

MULTICULTURALISM AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF THE CREATIVE CITY SPACE

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ABSTRACT

The city development begins with the people recognizing specific potentials of their city and creatively using its resources. This is the basic statement by Charles Landry – the author of The Creative City (1998). The creative city is a space where citizens can involve and engage themselves in creations of transformed place. The perception of the Novi Sad's local community in cultural tourism has been studied using personal interviews with representatives of four major ethnic community groups in Novi Sad and one carefully chosen local authorities representative who is in a charge for local minorities in destination. The aim has been to examine their views on multiculturalism as a competitive advantage for cultural tourism development in an attempt to establish desired creative space. The research in this paper is pilot one on future researches for implementation creative city concept in Novi Sad using its multicultural potentials. The main question on which authors inquire to find answer is the multicultural paradox that exists in Novi Sad: there are a number of official cultural associations of many ethnic minorities including the most numbered three – Rusyns (Ruthenians), Hungarians and Slovaks, but the multicultural diversity of the city stays neglected. The findings are going

to identify awareness and perceptions of the community groups suggesting obstacles and creative source of making multicultural diversity visible as an asset for cultural tourism development of Novi Sad.

KEYWORDS

Creative space;, Novi Sad; Multiculturalism; Competitive advantage.

INTRODUCTION

Novi Sad has passed through a very rough period in the past two decades. Being part of Yugoslavia it had a positive image with good cultural tourism. Since 1990 until the present day, the most common identification of Serbia is with the image of war. This fact also had a great influence on the tourism industry. In the time of Yugoslavia, the current Serbia was pretty much excluded from the tourism map. This gives a clue why the positioning on the international tourism market is not an easy issue nowadays.

With the new Tourism Strategy of Serbia, adopted in 2006, the country is divided in four clusters; Vojvodina, Belgrade, South-East Serbia and South-West Serbia. Those clusters excluded Belgrade, has their city representatives that should serve as a vehicle for their cluster-regions: Vojvodina has city of Novi Sad as its representative, South-East Serbia has Nis and South-West Serbia has Cacak. All those clusters with their city centers have common goal is important to be able to position Serbia as a destination on the international tourism market.

Cultural tourism is appearing more frequently as a distinct motive for traveling, when considering the international flow of tourists. During recent decades development of cultural tourism in cities around the world is transformed in creative city movement. Focusing on the city of Novi Sad, this paper recognizes a multinational social environment of the city as an intangible cultural asset that is covered source of creativity and vibrant cultural diversity.

To be able to find out is why the multicultural diversity is not visible enough in the Novi Sad's creative space and how it can be this research is conducted. Which are the existing obstacles causing the lack of using multiculturalism as a competitive ad-

vantage and what can be done to be able to solve this problem. The main question which has been answered in this pilot research is: what are perceptions among four major Novi Sad's ethnic groups about Novi Sad as a creative city space based on its multicultural characteristic and how it can be improved with purpose for cultural tourism improvement? Then interviews qualitative analysis is discussed with two more recent done surveys on multicultural perceptions on tourists and citizens of Novi Sad.

The research questions which have to be answered to achieve this are:

- Has Novi Sad been multicultural city?
- What exactly 'multicultural' city means for the representatives of the local ethnic community?
- Has the multiculturalism viable in every day life of Novi Sad?
- Has Novi Sad been experienced as the Creative City for its own local people and how?
- What would it be - creative urban space?
- What is the best way to make multicultural characteristics of Novi Sad visible through creative urban space?
- What are the roles of the local government and its citizens in developing Novi Sad as a creative city destination?
- Which are the issues that have been main obstacles for making Novi Sad vibrant from its diversity?

This research in the paper is an explanatory research using the retrospective-prospective study design. An explanatory research is explaining the "how" and "why" of an issue or problem which is already known as a fact. In this case this research method is applicable since the issue of slow development of Novi Sad as a tourism destination is known and is a fact, based on structures and plans from the past.

The theory used for this research is the creative city concept based on Charles Landry work more than on Richard Florida's

creative class. The reason for this is that by authors' opinion Charles Landry's approach to the issues has been more suitable for cities in the countries that are still recovering from post-socialist economic transition and their infrastructure is not good, and recovery still requires more time and money. Also, a great number of many thousands educated young people emigrate from the country during war and depression years so Serbia needs to make environment to cherish its own creative class the one that is growing among younger generations and the one that has been spread all over the world and in decline in the cities of the country. That means that leadership qualities need to be found among ordinary people that can make the extraordinary possible when given a chance (Landry, 2000).

INTRODUCTION TO CITY OF NOVI SAD

Novi Sad is Serbia's second largest city, after Belgrade. It is the capital of Northern Serbian's province Vojvodina that is known as multicultural region. According to the data from May 2009, the city had an urban population of 281,694, while its municipal population was 366,857. The city is located on the banks of the Danube river and Danube-Tisa-Danube Canal while facing the northern slopes of Fruska Gora mountain (Novi Sad – wikipedia. 2009).

Since it was founded in 1694, Novi Sad became the centre of Serbian culture and earned its nickname *Serbian Athens*. Today, Novi Sad is a large industrial and financial centre of the Serbian economy; and it is also one of the biggest construction sites in the region

Human settlement in the territory of present-day Novi Sad has been traced as far back as the Stone Age (about 4500 BC). Later on the region was conquered by Celts (in the 4th century BC) and Romans (in the 1st century BC). The Celts founded

the first fortress at this location which was the today's fortress place. During Roman rule, a larger fortress was built in the 1st century with the name *Cusum* and was included into Roman province Pannonia. In the 5th century, Cusum was devastated by the invasion of the Huns.

By the end of the 5th century, Byzantines had reconstructed the town. The town was later conquered by Ostrogoths, Gepids, Avars, Franks, Bulgarians, and again by Byzantines. The region was conquered by the Kingdom of Hungary between the 10th and 12th century). Tax records from 1522 are showing a mix of Hungarian and Slavic names among inhabitants of these. Between 1526 and 1687, the region was under Ottoman rule

Novi Sad has been founded at the outset of Habsburg rule near the end of the 17th century. According to 1720 data, the population of Ratzen Stadt was composed of 112 Serbian, 14 German, and 5 Hungarian houses. The settlement officially gained the present name *Novi Sad* (*Neoplanta* in Latin) in 1748 when it became a "free royal city". The edict that made Novi Sad a "free royal city" was proclaimed on 1 February 1748.

For much of the 18th and 19th centuries, Novi Sad was the largest city in the world populated by ethnic Serbs. The reformer of the Serbian language, Vuk Stefanovic Karadzic, wrote in 1817 that Novi Sad is the "largest Serb municipality in the world". It was a cultural and political centre of Serbs, who did not have their own national state at the time. Because of its cultural and political influence, Novi Sad became known as the Serbian Athens (*Srpska Atina* in Serbian). According to 1843 data, Novi Sad had 17,332 inhabitants, of whom 9,675 were Orthodox Christians, 5,724 Catholics, 1,032 Protestants, 727 Jews, and 30 adherents of the Armenian church. The largest ethnic groups in the city were Serbs, and the second largest were Germans.

During the Revolution of 1848-1849, Novi Sad was part of Serbian Vojvodina, a Serbian autonomous region within the Habsburg Empire. Between 1849 and 1860, the city was part of a separate Austrian crown land known as the Vojvodina of Serbia. After 1867, Novi Sad was located within the Hungarian part of Austria-Hungary. During this time, the Magyarization policy of the Hungarian government drastically altered the demographic structure of the city, i.e. from the predominantly Serbian, the population of the city became ethnically mixed.

After World War I in November 1918, the Assembly of Serbs, Bunjevci, and other nations of Vojvodina in Novi Sad proclaimed the union of Vojvodina region with the Kingdom of Serbia. Since 1 December 1918, Novi Sad is part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes; and in 1929, Novi Sad became the capital of the Danube Banovina, a province of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

In 1941, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was invaded and partitioned by the Axis Powers, and its northern parts, including Novi Sad, were annexed by Hungary. During World War II, about 5,000 citizens were murdered and many others were resettled. Citizens of all nationalities - Serbs, Hungarians, Slovaks, and others - fought together against the Axis authorities.

After the World War II the communist partisans committing atrocities against Hungarian and German citizens. Many of them were murdered and some of them left the country.

Novi Sad became part of the new socialist Yugoslavia. Since 1945, Novi Sad has been the capital of Vojvodina. After 1992, Novi Sad was part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which, in 2003, was transformed into the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. Devastated by NATO bombardment, during the Kosovo War of 1999, Novi Sad was left without all of its

three Danube bridges, communications, water, and electricity. Residential areas were cluster bombed several times while its oil refinery was bombarded daily, causing severe pollution and widespread ecological damage (*see: 1999 NATO bombing in Novi Sad*).

Today Novi Sad is part of Republic of Serbia and still recovering of its stormy past. Multiethnic of the city has a bit changed during history so today's official languages of the city that are written in all urban institutions are: Serbian, Hungarian, Slovakian and Rusyn (Ruthenian). In Novi Sad taken place a number of cultural societies of many other minorities as well that live in territory of Novi Sad and Vojvodina: Croatians, Germans, Jews, Slovenians, Russians, Ukrainians, Romany people, Romanians etc. Novi Sad has been capital of Vojvodina region (2,031,992 inhabitants) that has '26 nations in one smile'. Even though Novi Sad is the best known as city of EXIT festival that takes place every July at the fortress which dominates the city. Inspire of EXIT big tourism success as a cultural event Novi Sad stayed unknown as a city with big multiethnic diversity and that has specific national, historic, cultural and other characteristics as a multinational, multicultural and multiconfessional that make it unique European destination.

The authors of the paper tried to find out the reason why the paradox exists: If there are so many official cultural societies of ethnic minorities in Novi Sad why multicultural characteristic of the town stays almost invisible.

COMPETITIVENESS OF MULTICULTURAL CREATIVE CITY

Nowadays more than half of the world population lives in cities. The concept of '*Creative Cities*' is based on the belief that culture can play an important role in urban renewal. Cities are

increasingly playing a vital role in harnessing creativity for economic and social development (UNESCO, 2009).

The Creative City concept was developed by Charles Landry in the late 1980's and has since become a global movement reflecting a new planning paradigm for cities (The Creative City – Wikipedia, 2009).

The definition of the Creative City is elusive. It seems irretrievably intertwined with architect-designed temples to art; arts districts that make cities more lively and raise real estate values; tourist-friendly art and arts events; attempts to harness the multicultural characteristic and how it can be improved with purpose for cultural tourism improvement economic impact of the arts and build international civic reputations; attracting and retaining a so-called “creative class”; using art to showcase diversity and build understanding among people; building an economy of creative industries; recognizing creativity as a precursor for innovation; even adopting a creative approach to civic problem-solving (Coletta, 2009).

In the Creative City it is not only artists and those involved in the creative economy that is creative, although they play an important role. Creativity can come from any source including anyone who addresses issues in an inventive way be it a social worker, a business person, a scientist or public servant (The Creative City – Wikipedia, 2009).

What makes the creative city? It is people - people interacting with people (Hawkins, 2002).

The term *multiculturalism* generally refers to the acceptance of various cultural divisions for the sake of diversity that applies to the demographic make-up of a specific place, usually at the

scale of an organization such as a school, business, neighborhood, city or nation (Multiculturalism – Wikipedia, 2009).

The demographic-descriptive usage occurs where 'multicultural' is used to refer to the existence of ethnically or racially diverse segments in the population of a society or State. It represents a perception that such differences have some social significance—primarily because of perceived cultural differences though these are frequently associated with forms of structural differentiation (Inglis, 2006).

Diversity – whether cultural, social, ethnic or physical – is considered to be a key element in the current debate about creativity and economic development of cities in the twenty-first century (Merkel, 2008). As the American geographer Richard Florida highlights in his creative capital thesis, ethnic diversity and tolerance are equally important as economic potentials and location factors for cities (Florida, 2004). Under an economic and cultural tourism perspective ethnic diversity receives a new meaning that sets it off from social segregation and the lack of integration of ethnic minority groups of Novi Sad. Especially creative industries – those growth sectors in the field of cultural production that are currently receiving tremendous attention by cities that claim to depend on ethnic diversity as a cultural resource. However, ethnic resources in fields like cultural tourism, urban development, and creative industries receive almost no scholarly and political attention in Serbia as well. So, if ethnic diversity is crucial for the development of creative industries, how ethnically diverse are Novi Sad is not placed in the first row of attention?

According to all up multiculturalism is seen these days as one of competitive advantages of now day's urban spaces. City competitive advantage is usually defined as economic at core. But the competitiveness debate is becoming more sophisticated.

Does the city have an ethical framework at action that inspires people to give more, to care more and to have more social solidarity? (Landry, 2006).

Novi Sad has inherited multicultural asset from the past. Novi Sad is the capital of Vojvodina that claim it self '26 nations in one smile'. Based in Novi Sad, there are huge number of 17 minorities cultural association based on origin of their members and usually on friendship to the particular minority groups either like 'Kredarica – Association of Slovenians and their friends'. Even though there is not enough issue out of multicultural, multiethnic, multi gastronomy, multi heritage of the city know best by EXIT festival while big treasure that of Central Europe stays under landscape, hardly visible even in every day life of its inhabitants.

METHODOLOGY

The research in this paper has been the outset of big project research that will be conducted during next six month on creative city concept fostering by Novi Sad for cultural tourism improvement of the city space more creative and attractive its citizens, visitors, travelers, tourists and finally investors.

In conducting a research there are two types of methods to gather the necessary data: primary research and secondary research. For getting good overall information both ways are used. Besides that the interpretation of the mainstream media coverage in the past couple of years about Novi Sad was researched. Retrospective-prospective study design was used as type of study to find out what is the past and present the current multiethnic environment of Novi Sad. Interviews were conducted with representatives of four major ethnic groups in Novi Sad. To come to the right conclusions, the results were combined and analysis was made.

The goal of this research is to provide an answer to the question on what are perceptions among four major Novi Sad's ethnic groups about Novi Sad as a creative city space based on its multicultural characteristic and how it can be improved with purpose for cultural tourism improvement.

The semi-interviews are conducted in July 2009 with the very active and in charge for promoting culture of ethnic minority representatives of Serbs community, Rusyns, Hungarians and Slovaks minority. Serbs are not minority population in the city of Novi Sad in the city and country. There are many different Serbs societies that are based on the home town or Balkan region origin or their members. That is why we chose for this occasion to interview a few Serbs no matter their membership. We chose to interview as well one local representative who is in position to be active in cultural multiethnic life of Novi Sad as well as in region, so who has as more information then the representative of local city authorities.

- Ms Ileana Ursu Nenadovic as a local authorities representative at the placement of Associate on Popularization Culture of Vojvodina the Region and Culture of the Region in Vojvodina (it is not relevant for this paper but it is interesting that the interviewee is an active member of Romanian minority).
- Ms Anan Maria Pap – Journalists at Rusyns' (Ruthenian) Radio and Television reduction
- Ms Vladimira Dorcova – Coordinator for information national board o Slovaks Ethnic Minority and Representative of Slovaks Journalists Association.
- Ms Andrea Borsos – Active member of folklore dance group and organization of Citizen Association for Cherishing Hungarian Culture and Art

- Serbians are not ethnic minority in Novi Sad and they are spread by the places from all over Balkans where they come from so four representatives of Serbs who were chosen by authors: Ms Marica Marijana Suzic, Mr. Radovan Vladislavljevic, Mr Bogdan Ivkovic, Mrs Jovanka Jovic. All Serbians representatives have residence in Novi Sad, they all have high education. Two of them are originally from Novi Sad *here were born and were grew up. Two others are one from another Vojvodinas town and second from Bosnia who immigrated Serbia after war.

DISSCUSION ON FINDINGS

The main question which authors sought to be answered in this pilot research was: what has been a perception among interviewees of four major Novi Sad's ethnic groups about Novi Sad as a creative city space based on its multicultural characteristic and how it can be improved with purpose for cultural tourism improvement?

At research questions which have to be answered to achieve this are:

1. Do you think that Novi Sad is multicultural city?

All interviewees said - YES!!!!

2. What exactly 'multicultural' means for you?

Here are some answers:

- Multicultural means a place where people of ethnic minorities can express freely their culture, talk in their languages and have education in their languages.
- It is the place where every nation has their own rights to be what they are.
- It is the place where Medias promote minority cultures.
- Yes, but the point is to make intercultural stage of the city.

- It means that there is culture for export.
3. Has the multiculturalism visible in every day life of Novi Sad?
 - Yes and no. It is visible to those who are minority so they know what is going on.
 - Yes, you can here other languages in the streets just by passing by. – *What languages can you hear in the street in every day life?* Well, only Serbian, English and Hungarian.
 - Yes it is visible, you can see in the panorama of the city with many different churches and on some Institution you can see the name of them in four major languages. *Do you know what these languages are?* Well, Serbian, Hungarian, Slovakian and Romanian or Rusyn I don't know exactly.
 4. Do you think Novi Sad is Creative City?
 - Yes, but it is not as creative as it could be.
 5. What it means to you Creative City?
 - Creative city is where creative people live and express their creativity.
 - Where young people are involved in many projects about improving the city in cultural, educating, scientific way. There need to be production as well.
 - It is the city with many events like EXIT, theatre, galleries, cultural events
 6. What would it be creative urban space in your opinion?
 - It is the space that connects old and new, where creative people has opportunity to express them.
 - It is fortress during EXIT
 - It the space where people would gladly come and that space will be changing itself by people who will think of it,

7. Do you think that the role of the local government is more important in developing Novi Sad as a creative city destination than the role of its citizens?
- We need to strengthen multicultural to be visible to the world. EXIT festival is just a small island in comparing what we can offer and what we have. It is like in big ocean that all we see is Small Island and big island is not. They are not exotic enough.
 - If we will wait for slow governmental process to do something then we will wait forever. Slow administration can ruin every creativity
 - We have government like we chose. There must be critical mass to show who what we need.
 - At the first people need to express themselves in creative way and then it can come some official resolution.
8. What is the best way to make multicultural characteristics of Novi Sad visible through creative urban space at the moment without much resources and support?
- Maybe to paint some murals at the walls somewhere and graphite – like a street art
 - We can organize cleaning streets and taking care of the streets as volunteers that would be recruiting from many minority associations.
 - To remember local community who lives in it over bill boards. And poster at the bus stops.
 - It is the fair of the books to promote poetry, writers, certain books, to talk to authors not just selling books
 - To go around in fold clothes and play folklore that we see all that at first
 - See how other cities did it and then copy it.

9. Do you think that multiculturalism of Novi Sad if it would be seen and feel and enhanced more can be attractive for tourists?

Everyone answered that of course it can. It is very interesting diversity in a small space.

10. Which are the issues that have been main obstacles for making Novi Sad vibrant from its diversity?
- Media don't do it on right way. Somehow there is not impact on local society and not to talk about wider.
 - Many educated people go to work in major population since her is more job and then better payment.
 - People are just not interested in anything even my friends that are the same national minority. They don't care about our culture.
 - Local authorities are not interesting to plan longer and have a strategy of tourism improvement of Novi Sad.
 - Information and marketing are missing.

There were no evident differences in answers between ethnic minority interviewees and representatives of Serbs. There is evident lack of information about cultural activities. What is interesting is that in survey that was conducted among volunteers who came to volunteer in international camps in Vojvodina in 2006 is shown that while foreign volunteers hardly noticed multiculturalists of the region and Novi Sad, domestic volunteers visitors from another parts of Serbia thought that this region is cultural and multicultural, but it was more based on general knowledge about history and reputation of the region than from personal experience (Klicek, 2007).

Recently, was made one interesting small scale research on 70 randomly chosen citizens of Novi Sad to investigate what the possible brand of Novi Sad as town can be. Multicultural characteristic of the city was at 5th place after EXIT festival, Novi Sad's cultural events and infrastructure, the spirit of Novi Sad and the Fortress (Vucinic, 2009). It is interesting that Cultural event as EXIT and cultural infrastructure such as other events, galleries, museums, etc are chosen as the first impression of Novi Sad's citizens and those are seen apart from multicultural characteristic of 17 ethnic minorities that has active cultural associations who live in the city and major four. This is all settled near each other at relatively small population of 300.000 citizens in Novi Sad and Vojvodina with 2 million citizens.

CONCLUSION

The Republic of Serbia is a country in transition with a certain tourism potential. The country is going through serious reforms in the tourism sector. Besides these reforms there are many other problems, which the tourism sector of Serbia is facing. The sector is trying to reposition itself on the international market but is having a hard task in creating a positive image for the country. The picture of war is still in the eyes of many tourists. Tourism in the former Yugoslavia was high developed, but on Adriatic seaside as well as it is now days, but that is on territory of ex-Yugoslavian republics: Croatia, Slovenia and Montenegro. Because Serbia was not known on the international market as a tourism destination the task to develop the tourism sector becomes even harder.

It is well known that cities can be engine for not just tourism development and improvement for whole region. Novi Sad is second largest city in Serbia and the capital of Vojvodina. Contemporary Novi Sad arose from the ruins of many empires

Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian. Germans settled here, Greeks, Armenians, Jews and Aromanians passed through. Hungarians, Slovaks and Ukrainians have already been here. Novi Sad has great history and is a cultural center of Serbia which is why people often call it the "Serbian Athens". By its charm, culture and nightlife, Novi Sad is similar to Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, but because it is smaller, there is more a personal tone to everything in a laid back environment. That is why Novi Sad is considered to be a perfect combination of urban sophistication and bohemian relaxation. A multiethnic (Serbs, Croats, Hungarians, Slovaks, Germans, Romanians, Rusyns, Gypsies etc.) foundation on which Novi Sad was built, makes it a very tolerant, peaceful environment with a specific charm to it.

There is the paradox exists in Novi Sad's multiethnic environment: There are so many official cultural associations of ethnic minorities in Novi Sad and yet multicultural characteristic of the town stays almost invisible. Even three the most numbered minorities are not active in a right way.

Novi Sad can be perfect creative city space for improving cultural tourism of region based on its inherited ethnic diversity and on cultural reputation inform the past. It seems even though nobody takes competitive advantage of this. Local authorities neither have interests and probably enough knowledge about how to use it and community stays in lethargic stage of its development. What can be solution for such a state of the presence? That is for sure recommendation for future inquiries that will be made in the project which the first step is based on this analysis.

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