, and therefore,
- *Base their needs of consumption on reduce, reuse, and recycling* principles applied to natural and cultural (heritage) resources.

On the same basis, we may adapt the popular formula of sustainable development⁴ (Daly, 1994) for defining the **main principle of cultural sustainability**: *For the cultural system to sustain itself indefinitely*:

- *Renewable* cultural (heritage) resources must not be used faster than the rate at which they can be recreated or replaced with adequate new resources,
- *Non-renewable* cultural (heritage) resources (taking recycling into account, which is also a limited

⁴ “For the global system to sustain itself indefinitely, renewable resources must not be used faster than the rate at which they can be regenerated, non-renewable resources (taking recycling into account, which is also a limited process) must not be used faster than the rate at which they can be substituted for, and pollution must not be generated faster than the rate at which the system can absorb it”.

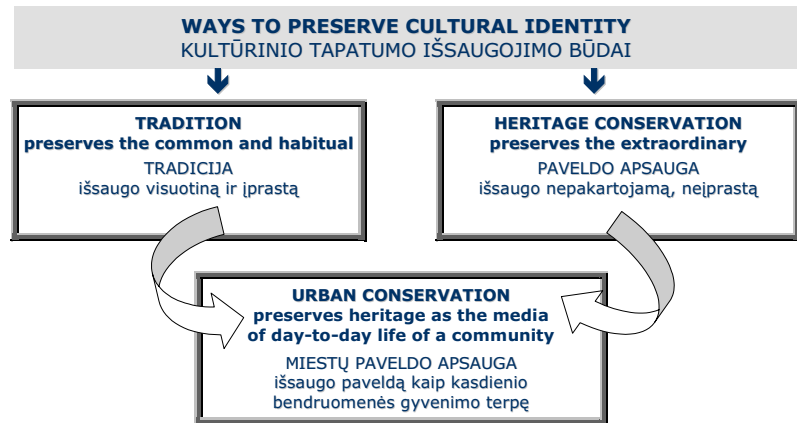


Fig. 4. Ways to preserve cultural identity of a socio-cultural group
4 pav. Sociokultūrinės grupės tapatumo išsaugojimo būdai

process) must not be used faster than the rate at which they can be substituted for, and

- *Changes* must not be generated faster than the rate at which the cultural system can absorb them.

Ways to maintain cultural identity

Cultural identities of societies are key factors of cultural sustainability. Any society has two mechanisms to ensure the preservation, maintenance, and continuity of its identity. *Tradition* is the oldest mechanism tested for ages and perhaps the best. In human societies, tradition is playing the same role as instincts do for an animal: it imprints and supports socially desired behaviour. In other words, tradition is nothing else but transmittance of “know-how”. *Cultural heritage conservation* is another way to preserve cultural identity. It was invented there and then when tradition had been lost, and people were left only to their rationales. The less vivid the traditions, the more conservation is taking place, and *vice versa* (Markevičienė, 2000). In Europe, this shift from tradition to heritage conservation started in times of the Renaissance. The Humanism and the Industrial Revolution pushed forward cultural heritage conservation as a public goal. Yet, at present we are very far from the ages that preserved “antiquities, curiosities and masterpieces” by keeping them as museums to be admired on Sundays. Our definition of cultural heritage is too wide and too different from the latter, which was still in use up to the 1960s. Therefore, we have no other way to preserve, except moving towards retaining and returning of traditions. Only in the case when heritage is used as a medium of common everyday life we can talk about heritage conservation in the context of sustainable development. Only then cultural heritage factually serves as cultural resources of a society, as in the case with tradition (see Fig. 4).

SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND URBAN CONSERVATION

The role of urban heritage in the anthropological approach

Urban heritage plays an extremely important role in the anthropological concept of culture. First, old settlements constitute a specific and unique class of artifacts. They were built to become a second nature – the habitat for human beings. Second, settlements affect human beings and interact with them in a similar way as any other environment. Finally, old settlements condense, unify, and express rhythmic patterns of the society that created them. This feature is extremely important, because it is rhythm that allows us to perceive the Synchrony with Universe (even if limited to our own home). We sense this rhythmic synchrony of a place as its harmony and call it ‘genius loci’.

No other class of physical heritage is able to act as such a medium of human life. We can compare this impact on human conscience only to the influence of the spoken language. And the physical impact is non-comparable at all. That is why our ordinary systems for classification of heritage values hardly fit to historic settlements. Evaluation systems are comparativistic, but settlements are unique. The main value of these sites lies in sentiments of people who live there. Bernard M. Feilden and Jukka Jokilehto named them “identity values” (Feilden..., 1993). Much earlier, in 1918 Max Dvořak noted: “Common country church or an old provincial town arouses the same feelings as a magnificent cathedral, ducal palace or rich museum (...). Many people lose everything what the ancient art was able to offer them, when the relics of their homeland are destroyed. When their living places are impoverished, the same happens to their lives – this way the strongest ties that affected people to their native land are broken off” (Dvořak, 1918).

We call these feelings love of a place. They can evolve invisibly, just out of our act of belonging to it. Furthermore, they are the driving forces for cultural sustainability and urban conservation. We may define these values as *philotopic*⁵ (Markevičienė, 1999). They indicate not only love of a place, but a priority given to day-to-day life values and a continuity of traditions of a socio-cultural group. There is a strong link between these values and Life Quality values. On an urban level, the latter refer to specific features of components of an urban envi-

ronment, which help in creating a sense of satisfaction (or dissatisfaction). This concept should cover not only the amenities of a living place (as it often happens), but also the socio-cultural aspects of an environment – the sense of community, including the search for spiritual values of a historic town – its identity, cultural space and genius loci.

Urban conservation in the context of cultural sustainability

When compared to monument conservation, urban conservation has much more opponents, who use to emphasize: “city is not a museum”. However, in regard to traditional environments, new developments often fail to replace them with similar or even more human and social-friendly patterns. Moreover, it is necessary to keep in mind that environments influence people in a complex multithread way and there is no clear cause and effect relationship.

The concept of cultural sustainability helps in preserving the historic environment and avoiding the total alteration or loss of hundreds of historic villages, towns and cities which in fact are heritage resources, but do not or almost do not fall under official protection as ‘listed monuments’ or ‘conservation areas’. The aims of cultural sustainability, when applied to urban heritage, help people to see that historic cities may be enjoyable places to live in, not only to go sightseeing. This means an attempt to make habitats more human, more stable and safe, more beautiful ...

In other words, the idea of cultural sustainability suggests a constructive perspective of development, therefore it has a potential to activate human-scale innovations and integrate a wide gamut of human concerns – environmental, social, economic, personal – into a long-term process of systematic activities. Moreover, it can attract, convince, bring together, and activate social groups and strata that are indifferent or even opposite to urban heritage conservation *per se*, by

- binding a variety of concerns and compiling different approaches (such as integrated conservation, soft or cautious renewal, healthy city, making city liveable, etc.), as well as by
- establishing a close relationship between the new development and environmental protection, nature and heritage conservation, housing and various social issues such as jobs, security, etc. (Markevičienė, 1999).

Indicators of sustainable cultural development

The above-mentioned definition of the main principle of cultural sustainability (see Section 3.2) gives us a formula which might become a perfect tool

⁵ *I.e.* based on love for a place (phil-, philo- comb.form. loving, having an affinity for, dear, friendly [L]; top-, topo- comb.form. place, locality [Gk]).

for evaluation of urban development – a *sustainability criterion* for measuring assumed effects which specific urban changes might cause. However, is it possible to define any relevant indicators? The further proposals are just an attempt to denote some basic tendencies related to historic environment and urban conservation and suggest possible directions for further studies.

We do have indicators of sustainable development that the UN Commission on Sustainable Development initiated in 1995 by adopting a special Work Program on Indicators of Sustainable Development (United...). Many states have their own ones as well. These indicators cover three fields typical for the mentioned popular concept of sustainability: social, economic, and environmental. It is possible to select from these indicators and find one or another helpful for sustainable cultural development. However, in most cases they do not reflect the situation in this field or have either a poor or none relationship to the issues of culture and urban conservation. Yet, they are very useful for forecasting the tendencies in urban development, which might influence the historic environment.

However, what about indicators of cultural sustainability? They are not covered by the popular concept of sustainable development, and there are some basic doubts as to the subject as well:

- Is it possible to develop a set of principles for cultural sustainability?
- Might such a set be universal enough to provide a generic framework operational in various cultures?
- Would it be possible to aggregate them with other indicators for sustainable development in a satisfactory way?
- Might principles of urban conservation serve this purpose and *vice versa*?

The answer will be *yes* and *no*. We *can* develop some generic indicators to be used as compelling guides. They can indicate the tendencies and their spectacular growth, stagnation or decline, define the principles that need to be considered, and all of them seem being quite universal and stabile. However, they will show no absolute rules and give rather a rough measurement, because an exact one is hardly possible. That is why these indicators might be rather qualitative than quantitative. Yet, we *cannot* indicate interdependence very clearly, because too many factors are interacting on the stage of urban life. Moreover, the indicators (and findings as well) may conflict with each other in practice, and some may trump others under certain circumstances. In addition, they need to be based mostly on the precautionary principle, because we are able to

indicate where, why and in what way a significant damage may occur, but our knowledge on the matter usually is incomplete. So the decisions made and the measures implemented should err on the side of caution.

The indicators for sustainable cultural development should be based on two premises:

- Historic settlements must be preserved as habitats.
- It is impossible to implement this type of development only on the official level. A local population must have a sense of community, a sense of place, and a will for preservation of their home.

The latter is an ‘iron rule’, because sustainable development is, in fact, an ethical concept based on shared values and therefore responds with a question of the moral responsibility. Nevertheless, we live in the world where universal values and common duties are not as popular as subjective relativism. According to its position, what is right for one person may not be right for another, and no one has any right to impose morality on anyone else. This approach makes impossible any reasoning, except that based on the “truth by definition (agreement)”. That is why it often turns to be difficult to advocate for cultural sustainability and for urban heritage conservation. Yet sustainability is nothing else but ethics, and this ethical approach is based on necessity that comes from the natural and cultural background of our species and guides the behaviour of humankind with its common home – the Earth. An agreement to this basic statement would make it easier to find specific arguments for heritage conservation as well. On the contrary, appreciation of free choice and equal value of preservation and non-preservation would let win some tactic fights but none of strategic battles for sustainable cultural development.

Local population should initiate the policy of sustainability and participate in its implementation, however, in many cases it is necessary to foster urban preservation needs in relation to community development. Seeking for public support it would be very useful to know something about the socio-cultural orientation of a community: its readiness to coexist with what it has and to adapt its needs to the possibilities of the environment that has to survive, and on its potential to implement the ethics of cultural sustainability. Globalization supplies *international* approaches: generic standards and “know-how” technologies of social management which, if not customized, may not operate well enough under specific local conditions. In addition, a wider knowledge on the specifics of a community helps in developing a more precise urban conservation strategy, as well

as in creating comprehensive options of urban development. The latter may be achieved by canalizing relevant public motivations and goals into the mainstream of sustainable cultural development.

Therefore, *community profiling*⁶ based on a set of cultural indicators gauging the public's perceptions of the historic environment is an important tool for sustainable cultural development. It will show the mentioned readiness and the existing potential. The profile of a community has to cover information on some of its socio-cultural aspects such as traditions of urbanity, sense of community, love of the place and identification with it, shared values, public activity in relevant fields, etc., taking into account the structural expressions – type, intensity, direction and hierarchic patterns. It is necessary to base the indicators on information about the generic nature of a specific community:

- type of its culture (homeostatic/innovative; stable/changing; development based on free choice/unavoidable pressures; open/close; tradition-based/heritage-conservation-based, etc.);

- type, direction, and scale of the cultural shift and change (acculturation, enculturation, syncretism; preservation/depatriation; evolution/revolution, etc.);

- social and demographic patterns, their structure and scale.

Indicators of sustainable cultural development would help in establishing an adequate local policy, which accordingly activates the community (Markevičienė, 1999). For strategic long-term policies of sustainable development, these indicators should be joined with the above-mentioned social, economic, and environmental indicators of sustainable development and those used for integrated urban conservation.

CONCLUSIONS

First, the principle of sustainability may be regarded as universal – a driving force of natural and cultural (humane) life:

- laws of sustainable functioning of the organisms: self-preservation (which also includes the habitat) based on metabolism, dynamic stability, homeostasis and ability to adapt, govern natural life. The proposed innovations should be accounted for on this basis;

- humankind has been aware of, accepted, and obeyed the principles of sustainability since the olden times. In human cultures these laws were adap-

ted as ethical rules, requiring rational consumption and respect for other people's needs (including past and future generations);

- three basics of the popular sustainable movement “reduce”, “reuse”, and “recycle” – are good characteristics of this driving force.

Second, any culture should not be isolated from the other aspects of sustainability. Rejecting the cultural aspects, we undermine the whole idea of sustainability as well. Sustainable culture should be the basis and the aim of sustainable development.

Third, the concept of cultural sustainability is a broad issue that is able to:

- integrate into a whole system a wide gamut of humane concerns – environmental, social, economic, personal;

- adopt and compile different approaches such as integrated conservation, soft or cautious renewal, healthy city, making city livable, etc.;

- establish a close relationship between new development and environmental protection, nature and heritage conservation, housing and social programs such as jobs, security, and similar.

Forth, the concept of cultural sustainability is a community-based issue. If local people do not want to preserve and continue local urban traditions, not any perfect law or self-sacrificed local or central government would help, either.

Fifth, in the field of urban conservation, this concept should aim not at conservation of the Past, but at sustaining the cultural continuity of society and its habitat and preserving its heritage resources for the future development. It would help to attract, convince, bring together, and activate those members of a society that are indifferent or even opposite to urban conservation *per se*.

Sixth, *community profiling* based on a set of cultural indicators gauging the public's perceptions of the historic environment might be an important tool for sustainable cultural development. Indicators of sustainable cultural development will bring knowledge necessary for establishing an adequate local policy and activating the community.

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⁶ See Markevičienė, 1999.

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Jūratė Markevičienė

TVARI RAIDĀ – BŪTINYBĖ, IDEALI MORALĖ AR GAMTOS REIŠKINYS?

S a n t r a u k a

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas tvarios raidos sociokultūrinis aspektas kaip šiuolaikinės miesto bendruomenės raidos etinis pagrindas. Siekiama, pirma, surasti šiuolaikinių tvarios raidos sampratų ryšį su aktualiomis kultūros koncepcijomis ir, antra, apibrėžti tvarios kultūrinės raidos sampratą. Nagrinėjamos dvi šiuo metu aktualios kultūros sampratos, apibrėžtos kaip institucinė ir antropologinė, kurių pirmoji kultūrą iš esmės tapatina su menine kūryba ir pramogų kultūra, atsiedama nuo jos daugumą kitų individų ir visuomenės reikmių (t. y. socialinius, ekonominius ir pan. aspektus), o antroji – su žmogiškųjų būtybių gyvenamos ir susikurtos aplinkos pagrindais. Teigiama, jog pastaroji (antropologinė) samprata turi tris pagrindinius šaltinius: pirma, būtinybę, kurią lemia šiuolaikinė žmonijos raidos kaita, apimanti aplinką, socialinę bei kultūrinę raidą, antra, idealią moralę, kuri nuo seniausių laikų iki dabar atsispindi religinėse, etinėse ir/ar filosofinėse paprastumo, santūrumo ir neturto doktrinos, įskaitant ir „naujo bei seno“ priešpriešos vertybinį aspektą; trečia, gamtos reiškinį – gyvų savireguliuojančių sistemų egzistencijos dėsnius (savi-sauga, metabolizmą, dinamišką stabilumą, homeostazę ir prisitaikymo gebą) bei jų santykį su plėtra ir evoliucija. Taip pat apibrėžiami pagrindiniai kultūros reiškinio ypatumai: tvarumas, socialumas ir tęstinumas (kur paveldui tenka kultūros nešėjo vaidmuo). Tvarios kultūrinės miestų raidos sąvoka apima žmonių bendruomenių kultūrinių vystymąsi, siekiant, pirma, darniai sugyventi su gamtine bei kultūrine aplinka, antra, gerbti praeities ir dabarties kartų vertybes ir todėl, trečia, riboti gamtinių bei kultūrinių išteklių vartojimą, remiantis išteklių vartojimo mažinimo ir jų atitinkamo antrinio panaudojimo nuostatomis. Nurodomi pagrindiniai tokio vystymosi principai. Teigiama, kad žmogaus tvarios kultūrinės raidos kontekste svarbus vaidmuo tenka per amžius sukurtai (istorinei) gyvenamajai aplinkai, ypač miestams, ir apibrėžiami atitinkami miestų paveldo išsaugojimo, kaip neatsiejamos šios raidos dalies, aspektai. Toliau straipsnyje nagrinėjamas tvarios raidos sampratos ryšys su abiem kultūros koncepcijomis ir vienos ar kitos pritaikymo skirtingos pasekmės kultūrinei visuomenės raidai ir ypač istorinei gyvenamajai aplinkai. Teigiama, kad tvarios kultūrinės raidos samprata nėra grynai akademinė koncepcija, nes jos paraiškų vis labiau pastebima visuomenės siekiuose išsaugoti kasdienę istorinę ir tradicinę aplinką, o ne vien iškilus pavienius paminklus, kaip kad prieš keliasdešimt metų, taip pat užtikrinti savo ir savo gyvenamos aplinkos tapatumą, išlikimą bei tęstinumą. Šios

tendencijos pastebimos ir daugelio šalių administracinėse sistemose, kur vis dažniau sujungiami kultūros (ypač paveldo apsaugos) ir aplinkos apsaugos dalykai. Toliau straipsnyje pateikiami du kultūrinio tapatumo išsaugojimo ir perdavimo būdai – tradicija ir paveldo apsauga – pabrėžiant, kad jų taikymo atskirose visuomenėse santykis yra atvirkščiai proporcingas. Nagrinėjamas miestų paveldo apsaugos vaidmuo tvarios raidos procese ir teigiama, kad miestų paveldo apsauga turėtų įsiliesti į tvarios kultūrinės raidos procesų planavimo kontekstą, šitaip transformuojant paveldo apsaugą iš praeities saugojimo į dabarties ir ateities kultūros išteklių palaikymą ir racionalią panaudą. Paga-

liau, nurodoma, kad tvarios kultūrinės raidos koncepcijų diegimo sėkmę atskirose bendruomenėse lemia pačių bendruomenių noras įgyvendinti šiuos procesus. Siekiant tinkamos taktikos, reikia žinių apie konkrečios bendruomenės ypatumus: jos vertybių sistemas ir pan. Šiam tikslui rekomenduojama parengti kai kuriuos tvarios miestų raidos sociokultūrinių aspektų rodiklius ir jais papildyti Jungtinių Tautų nustatytus tvarios raidos socialinius bei ekonominius, aplinkosaugos rodiklius. Šių rodiklių visuma parodytų sociokultūrinį bendruomenės profilį – vertingą žinių šaltinį praktiškai įgyvendinant konkrečias tvarios kultūrinės raidos ir miestų paveldo apsaugos programas.