

BELGRADE AS EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE - CONCEPTUAL CONJUNCTION

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The paper treated the question of cultural policy in the context of Belgrade event 'European Capital of Culture' (ECOC). In accordance with the current nomination for the title of cultural capital of Europe 2020 there are frequent media and political statements about contribution to the socio-economic development of the city and its positioning as an international cultural center. Also, it is assumed that this project can be a strategic tool in creating a new model of cultural policy of the city, with regard to the proposed objectives which coincide with the primary aims of his cultural development. Taking into account studies that represent the effects of the event 'European Capital of Culture' in cities that carried the title in previous years, the paper seeks to highlight the perceived problems and to propose a possible solution in the form of 'cultural planning' which represents holistic and flexible understanding of cultural and urban policy. Such an understanding encompasses the sphere of art, economic, political, social, educational and environmental sphere of the city and seeks a sustainable and comprehensive model based on local identity and character of the city, based on the participatory planning.

Key words: cultural policy, cultural planning, European Capital of Culture.

INTRODUCTION, AIM AND PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The subject of the paper in the broader sense is an event organized by the European Union - European Capital of Culture (ECOC) and Belgrade's proposal for the nomination for that title of the year 2020. This topic is current at the highest political circles, and at the end of the previous year a Framework Programme for the nomination of the city was created and directed to the Council for Culture of the European Commission. In a narrow sense, the problem of research is focused on a critical review of nominations of Belgrade for the European Capital of Culture. In any case, this venture is an affirmative and welcome. It represents an opportunity for both the affirmation of Belgrade in the wider European context, and for systematic creation of the city's missing cultural policy. Officials who advocate this idea often refer to positive socio-economic effects that would operate as a result

of holding the event. Cultural effects are not mentioned in any context and it seems there must be a harmonic relation between economic and cultural spheres. Economic effects, as easy to measure and monitor, are often cited in the reports of the cities carrying the title of Capital of Culture. Therefore they are placed in front of the cultural effects that are difficult to measure and often remain unclearly defined. Proponents of the idea of nominating Belgrade, in addition to emphasizing the economic effects, at times indicate a problem with cultural policy, and state that the nomination of Belgrade can contribute to the creation of missing cultural policy. However, the question is whether one event can really improve the socio-economic situation of the city and produce a model of effective cultural policy that will solve all existing problems and unite state and local leaders from government and private cultural sector, artists, citizens and all who 'consume' culture, in a broader or narrower sense.

Referring to research on the effects after the European Capital of Culture event, it is notable

that many cities did not continue their cultural life, planned by the ECOC's guidelines and 'the potential for long-term development has not been realised' (Palmer-Rae Associates, 2004). Does Belgrade want to become one of the 'consumed' cities that are culturally present only for one year, or does it tend to its harmonious development with citizens who feel comfortable in it and who are 'identified' with the natural and built environment?

It is possible that the nomination for European Capital of Culture represents a close and realistic solution to the culture of Belgrade. At the same time, a strategic planning should be implemented in order to focus resources towards rehabilitation and reconstruction of those elements which community members believe that represent city's lifestyle. Evaluation by ECOC has concentrated on hard legacies (visible and measurable effects, such as buildings, visitor impacts, new organisations and projects) rather than soft legacies (such as city image, personal skills and new ideas). Both were important for the future development of each city and should be incorporated in a

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creation of a long-term city cultural policy (Palmer-Rae Associates, 2004). Such cultural policy 'as a public policy in the field of culture, arts and media, should contain a series of designed and related measures and activities of public authorities that have political, legal and financial authority to make legitimate decisions whose purpose is to respond to real needs and problems that lead to the achievement of clearly defined objectives in the field of culture and art' (Eukić, 2010). This could be the key to the sustainability of the city culture, and ECOC would be in that case just a show for the 'Belgrade lifestyle', directed by its local forces.

CULTURE AND URBAN CULTURAL POLICY

Culture is viewed in a broader sense as a specific way of life, a system of symbols, meanings and codes for communication, a means of adaptation to the conditions set in the environment (Lim, 1993). Lim also emphasizes the difference between 'culture' and 'art', stating that art is only one manifestation of culture, and certainly not the culture itself. According to Avramović, the term culture in a broader sense refers to the way of life of a society, or more social groups, the content of interactions in which its members exercise their basic living needs, such as communication, diet, clothing, housing, family life, religion, entertainment, art, power and authority (Avramović, 2006). In a narrow sense, culture means only the artistic creativity.

Culture in the narrower sense includes literature, music, visual arts and architecture, drama activities, film, digital and multimedia creation, as well as research, protection and revitalization of cultural heritage and scientific-research activity in the culture. So these are all the cultural activities of general interest which encourage the harmonious development, and that are the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture of Serbia, according to the proposal of the Law on culture (Ilić, 2010).

Cultural policy is a strategic planning document that connects the different actors of the cultural scene in order to connect and establish a purposeful dialogue, and to protect and promote cultural values in general (Serbian Ministry of Culture, 2010). Cultural policy is a conscious regulation of interest in culture and in all matters related to the cultural development of a global society (Dragičević Šešić and Stojković, 2011). According to the level of its impact it may be national and local (municipal, city). The need for better, more efficient, different, clear, true cultural policy in

the field of cultural heritage in Serbia exists decades ago. It could be said that cultural policy had never satisfied the experts in the field of culture nor those who have shaped the conditions of cultural activities (ibid).

Big cities have always been places of cultural production and centers of innovation where taste is being formed. Urban culture presents just the right sum of contents, which are formed in specific conditions of a huge human congestion and biggest possible heterogeneity (Pušić, 2003). As cities are losing their traditional functions of production, city culture remains a resource upon which the 'vital urban survival strategies' could be designed (Zukin, 1989). In her further studies, Zukin started a discussion about new cultural-symbolic-economy of the city, which considers culture not as art and heritage, but as an economic category – a good with a market value. The concept of city marketing and its 'packaging and sale as a products' (Ward, 1998) has become an activity of the government of European cities in order to become more globally competitive. The main role of city marketing is to create new or change its current negative or ambiguous image, perceived by current or potential residents, investors and visitors. It was usually boiled down to logos and slogans creation, separation of subsidies, the construction of capital development projects, flagship architecture, as well as creating various events, fairs, cultural and sporting spectacles (ibid). In a sense it represented an investment in 'high culture' and could be seen as a 'manicured and sterile cultural experience, based on high-class shopping malls, theaters and galleries.' (Short, 1996). The most common contribution of cultural policies to urban renewal was the creation of images that will attract visitors. In the context of global competitiveness of cities, urban policy makers have tried to reevaluate the place through the promotion of cultural identity by using the so-called concept of 'cultural economy' (Ray, 1998), which uses the cultural capital as a means of creating a product that is aimed at visitors. Cultural capital in this context represented a unique fixed resources - monuments, art collections, performance spaces and streets with shops, all accumulated over the past time. The focus was on historical elements that served as the basis for the creation of cultural identity and marketing approach of the city. Urban policy makers, after consultation with a team of experts, decided what needed to be supported and represented as an element of identity. Thus, they often emphasized the values that community members did not feel as part of

their urban identity, and many monumental architectural and urban ventures didn't come to life and didn't become a part of everyday urban life. In order to profile cultural identity, as an important factor in defining the components of sustainable urban development, it is necessary to develop a culture of decision-making on spatial issues. Urban cultural policy is much more than a sporadic presentation of 'events' in an urban area, it should result in strategies that would permanently enrich the urban space with the cultural attributes (Pušić, 2004). Concerning processes of an ECOC event nomination and urban cultural policy creation, which should be performed in parallel, there is a greater challenge both for ECOC organizers as well as for state/city authorities. The challenge arises because of the 'necessity to develop a programme which should balance different and sometimes opposing factors such as artistic vision and political interest, high-profile events and local initiatives, and the involvement of established cultural institutions and independent groups and artists' (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004). Many ECOC tried to develop their cultural programmes in close cooperation with different groups in the city, in an attempt to produce something that not only represented the fabric of the city but also addressed some of its needs (ibid). At the same time, challenge is being increased by the aspiration for the inclusion of the unique historical, economic, social and political context.

Belgrade cultural policy

The creation of functional and space cultural systems is influenced mostly by historical factors and socio-political circumstances. In Belgrade there is consensus of experts that cultural policy should be created by the most competent people (executives of cultural institutions and independent experts), while public cultural institutions should implement that policy, under the control of city government. This concept relies on the expert opinion of specialists, which is often being adapted for the requirements of government and ideology. Due to lack of competent personnel, political party in power often engage quasigovernmental, more or less independent agencies and organizations, composed of experts (Dragičević Šešić and Mikić, 2007).

In general, culture in Belgrade is managed by Secretariat for culture, which is part of the city government made up of other secretariats, professional services and special organizations (ibid). Secretariat for Culture is responsible for the protection of important cultural properties and properties requiring previous protection, museum and archive services, library science,

artistic creativity, cultural and educational activities, cultural and artistic amateurism. Secretariat is also responsible for activities related to ensuring the conditions for the operation of cultural institutions and independent artists, events in the field of culture, international cooperation, realization of the programs of importance for the city, investments and investment maintenance of cultural facilities and supervision over the work of cultural institutions founded by the city. Moreover, for the purposes of the Assembly, the Secretariat of Culture performs raising and maintenance of monuments and memorial, naming squares and streets of Belgrade, and provides award for the arts - literature, theater, music, arts and film making (Grad Beograd, Sekretarijat za kulturu, 2010). Secretariat occasionally collaborates with the Ministry of Culture of Serbia, mostly in terms of financing of international events and investment plans. There are no precise tripartite agreements between the Ministry, the city/municipality and institutions, which would establish relationships that would provide stability and the possibility of long-term planning and development of certain institutions and events. Also, the City Secretariat for Culture observes inter-sectoral cooperation as a joint co-financing of certain events, while cooperating with the secretariats of education, tourism, economy, urban planning and transport. However, there are no indications of initiation of intersectoral projects and associations, that would deal with issues of common interest (Dragičević Šešić and Mikić, 2007).

The objectives of cultural policy of the City of Belgrade (since year of 2001) are as follows:

1. reorganization of the network of cultural institutions (establishment of new institutions and organizations, repositioning),
2. infrastructure development - investment,
3. development of decision-making procedures (new instruments, the purchase of works of visual arts, competitions, standardization, determination of the 'price list' of programs, etc.),
4. expanding areas of activity (opening to the private and NGO sector, cinematography, children's creativity and culture for children, etc.) and the development of international cultural cooperation (ibid).

Importance given to culture in the context of spatial development is visible in Belgrade's Master Plan until the year 2021. This document highlights its perspective as a European metropolis, which further implies its spatial development strategies and the new orientation in relation to the European

metropolis in the region. The Master Plan suggests 'the rising level of attractiveness of the urban area of Belgrade, with planning and organizational solutions' (Generalni plan Beograda 2021, 2003). These range from increasing the attractiveness for new investments and to new cultural ventures, which could (among other things) be achieved by the 'wise cultural policy that would be able to set natural and cultural values as a basis for the overall development of Belgrade, emphasizing his identity' (Peković, 2010).

Two programs of the European Union may be considered as a broader context from which the above mentioned guidelines derived. The first is a cultural program (Culture Programme), which is designed for the period from year 2007 to 2013, with a total budget of 400 million Euros. Specific objectives of this program are to promote awareness about the importance of the protection of cultural values of European importance, to promote the transnational mobility of employees in the cultural sector, to encourage the transnational flow of cultural and artistic works and products, as well as to stimulate intercultural dialogue. The second program is the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) which is designed as an activity that will highlight the diversity of European culture, with an emphasis on its common origin (European Union, 2011). This program is designed in the year of 1983 by Melina Mercouri, who was then Greek Minister of Culture. Its purpose was to add both cultural dimension of European Union action in a time when it did not have defined direction for cultural activities. Also, the program was supposed to celebrate European culture as a means of community bonding. The first cities were great centers of European culture - Athens (1985), Florence (1986), Amsterdam (1987), West Berlin (1988), Paris (1989), and they all celebrated the development of community and self-expression (Garcia, 2004).

Nomination of Belgrade for the program of the European Capital of Culture (European Capital of Culture, ECOC)

In the context of pro-European tendencies and bringing Belgrade closer to the European Union, as well as in regard to the lack of cultural development strategy, Aleksandar Pekovic, Deputy City Secretary for Culture and member of the Council for Culture, Media and Creative industries of the Liberal Democratic Party, proposed the nomination of Belgrade for the European Capital of Culture in the year of 2020. Based on the initiatives adopted at the 29th session of the City Assembly in December 2009, the Organizing Committee has been established, and it should have

submitted the nomination. The nomination process would have been a parallel process of bringing culture of Belgrade closer to the European cultural space and creating a strategy of cultural policy. Philanthropic project in the field of culture and 'the dream of Belgrade as the European capital of culture that has emerged as a product of pure love of Belgrade citizens, which have a unique opportunity to launch a dynamic of change' (Peković, 2010) is ambitiously designed activity that would supposedly be to compensate for the lack of strategic projects in the field of culture. According to Peković, Belgrade has three key objectives by the year of 2020:

1. to go through the process from concept to implementation of a strategic project in the culture. It is a process of maturing and changing awareness of the new generation whose attitude was shaped by society with a mission only to survive - with short-term plan without the higher sense;
2. to present a new cultural model that would be a 'mirror' to the existing one in the process of its transformation. The project European Capital is a great example of organizational structure, financing, preparation and implementation of programs to be established as a parallel system on a sound basis without the obligation to respect traditional forms and patterns of inheritance of the old mistakes. Through its implementation over a period of ten years, a far higher goal could be achieved - a transformation of the current model of organization and culture in the area of Belgrade;
3. to bring the revival in the cultural, infrastructural and economic fields, through the implementation of this project; to raise the international profile of the city and environment, to reposition the city's geographical location by attracting large numbers of people and the illumination of this point of the world in the context of European cultural center rather than Europe's Bangkok.

According to the above noted, project to the European capital of culture is seen as a panacea to the existing state of the culture of the city. The proposal was met with great response in the daily print and electronic media, where solely affirmative statements in connection with the cities nominated for the European Capital of Culture were cited 'such European cities become centers for artists and the lure for tourists, but it also means extensive preparations' (RTS, 2010). Great preparations include mostly investments in cultural institutions, many of which currently have significant financial problems, so that the funds

from the national and city budget, as well as from ECOC fund are looked forward with great expectations. The project is expected to bring a major cultural, social and economic effect, and all reports say that one Euro invested in the city usually returns of between eight and ten Euros.

The idea of Belgrade as the European capital of culture should be approached with caution because of research and analysis of the cities after the end of the year in which they were European cultural capital point to three main problems of ECOC. The first is the lack of clear regulations and guidelines for activities that would contribute to sustainable urban renewal based on the culture. The other is reflected in the 'top-down' approach to cultural representation, where the local identity served only as a means of marketing. This contributed to the creation of images aimed at the observer, where a certain alienation was created, and even physical movement of the local population. The third problem relates to the creation of a polycentric city and gentrification of individual urban areas (Garcia, 2004). If gentrification were to be solely observed through the lens of influx of investments and their influence on the physical improvements of the neighborhood and increasing of the property value, it could have been considered as a solely positive urban change (Nedučin et al., 2009). But the case with the ECOC event is that several centers of culture were created in some cities, however the low-income citizens didn't have the opportunity to participate in them, which directly relates to the segregation on the basis of financial status and to the cultural elitism. The contradiction that appeared was due to an imbalanced relationship between economic and cultural priorities in urban policy and planning (Garcia, 2004).

On the other hand, according to the conceptual framework regarding the process of candidacy of Belgrade for ECOC developed by Organizing Committee, candidacy could be seen as a unique opportunity for the City of Belgrade to establish a new (international) identity. During the last 60 years Belgrade has faced several different identities from the open cosmopolitan city (as an opposition to the cities located behind the Iron Curtain), over the bombed city in the late nineties to the town which is represented as a place of entertainment and new openness to the other cultures (Beograd 2020, 2010). Therefore, one of the main cultural strategic objects for Belgrade is to construct a new polycentric identity based on a individual identities. During the candidacy procedure this polycentric identity should be constructed through seven different thematic programs, each of them underlying one of the particular Belgrade aspects.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (OR HOW TO BALANCE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT)

Culture has a strong economic dimension if being planned properly from the beginning. It might be a trigger for urban renewal and creating the image of the city, where it should not be used as a temporary instrument - goods aimed at external needs, but as the internal strength and long-term potential that will be recognizable symbol of urban centers. As a counterpoint to the 'cultural economy', Bianchini introduces the concept of 'cultural planning' (Bianchini, 1999) which represents 'a strategic and integral use of cultural resources for urban and community development' (Mercer, 2010). Cultural planning presents an alternative to traditional cultural policies (based on the aesthetic interpretation of culture as art) and renewal (based on cultural policy, which often has a sectoral focus). The classic approach to cultural policy implies a culture as a resource for achieving economic effects, without seeing the outcome of social and cultural development, and their essential value for urban renewal. Cultural planning considers cultural resources as urban resources that play a strategic role in planning and in the new economy (ibid). Cultural planning means an overall strategy of urban and community development, which must be associated with spatial planning, economic and industrial development objectives, initiatives that promote social justice, and the planning of public spaces for recreation and entertainment. In that way 'a diversity of offer and mix of functions within the architectural context would be achieved, which could lead to the sustainable city renewal, together with a strong national or local support and with participation of local population' (Vaništa Lazarević and Đukić, 2006).

Therefore, these concepts are comprised by strategic objects of above mentioned document (Beograd 2020, 2010). In order to get a possibility to be a ECOC 2020 Belgrade should completely avail of its geo-strategic position and establish a network with other European and regional cities. It should improve the development of sustainable economy, especially in the service sector as well as social development regarding education and employment. City of Belgrade should develop its public service which could be one of the guarantees for the further economic growth, attracting foreign direct investments (greenfield or brownfield) and creating a stable political environment.

Regarding these objects, cultural planning may be one of the solutions for the strategic planning

of culture in Belgrade that started from the "bottom up" approach. Urban planners, who in this context can be called 'cultural planners', should necessarily consider the synthesis and connectivity of natural, social, cultural, political and economic environment. This implies a shift from reliance on 'hard' infrastructure (buildings, institutions) to 'soft' infrastructure (daily life, work and recreation, local rituals, ambience and atmosphere, a sense of belonging). Knowledge and usage of 'soft' infrastructure should be the basis for the successful implementation of the city's cultural policy (Bianchini, 1999). This means that the city's cultural policy should be based on the concept of 'cultural planning', which implies a holistic and flexible understanding of cultural policy that combines the artistic, economic, political, social, educational and environmental sphere of the city. Also, instead of encouraging 'top-down' approach, the emphasis should be on providing a platform for expressing views and expectations of citizens, where average citizens, as well as citizens' associations and local authorities would be included. The ultimate goal should be directed towards the achievement of 'local control' based on local identity and the 'sense of place'. This would avoid the feeling of alienation, misrepresentation and lack of sense of citizens' belonging to the city. As a result, cities could be profiled as an impressive, credible and sustainable over the long term.

Policy makers and cultural planners should do the following:

- ensure the sustainability of capital investment and schemes of construction, as well as planning long-term costs at the outset,
- ensure that all levels of the community are involved in local consultations, thus avoiding dominance of the 'top-down' approach,
- ensure that investments in culture are not treated as imports of products of global competitiveness, but to enable the creation and sustainable production of local culture for local consumption and export,
- ensure that investments in culture connect people and communities, where investments will be directed toward human beings and their environment, in order to avoid the risk of distancing and alienation of people from their surroundings,
- provide assessment and measurement of investments in culture, with equal emphasis on cultural, economic and regenerative effects, which can be measured by longitudinal studies that track the progression of the impact and effects for a long time (five or more years after the event) (Garcia, 2004).

These guidelines should be applied when

creating the cultural politics of Belgrade, as well as in planning ECOC event. In this regard, a key issue in the design of cultural policy is a reflection of what should be left to the citizens of Belgrade after the end event of the European Capital of Culture. City Administration, Cultural Council, Planning Institute of Belgrade, non-governmental professional organizations and civic associations should work together to create a sustainable urban environment that corresponds to its inhabitants. The main goal of city policy should stand between the economic and cultural priorities with the need to keep in mind that only long-term cultural planning can also have long-term economic effects.

Course of action that arises after theoretical findings and practical aspects is the parallel process of creation of the cultural policy of Belgrade and its nomination for European Capital of Culture. During this process it is necessary to bring together experts from different fields and with different levels of management. Also, in order to provide a sense of identity and belonging to the community members, it is necessary to do research with various social groups about the aspects of the city they are identified with, taking into account both tangible and intangible assets. This creates a basis for not only urban but also for a kind of 'civic' renewal of Belgrade. Cultural planning could be the appropriate solution that will unify the interests of citizens, the economic plans of small and medium enterprises, large companies, cultural institutions and programs, non-governmental institutions, development state agencies, up to local government decisions and regulations of the highest governmental levels. In the current context of the Serbian polity, 'binding' of all stakeholders and moving towards a common interest might seem as a difficult endeavor. However, bearing in mind the positive atmosphere that prevails in relation to Belgrade's nomination for European Capital of Culture, perhaps this event could be a turning point in the planning and constitution of Belgrade as the Serbian capital of culture.

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