

Influence of Socio-Economic factors in the development of the Bar Urban Region

Introduction

There is a large number of cities and regions in the Central and South-Eastern European countries, which were the motors of economic development for decades on account of their industrial base but have largely forfeited their economic base over the past decade, owing as a consequence of social and economic transformation, the impact of globalisation and reduced competitiveness of their products. In Serbia and Montenegro the situation was additionally complicated by civil wars and political overthrows, which profoundly reinforced the country's isolated position at the European and global scene. Today, the post-socialistic urban areas are faced with far-reaching and deep-rooted socio-economic structural problems.

For this reason Bar, the seaport in Montenegro is selected as an example of a confusing post-socialistic urban region where the consequences of the decade long isolation are apparent. The breakdown of the former country and the decade of the Balkan conflicts, political instability and economic decline, as well as negative social and cultural trends present and environmental problems despite the that the Republic of Montenegro is constitutionally regarded as the "Ecological State". Specific political and economic conditions have caused the loss of town's practical role, its position on the regional as well as global level. Regional structures that have taken decades to evolve the seaport Bar are losing their purpose, therefore it is an imperative that the town of Bar redefines its urban character, improves its appeal and finds the means to take part in global competition. The new vision of the future has to be developed on the local, regional and European (transregional) level.

Municipality of Bar

Bar is a coastal town, situated in the south-eastern part of Montenegro on the Adriatic Sea (fig 1).



Figure 1: Position of Bars Municipality in Montenegro
[http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bar_\(Montenegro\)](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bar_(Montenegro))

Bar, a major seaport in Serbia and Montenegro, has around 25,000 residents with the entire municipality of Bar totalling 47,768 people. The Municipality spreads over 598 km² of land area, 46 km length of Adriatic coast and 61 km length of Skadar Lake's coast. Bar's municipality is divided into 12 local communities with 83 settlements, renown for its multi-national and multi-ethnic diversity. Twenty five different nationalities settled very well in this area and the population increased from 1948 till 2003 more than 100 percent from 21,000 residents in 1948 to 47,768 in 2003. There are 11,584 young people, 4,619 senior citizens as well as 3,920 unemployed people.

Urban development

From its origin till today, there have been numerous indicators that Bar existed in Illyrian times, as well as in Roman times. Different civilisations and cultures have interlaced in this area from Roman, Byzantine and medieval culture up to modern civilizations of XX and XXI century. Urban development of Bar can be distinguished in regard to history and space on three separate entities:

1. Old town Bar
2. New Bar (Pristan)
3. Bar (Topolica)

1. Old Bar-Origins of town's development

Old Bar is built inland and shows fascinating urban solutions which have stood the test of time for centuries. For a few hundred years it has been invisible, hidden among dense olive groves. Within, there is a ruinous village surrounded by a wall, and the wreck of an old Venetian fortress surrounded by mosques and bazaars (fig. 2).



Figure 2: Old Bar
Source: Tatjana Djukic, Belgrade

Old Bar looks more like the Turkish than Montenegrin town and has what is believed to be the oldest olive tree in the world, estimated to be about 2500 years old (fig. 3).



Figure 3: The oldest olive tree in Old Bar
Source: Tatjana Djukic, Belgrade

The town is a Montenegrin multicultural phenomenon and it is the most important medieval archaeological site in the Balkan region.

A traffic network is visible on this approximately triangularly shaped area, which has expanded over time, although irregular forms suggest certain regulation and planning during its origins and development. The plan of the old town itself is evidence that the deformed network of antic urban planning with the orthogonal street network exists. According to certain geometrical pattern it is obvious that the street network was planned in some old antic or later period.

However, over time the old Bar needed to expand its borders, which is precisely the reason why new settlements were established: Podgrad, Bartula, Varos, Brbot., etc.

2. New Bar - Pristan

The origin of new Bar – Pristan, which marks the end of the first period, can be calculated from the beginning of XX century or the year 1912 when the last inhabitant left the old town. The conditions of developing new Bar (Pristan), the impetus for establishing new Bar and relocating the old town were forming of the port of Bar as a need for developing railway and nautical traffic.

The first urban plan for new Bar was created by an Italian engineer Gegli at the beginning of the XX century and this marks the start of its development (fig. 4). The basic direction of the town's development was determined by the two orthogonal traffic roads, which in some way existing up to nowadays. The town's core was planned in triangular areas located between these roads and the sea coast, as well as in the back area defined as the "Zona Franca". New Bar (Pristan) existed till the 70's of last century when was definitely abandoned for the purpose of port development.

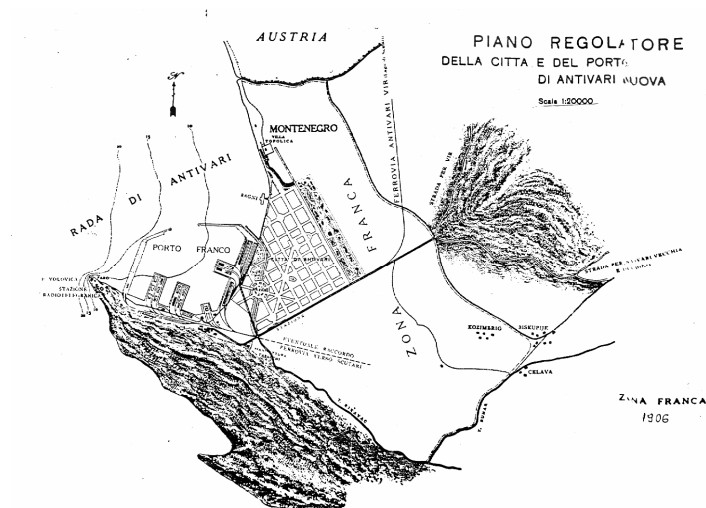


Figure 4: The first urban plan - proposed by Italian engineer Gegli
Source: Dragan Scekic, Luka Bar

3. Bar – Topolica

The new spacious plan of Bar-Topolica was proposed by professor Somborski in the middle of twentieth century, with the planned traffic road orthogonal near the sea coast aiming to separate the port from the town. This proposal marked a new strategy of Bar's urban development where the town centre was separated from the port itself.

First Master Plan (GUP) of Bar was carried out in 1970 and it represented the first significant urban document .The plan itself was based on the modern planning of the town with the aim to move it on towards the north-west and to define main traffic roads parallel to the sea coast line. After the earthquake on the Montenegrin coast in 1979, the new trend of the Bars urban development became visible and they indicators of a revised of Master Plan of Bar in 1985 year. This plan is still current, but significant point of this plan is interesting up to today, that the center of the town is not defined as well as the complete development plan of the region (fig.5).



Figure 5: Bar - Topolica
Soure: Tatjana Djukic, Belgrade

Since the beginning of the 1990s the population had become socially polarized and rapidly pauperized and Bar's urban regions were transformed into confusing planned and unplanned areas and illegal settlements.

Economical development

Development of industrial zone of Bar has required controlled development of industry because of the limited space and conflict of different interests between industry, tourism and agriculture. The port of Bar and industry in the port complex have priority over another economical carrier of the town as well as controlled development in respect to environmental pollution.

Economic reforms are underway, while European integration process that the country is performing represent an additional incentive and potential for numerous, complex challenges and problems that need to be overcome in order to secure achievement of these goals. The key challenges are the implementation and acceleration of economic reforms and ensuring balanced economic development. Closely related are the challenges of improving the living standard and reducing poverty.

Port of Bar

The port of Bar is a modern sea port with high-quality handling services for all types of cargo. The forming of a free customs zone enables better organization of production, as well as some particular advantages made possible by the provisions regulating the rights and obligations within the Free zone (fig.6).



Figure 6: Detailed urban development plan "The first phase of the economic zone Bar"
Source: Dragan Scekcic, Luka Bar

The port has an installation capacity for an annual turnover and transport 4,5 million tones of cargo, but the usage of the port in the last decade has been less than 50%. The situation in

society has highly reflected on the work of the port resulting in loss of jobs. In year 1991 the number of workers was 1991 but now is 1374, which indicates that the port is losing its importance. According to the Master Plan of Bar as well as the Regional Plan and Spatial Plan of the Republic of Montenegro the port should be an important employer in the Bar region. The Spatial plan of the Republic of Serbia in relation to the railway line Beograd-Bar saw the port of Bar as an important cargo and passenger destination, but during the last decade the bad maintenance of the railway line and new political relation between the two new states caused the confusion over the importance of these resources. The confusion in relation to the port reflected on the Bars urban development.

Social development

Bar as a multi-cultural town faced a refugee problem in early 1990-s, poverty and isolation at the European as well as at global level. Prior to the crisis the Montenegrin population had been highly educated with robust health system, all which had contributed to the fact that Montenegro had significant potentials in the field of human resources and the good basis for economic recovery.

In order to ensure urban renewal and resurrection of Bar's urban environment it is necessary that citizens take part of managing urban areas and participate in decision making process. Adequate education, health care, culture as well as equity and social protection together with economic and goals related to the environmental protection in society are elements to ensure sustainable development of a society.

The regionalization

After the independence referendum in the Republic of Montenegro new challenges have appeared and a new phase of economical and political development of Montenegro has started. Bar as a major sea port in former Serbia and Montenegro faced problems as a result of isolation, post-communist restructuring, globalizing forces, changing political boundaries, evolving networks all which suggests that Bar has to adapt to new political, social and economical trends. During the last decade Bar has responded to the process of regional co-operation and global competition, under the limited scope of transnational integration. Transition to the market condition and different status of property, modernization of building and planning regulation have become a starting point for the creation of new urban areas and diversification of economic structure.

Bar as a one of the most important economic regions in Montenegro has recognized that the region cooperation is the efficient tool for strengthening political and economical stability, as well as solid base for the inclusion of the entire region in the process of European integration. Regional integration should be considered as an important step towards protection of the environment and sustainable development of urban and rural areas.

The South-EU Urban Enviplans proposed by European Commission, initiated as a new Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment to help Member State and regional and local authorities improve the environmental performance of Europe's cities. The projects: Mediterranean Action Plan and Adriatic Ionian Initiative could be recognized as being comprehensive and promising for Bar's region by strengthening of the regional and subregional cooperation, the national needs and priorities can be realized in the framework of the global and regional determined goals in the fields of environmental protection, tourism development and maritime economy.

Conclusion

Influence of Socio-Economic factors in the development of the Bars Urban Region are significant. Therefore the importance of creative, flexible and innovative urban management as well as implementation and proposal of new Master Plan, should provide Bars urban renewal and enable Bar to return its position in the regional and global network.

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