

Final Report: Research Stay at Freie Universität Berlin

Dr. Nikolai Bobylev

Saint Petersburg State University

Green Urbanization:

Environmental management of urban water corridors at a city scale

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The project aim is to share knowledge and expertise to address the problem of creating better cities by using water bodies as parts of a city green infrastructure, creating green corridors centered around water bodies. During the research stay comparisons in this regard were primarily made between Berlin and Saint Petersburg in terms of creating lively and liveable waterfront at different scale. Issues of ecosystem services and nature engineering has been discussed as well in the context of creating a better urban environment. The role of ecological systems and manmade physical infrastructure in provisioning services of recreation and nature development using urban water bodies has been discussed as well. This subject is of particular importance to Saint Petersburg city, where few water fronts are used for recreation, and many water bodies does not sustain ecosystems around their shores, which is a missed opportunity for a significant environmental improvement.

During the research stay at Freie Universität Berlin I was privileged to met with a number of researchers with multi- and interdisciplinary backgrounds and discuss the most recent findings on the environmental planning. One of the challenging questions was integration of environmental assessment approaches to proactive planning practices. This brief research project has opened up new ideas on alternative solutions to how we view and should be viewing waterfront form transport, aesthetics, and environmental points of view.

During the course of the stay I gave a lecture on Green Urbanization: ecosystem services and infrastructure provisioning in the urban context.

During my research stay I was privileged indeed to meet old and new colleagues, expanding my research network and sharing most recent trends. Current and future research have been discussed with:

Prof. Dr. Brigitta Schütt - Physical Geography;

Prof. Achim Schulte - Geographical Sciences;

Prof. Dr. Tilman Rost - Physical Geography;

Prof. Dr. Susan Thieme – Anthropogeography;

Prof. Theocharis Grigoriadis - Economics & East European Studies;

Dr. Andrea Kölbel - Geographical Sciences;

Dr. Klaus Jacob - Environmental Policy.

New projects:

I am very pleased that later in the year we are going to a new project on Sustainable Urbanization & Comparative Development, which has been funded in the framework of the Freie Universität Berlin – Saint Petersburg State University Joint Seed Money Funding Scheme (Call for Proposals 2017). Partners on this multidisciplinary proposal include four research departments: Earth Sciences & Environmental Safety, Economics & East European Studies, International Relations, and Geol Sciences (Hydrogeology). Within this initiative a course on Global Environmental Change will be offered to students at Freie Universität Berlin in December 2017. The course introduces students to the contemporary global agenda related to urbanization, cities, planning, development, and the environment. The course is part of certificate program “Sustainable Urbanization & Comparative Development” and is recognized in modules of MA East European Studies.