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Local Identity and Urban Image Construction. The Case Study of Ulcinj

Lokale Identität und die Konstruktion eines urbanen Bildes. Die Fallstudie Ulcinj

ABSTRACT

The urban image is a reflection of the formation and the dynamics of a local identity. Cities continuously create identities and connect them with signs of utility, function and symbolic order. As a theatrical scenery, they change after each act constantly, sometimes with minor adaptations, sometimes with radical interventions. Urban change is a production of meaning, interpretation and identity making practices. The arena which will be critically explored in this paper is the relationship between the built heritage, the way it is made, held, collected, curated and exhibited or simply exists, and the performative acts of creating and moulding the urban image of Ulcinj. The complex process of "evaluating" certain aspects of the past and their results in the present, as witnessed and engraved in the built heritage, can be used in a strategic and tactical manner, by which people "raise their voices" in cities, in order to define their relation to, and their place in the society they live in. This paper aims to discover the various processes affecting urban identity creation in Ulcinj and how the town identities are made and remade, used and abused, imagined and narrated, politicized and communicated, expressed and projected, imposed and marketed through its urban image. The crucial research point of this paper is to offer a detailed analysis of the local identity and urban image construction of the town of Ulcinj through detection of the architectural methodologies that people use in order to (re)create the image of the town. The final goal is to recognize the potentials of the built heritage in the town of Ulcinj and acknowledge their significance for the future urban development of the Old as well as the New Town.

Keywords: Built Heritage, Cultural Heritage, Identity Creation, Urban Image Construction, Ulcinj

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Stadtbild spiegelt die Entstehung und Dynamik einer lokalen Identität wider. Städte schaffen kontinuierlich Identitäten und verbinden sie mit Zeichen von Nutzen, Funktion und symbolischer Ordnung. Als theatralische Szenerie verändern sie sich nach jedem Akt ständig, manchmal mit kleinen Anpassungen, manchmal mit radikalen Interventionen. Stadtwandel ist eine Produktion von Sinn-, Interpretations- und Identitätsbildungspraktiken. Die Arena, die in diesem Aufsatz kritisch untersucht wird, ist die Beziehung zwischen dem gebauten Erbe, der Art, wie es hergestellt, gehalten, gesammelt, kuratiert und ausgestellt oder einfach existiert, und den performativen Akten der Schaffung und Gestaltung des urbanen Images von Ulcinj. Der komplexe Prozess der „Bewertung“ bestimmter Aspekte der Vergangenheit und ihrer Ergebnisse in der Gegenwart, wie er im gebauten Erbe bezeugt und eingepägt ist, kann in strategischer und taktischer Weise genutzt werden, durch die die Menschen in den Städten „ihre Stimme erheben“ Um ihre Beziehung zu und ihren Platz in der Gesellschaft, in der sie leben, zu definieren, geht es in diesem Beitrag darum, die verschiedenen Prozesse urbaner Identitätsbildung in Ulcinj zu entdecken und wie die Stadtidentitäten hergestellt und wieder hergestellt, benutzt und missbraucht, imaginiert und erzählt, politisiert werden und kommuniziert, ausgedrückt und projiziert, durch sein städtisches Image aufgezwungen und vermarktet. Der entscheidende Forschungsschwerpunkt dieser Arbeit besteht darin, eine detaillierte Analyse der lokalen Identität und des städtebaulichen Aufbaus der Stadt Ulcinj durch die Entdeckung der architektonischen Methoden zu liefern, die die Menschen nutzen, um das Bild der Stadt (wieder) zu schaffen. Ziel ist es, die Potenziale des baulichen Erbes in der Stadt Ulcinj zu erkennen und ihre Bedeutung für die zukünftige städtebauliche Entwicklung der Alten wie der Neustadt anzuerkennen.

Schlüsselworte: Bauliches Erbe, kulturelles Erbe, Identitätsschaffung, Erschaffung des städtischen Images, Ulcinj

1. INTRODUCTION

The identity concept in the context of a city and architectural artefacts includes a wide definition covering natural, geographical and cultural products and social life norms. Urban identity, architectural identity and the construction of urban images are sometimes formed by very different components in a long period of time inside an urban space. Continuously changing and regenerating cities lose their readabilities and their citizens struggle with the perception of the collective (identity). As a result, it becomes more difficult to preserve the historical - cultural heritage, local authenticity and the urban identity as such.

Cities were formed as an expression of spiritual, material, social and political conditions. The changes in these conditions from one city to another make each one a unique unrepeatable phenomenon. Since the city is a humanitarian situation, it is in a constant state of change, as the communities and their circumstances are changing through time. *"Cities reflect as well as shape their inhabitants' values and outlooks in various ways."* (Bell and Shalit, 2011). Each of these changes constitutes a time layer represented by a material reality in the physical structure of the city. Each layer is supposed to be built on the basis of the previous layer, enrich and add to it, not abolish and erase it. This turns the city into a group of nested and accumulated loops that are difficult to disband, and broadcast the sense of time intensively to us. *"The city is a cumulative reality in space and time"* (Mumford, 1937). Understanding these layers and their relationship to each other is a crucial factor in understanding the city and sensing its identity. Problems arise when something goes wrong in this temporal, spatial structure of the city and the distorted situation becomes the prevailing, which causes loss of the city properties and adversely affects its identity and could lead to losing it.

This is experienced by the majority of Balkan cities as they begin to lose their authentic historic stockpiles, and many parts of these cities fade spiritually and materially. Distinguishing characteristics of identity became absent and mysterious because of reckless urban development and economic problems in a case of constant loss for many of the cultural gains. Many defects in the temporal - spatial structure of the city are happening, and the distorted situation is becoming prevalent. This drives them into deformity and loss of their aesthetic and historical values. In this context, Ulcinj is an example of a society that has undergone a lot of changes and lost its ability of carrying architectural and vital characteristics from the different historical layers into its contemporary context.

The focus of this paper is on offering a detailed analysis of the local identity and urban image construction of the town of Ulcinj through detection of the architectural methodologies that people use in order to (re)create the image of the town as well as the architectural layers that witness the current state. These two key points examine how the cityscape of Ulcinj has been constructed and how the urban identity of the town is reflected through the built heritage. The final goal is to recognize the potentials of the built heritage in the town of Ulcinj and acknowledge their significance for the future development of the town. Such endorsement is supposed to generate a controlled and regulated urban building environment that cultivates the local identity through the construction of the urban image of the town.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology that has been used during the research process consists of a mixed-method approach primarily divided into two parts - primary sources (field work) and secondary sources (comprehensive literature review).

The usage of the primary sources recognizes more active research methods that have taken place on site - a cross-sectional survey, field work analysis as well as interviews with local key stakeholders. This represents an establishment of a theoretical framework and emerging topics around which the field analysis evolved during the research. This part of the research methodology is of a great importance because it contributes towards assembling data to better understand the urban context of Ulcinj.

Firstly, the concepts of urban identity and urban transformation are mentioned which question the link between urban transformation implementations and urban identity. Later, it touches upon the development and urban identity change of Ulcinj to make the analysis particularly concentrated on the town through its historical processes. The materials for the field study consist of analytical surveys of representatives of the built heritage in the city, through different historical layers. Furthermore, the formation of the urban process has been analysed; morphologically, visually, functionally and spatially, the contextual characteristics of the town have been indicated and alterations in the urban tissue were noted. In this context, the analysis was categorized in three periods: the old city, the modern city and the contemporary city. Architectural fabric, street patterns and urban blocks were examined in morphological analyses and in a visual analysis the structures/buildings in the area were studied in terms of their architectural period and their locations in the skyline/silhouette of the city centre. As for the functional analysis, use of space and zoning, the spatial analysis of urban places, and contextual analysis of relationships between structures and areas, local identity and the characters of the architectural buildings were examined. During the examination of the analysis, maps for supporting morphological analyses, archive review, on - site observation and monitoring, and old and new photos of these places have been used.

While the morphological and functional analyses enable us to identify artificial attributes in the urban environment, they have their limitations for this research in terms of determining the changing perceptions of the social factor - the local community. Therefore, interviews with local key stakeholders were conducted in the second stage, in order to support the physical analysis. The results of the interviews were compared to the results of the field analysis. The expert stakeholders include a museum curator, a novelist and political adviser, an architect, a professional tourist guide and writer, local government representatives and academics.

Finally, the secondary sources (or comprehensive literature review) build up around the theoretical framework that we offer in this paper. The framework establishes the basis for a broad field of investigation of the topic of local identity and urban image construction in Ulcinj. While exploring how the urban environment is a reflection of the human needs and values, we try to discover how the town identities are made and re-made, used and abused, imagined and narrated, politicized and

communicated, expressed and projected, imposed and marketed through its urban image. Urban change is a production of meaning, interpretation and identity making practices. Its impact can be observed through different tools and in different fields of activity, but the arena which is critically explored and discussed in this paper (through the findings) is the relationship between the building traditions and heritage, the way it is made, held, collected, curated and exhibited or simply exists, and the performative acts of creating, moulding and making of the urban image identifiable with the town of Ulcinj.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Formation of Urban Identity

The concept of identity, as such, expresses diversity and originality. It represents a phenomenon that doesn't exist in the union or differentiation of similarity and repetition (Isin and Wood, 1999) as regarding with individuality and being unique (Lynch, 1960).

Urban identity, on the other hand, represents a complex topic which revolves around subjective values and attitudes that may differ according to social groups and individuals. Physical, social and psychological dimensions of the impact of urban change on urban identity and image construction have been studied by various researchers extensively. Urban identity can be defined through natural and artificial urban elements and socio-cultural characteristics of urban environments. According to this, two main elements can be connected to the formation of urban identity - the "social" (socio-cultural, socio-economic and psychological) and the "environmental" (natural and artificial) component. The artificial attributes that define environmental quality are discussed in terms of settlements, elements and symbols, which are shaped according to political, economic, social and cultural values. The physical characteristics of urban environments continuously change according to values, which is inevitable. However the scale, conditions and effects of change are required to be controlled in order to protect and sustain urban identity. The shape of the environment, more specifically the identity of the environment related to the nature and humans is explained with regards to the natural and cultural components in relations of human, environment and culture.

3.2. Construction of city images

The most important work addressing the concept of city image construction is probably the book "The image of the city" by Lynch (1960). He clarified that the image of the city is the people's perception of the elements in the built environment and the way that they adapt and interact with the city by creating mental maps based on five elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. In other words, the image is not only a physical or visual element, but it is also a mental analysis of all the components of the city, which reflects in the way we use and access our cities. In order to get an image, we would usually need a scene, a camera, and a processing of the image. By projecting these concepts on the city, we find that the scene is the physical and social urban environment of the city, and the camera is the people and the users of this environment, and the process of taking a

picture is to live in the city, while the production and processing of the image is the mental process of forming the impressions and mechanisms of interaction and overlap with this environment. "*Urban identity is the whole qualifications, which allows urban areas to be read or to become meaningful for humans, becoming separated from the others.*" (Lynch, 1981, p.45).

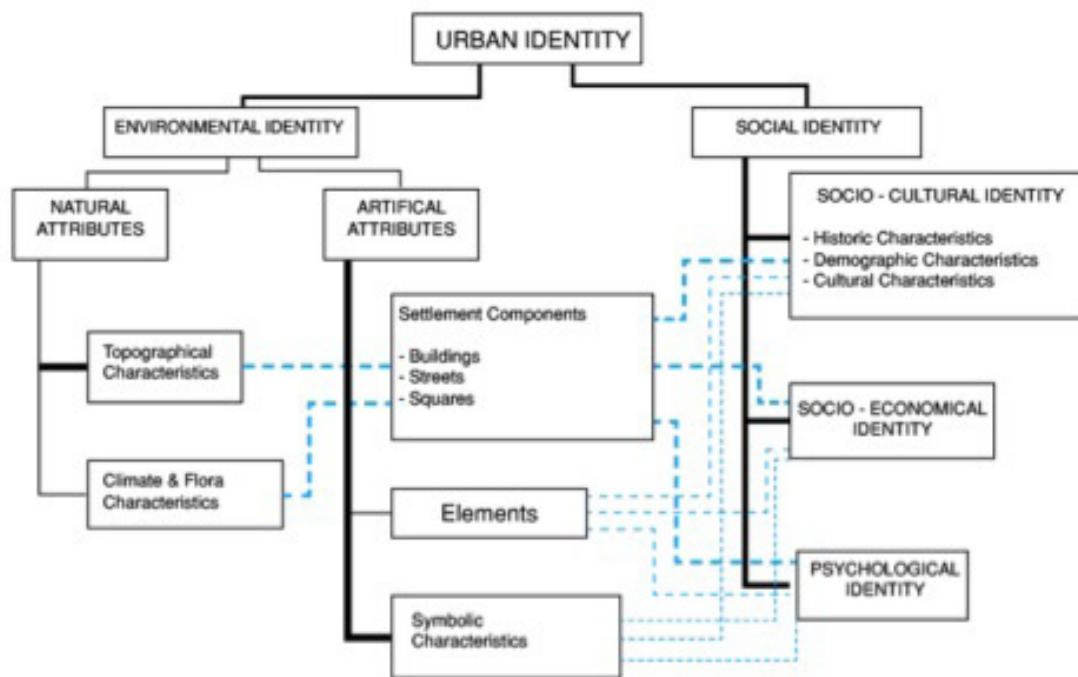
In the study of city image construction, Henri Lefebvre sets three dimensions of differentiation of produced space. He distinguishes between perceived space ("espace perçu"), representation of space ("représentation de l'espace"), and space of representation ("espaces de représentation"). According to Lefebvre, all three dimensions of the production of space create a contradictory, dialectical whole, and only in their interplay is urban space created (Lefebvre, 1974; Schmid, 2006). Similar to the production of urban space, the creation of city images can also be differentiated into physical and mental constructions and the constructions of meaning. These constructions are contested and disputed because they involve various actors: politicians, institutions, private developers, designers, communities, and individual residents (Biskup and Schalenberg, 2008).

3.3. The city as a four - dimensional space

The context of all the theories presented above started developing in the 1960-ies, the period when modernism came under fire of critics and new ways of seeing the city were emerging. Before this period, the social component in architecture and urban design studies was not mentioned. Obviously there are a large number of views of the concept of city identity, and every writer has identified it depending on different items and conditions. Some depended on the built physical structure of the city, while others involved the social life and people, and others looked at the emotional aspects and memory, e.g. Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff, or admitted the natural factors and climate as intervening factors in the identity of the city, such as Charles Correa.

Linking all the above factors is an essential point in understanding the identity of the city, but that is not the bottom line. We have to stop thinking about the city as a physical three-dimensional object and expand our horizons to include the fourth dimension, which is time. As long as the city is a humanitarian situation, and the man is in a process of continuous change over time, according to all the factors mentioned earlier, the city has a three-dimensional memory that dives into the future as into the past and reflects permanently on the present reality in a unique form and character. That makes this timeline of events tangible and understandable through the architectural, social and physical form of the city. This makes the formation of the city's identity a process that is mainly and directly linked to the factor of time. "*Identity is not a 'found object' but a process. We develop our identity by reacting to our problems and our circumstances.*" (Correa, 1980, p. 10).

Although each case should be regarded as separate and a manifestation of the varying surroundings, these terms can be somewhat broadly defined so as to apply to different places and under differing conditions. When examining a hypothesis on an example that should have a broader meaning and impact than that of an individual case study, one



Graphic 1

has to be careful to choose the “right” example and to draw more general conclusions that can be applied to other situations and/or places or re-visited when necessary. That is what we set out to do in our research (see graphic 1).

4. CITY CONTEXT

4.1. Introduction to the history of the town

Ulcinj is a seaside town on the south coast of Montenegro, that has been continuously inhabited since ancient times. Ulcinj’s history stretches over 2,5 millennia and the first documented mention of habitation traces back to the turn of the VII century BC, to an Illyrian settlement of the tribe Olciniatas. Ulcinj was famous as a pirate capital on the Adriatic Sea all the way to the pre-medieval period and the Late Illyrian Kingdom. Around the II century BC the town became a Roman province and was later granted the status of a “municipium”, meaning independent town. It was Christianized around the IV century AD. After the fall of the Western Roman

Empire in the V century, the town came under the dominion of the Byzantine Empire, and, with the exception of a short period of independence in the IX century, was a part of the province of Dalmatia until the XI century. Different regional rulers, most notably the Serbian prince Stefan Nemanja, changed in the next three centuries, until the Venetians made Ulcinj their stronghold on the eastern Adriatic coast and where an influential presence until the Ottoman conquest in the XVI century. During the Venetian period, the town was heavily fortified and was an important naval and commercial center in the region. In the Ottoman times, which lasted till the XIX century, when Montenegro declared independence, repairs to the many town structures, especially the fortifications, were made and the town started to expand beyond the city walls and acquired a typical Ottoman flair, with mosques, hammams, fountains and a bazaar (see fig. 1).

Different layers of the town have been preserved, allowing for exploration of various cultural stages and distinction between the periods of development of the town. The most important of those are: the Roman period, tied mostly to the I and II century, the medieval, or the XI, XII and XIII century, and further, the Venetian and Ottoman periods (The Study for the protection of cultural heritage, 2016).

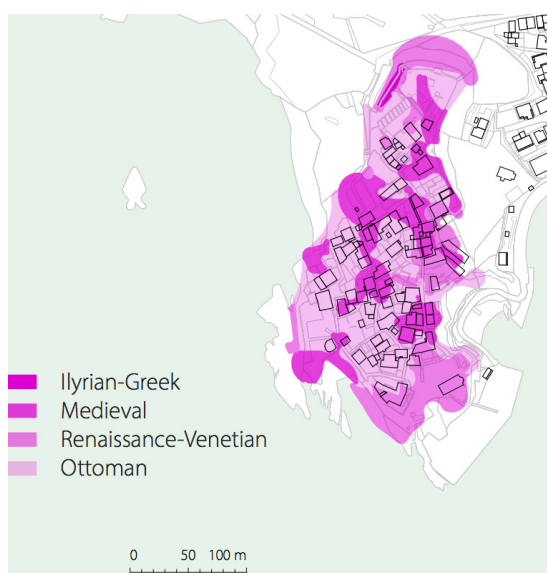


Figure 1

4.2. Local building and construction methods

In order to better understand and get to know the urban identity of the town and its relationship with the architecture, one has to recognise the special features and typical building methods and materials of the town’s built heritage. The techniques that were used reflected the cultural structure of the population and clearly speak to the period of history and the prevailing religious and ethnic setting of the town.

The fortress of Ulcinj has traces of a few different periods when it was built, reconstructed or reinforced. Remains of the original Illyrian fortifications with the typical Cyclopean dry-masonry can still

Graphic 1
This diagram highlights the linkages of urban identity and its various paths (source: IvaShokoska, Marija Nakeva).

Figure 1
Different building epochs (and layers) in the Old Town. Plan from Ulcinj I (source: Marija Nakeva).

be found inside the acropolis, near the North Gate of the Old Town. Typical large uneven limestone blocks, with little to no cementing material, were connected through cracks and bolts that reacted to the seismic activity in the region. The remains of the wall were later used as a basis for the new and more densely built Venetian fortifications. During the Medieval period, the fortifications were reinforced or rebuilt in the typical regular stone patterns with the orderly layers clearly visible. Local materials, such as the reddish-ochre limestone were used. In the later, Venetian period, so called chisel stone blocks were implemented in even layers in walls and staircases as well as arches and covered passages. The Ottomans later made a lot of repairs and reinforcements with rough masonry and brick joints and walled-up the arched openings from the previous periods.

Stone, the most durable building material locally available at the time, was predominant in the city: the house walls were made of rectangular, carved stone blocks in an orderly layering technique typical to the late-medieval/early Renaissance period, and had a predominantly square-shaped floor plan. Some of them were constructed as defensible tower-houses because they were built to withstand attacks, and openings were small and rare because they were considered the "weak spots" of a house and were kept to a minimum. In the Venetian times, covered arched passages over the streets were constructed as staircases or parts of the house itself. These external staircases sometimes had semi-circular basement access doors or openings underneath, which means that the living quarters were usually in the upper floors because of the temperature and safety of the inhabitants (see fig. 2).

The openings themselves can be separated into two large groups - square and arched openings. The square openings were framed and had small consoles used to dry fish and (probably) wooden shades to protect the inside spaces from the hot summer sun. This alludes to the maritime character of the town and its importance as a trade port on an important sea route from Italy towards the Middle East. Leftovers of a pink pigment are visible on some window and door frames. The arched openings are a typical trait for a number of towns that were a part of the Ottoman Empire and whose architecture developed under direct influence from the Turkish rulers (see fig. 3).

As a seaside town that depended greatly on the maritime trade, Ulcinj had to make use of the regional circumstances and adapt to the terrain. The most important dimension of defensible city planning, urban design, and architecture, is fear: fear of enemies, strangers, or others (Mezini and Pojani, 2014). The steep rock where the Old Town stands

is a natural defense against enemies coming from the sea and the fortress was built so as to make use of the strategic position the small peninsula overlooking the bay offers. In the limited space of the fortified area, the town started to develop organically, the layout seems not to have been willfully planned and the narrow and winding streets penetrate the houses which were usually constructed in groups of three to four houses. Two larger "squares" were formed on opposite ends of the fortress; one by the Citadel and the North Gate where a sailor's café was an important meeting point for the locals and visitors alike; and another near the South Gate in the vicinity of the remains of a Basilica. The former is right next to the Square of the Slaves, where, during the Ottoman Times slave-trading occurred. Even though these squares probably didn't have the functions that prescribed to such public spaces nowadays, they were undoubtedly social and places of commerce with great importance.

In the later Ottoman period, the existing structures of the town were either reused, re-purposed, modified or erased, as it is the case with other captured cities. The urban fabric became a mixture of the different layers left by the past and present urban dwellers, their culture and the previous social order blended with the one that was being established. The Ottoman expansion of the town shows a singular characteristic of Ottoman cities - it is defenseless, with no walls. This feature probably reflected Ottoman self-confidence and belief in the strength of the Empire. The structures of the town were typically articulated into distinctive units called "mahallas" (neighbourhoods) usually organized around a mosque (Mezini and Pojani, 2014). It is interesting to note that blocking neighbours' views and prying on their gardens were unacceptable behaviours in the Ottoman times, so the private spaces were respected and kept out of. The addition of hammams and the bazaar created new urban centres and meeting points outside of the original Old Town and by facilitating the expansion, generated new spaces for the growing population.

Today, the town of Ulcinj boasts an array of architectural examples originating from almost all periods of its existence, although the dominant features are from the reigns of the Venetians and Ottomans. The method of construction and repairs, the technique and the available tools used on the structures of the Old Town, can be related to the Middle Ages, and the Venetian and Ottoman rule accordingly. The urban infrastructure, especially the network of narrow streets and squares that was established in the Middle Ages, was improved in the Ottoman times which points to the fact that the town naturally grew as the architectural techniques advanced and then expanded outside of the City Walls into what is today the Old Turkish Bazaar.



Figure 2



Figure 3

Figure 2
The Episcopal Palace in the Old Town (source: Marina Urošević).

Figure 3
A window detail on the Episcopal Palace in the Old Town (source: Marina Urošević).

From then on, we are witnessing the expansion of the town in two directions - behind the hill, further away from the sea, and along the coast, as influenced by the terrain. The rapid (and often unplanned) growth of the town, a result of the need to accommodate the ever-growing number of visitors has started to show cracks in the protection laws and regulations and to slowly degenerate the long building tradition of Ulcinj (see fig. 4).

4.3. State of the Old and the Contemporary Town today

After the Earthquake in 1979, most parts of the Old Town were destroyed beyond an inhabiting state and large portions of the excavations were buried in the rubble. Almost forty years later, after an extensive reconstruction of the structures of the Old Town, Ulcinj is facing massive problems with (illegal) urban growth with little regard to the urban image and structure created over its 2.500 years of existence. The restoration and reconstruction efforts in the last thirty years do not respect the local building traditions and the natural regional characteristics important for the establishment of genuine and valuable architecture. By neglecting to learn from the historical development observed in the different architectural styles that have blended in Ulcinj and analysed extensively from the remains, the Old Town risks shifting towards kitsch and "fake" architecture that has neither historical nor contemporary usefulness. The huge terraces, concrete reinforcements and alteration of the volume and façades of the structures in the fortress, as well as the restoration upon free interpretation of the remains, rather than by observing the local typologies (Barthélemy and Rodolause, 2015) and without considering the stereotomy of the construction, damage the historical layers and their future authenticity.

These problems arise in no small part because of the lack of a mutual feeling of ownership, meaning a collective conscience to protect the publicly owned spaces, objects and the cultural heritage. The survivalism and enhanced individualism, as well as economic difficulties grouped with a widely spread feeling of distrust towards the government and institutions all contribute towards disrespect of the community and a diminishing collective identity.

5. FORMATION OF LOCAL IDENTITY AND URBAN IMAGE CONSTRUCTION IN ULCINJ

5.1. Regional and geographical predispositions

Ulcinj lies in a region ripe for socio-cultural exploration and development of tools and mechanisms for the further study of the formation of postmodern identities in the Balkans. Through many centuries the peninsula was a turbulent area in Europe. It was desired not only because of its natural resources and favourable climate conditions, but also because of its highly important geo-strategic position, as part of the European trade route towards the Middle East - the famous "Silk way". Therefore, the 'transit' Balkan region was attractive for many conquerors. Many nations, religions and rulers have left (and are leaving) their mark - starting with Alexander the Great, then the Roman Empire, the Illyrian Kingdoms, the different Slavic kingdoms, the Ottoman Empire, Yugoslavia and today a number of different sovereign nations.



Figure 4

The Mediterranean Sea played a great role in this, by connecting the Balkans and, ultimately, whole of Europe with two neighbouring continents - Asia and Africa. Logically the coastal parts of the Balkan Peninsula were crowded with harbours and the maritime trade blossomed. For centuries, one of the most important harbours in the area was the town of Ulcinj, on the shores of the Adriatic Sea. This metaphorical border between Europe and the Orient has always been a colourful array of interchanging traditions and identities and as an intersection point of peoples, cultures and religions, Ulcinj has seen new identities emerge and "new" peoples try to establish their history and their worldview in the town.

In the middle of the 20th century, after the establishment of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a new economic opportunity for the town's development emerged - tourism. As the country extended along the whole eastern side of the Adriatic coast, the importance of Ulcinj's maritime trade and strategic position seemed to diminish, and the townspeople shifted their focus towards a new profitable business in the form of, at first, domestic and later on an international tourist centre. This change has had a deep and lasting effect not only on the town economy and overall well being, but on the urban image and identity of the town which bear the brunt of the transformation of the town structure.

The prosperity of the region in the aftermath of World War Two, up until the early 80s, brought with it an interest in exploring, evaluating and preserving the historical buildings and structures and protect them as cultural heritage. Unfortunately, the sustainability of this undertaking had started to face challenges and obstacles as the socio-economic and political situation of SFR Yugoslavia was shifting. As it was becoming clearer that the country was going to split, the tourism sector in Ulcinj was suffering not only because of lack of investment, but for lack of (deep-pocketed) international tourists. To accommodate the new clientele and remain afloat, the population started to build in a frenzy - lawless, planless and en-masse. Instead of preserving - one would argue in an attempt to survive the difficult, tumultuous times ahead - the townspeople started to strip Ulcinj of its (old) identity and urban image piece by piece.

5.2. Social - spatial patterns in Ulcinj

According to Jacobs (1961), in the context of the neighbourhood, "urban space should be conceived as an outdoor room, somewhere to relax and enjoy the urban experience. When local urban context is considered, the district or quarter is the identifying

Figure 4
The Old Bazaar today (source: Elez Podrimja).

symbol both for the evaluation of the city and for the new urban extension; it is also essential for sustainable development." (Oktay, 1998, p. 52). To create a memorable place it seems that we need creative design in context of the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood as such, represents an important unit in Balkan society, deriving from the Ottoman influences. Neighbourhoods were not just a physical relation among each other; they also worked as a catalyst for social and economic interactions (see fig. 5).

Five districts displaying different urban patterns and identities can be defined in Ulcinj – the Old Town, the New Town, Outskirts, the Salina (salt factory) and Valdanos (olive fields). While the historical city (the Old Town) as well as the New Town in some humble measurements still embrace the traditional urban life of the society where culture is reflected in urban space, all the other parts of the town are completely neglected in terms of quality of life in the urban space. The New Town is established for a population of around 11.000 people and is mainly composed of apartment blocks with flats having an area of approximately 80 m². While the ground floors of those apartments were imagined to be used as shops, in order to create a mixed-use program in the neighbourhoods, very few of them actually work and offer diversity in the area. Even though the majority of the built structures are still single family houses, they are slowly transforming from two - floor houses into three and four floors high buildings just to satisfy the need for tourist accommodation. On the other hand, the outskirts of the city area were developed to contain walled-up villas for wealthy foreign residents and tourists, which have high security measures.

An area of the New Town is composed of houses for differing social backgrounds: some civic buildings (such as the theatre and the library) and recreational areas, including a cinema that today has been totally demolished. The strong sense of community is always associated with improved well being, increased feeling of security, participation in community affairs and civic responsibility. If we state that the community is being created in the open, publicly owned space accessible to everyone, then we can strongly argue that community creation and public space in Ulcinj is one of the hot issues.

In the New Town of Ulcinj, the concept of the relationship neighbourhood – public space has been totally abandoned. The city today does almost nothing to offer an architectural program with mixed use and the majority of the buildings are with a residential purpose. In such context, we are referring to the lack of public spaces as places that regenerate the vibrancy and vitality of city life, meeting points in the city that create the sense of community and sense of a place. Identifying and

creating conditions that foster and strengthen the sense of community and in the same time trigger the local identity of one livable city is an important task and challenge for the town.

5.3. Socio - Economic Structure of the Town

After the fall of the communist regime, new challenges have emerged and a new phase in the economic development of the Balkan region has started. Cities have faced similar problems as a result of the inherited local tradition, post – communist restructuring, globalization forces, evolving networks, reconstruction and revitalization and inevitably, a multicultural and multiethnic urban fusion, that, fortunately, simply cannot be erased by civil wars. Although placed at the margins of newly established global networks, these cities have reacted to the process of regional cooperation and global competition, under the limited scope of transitional political integration (Stupar, 2004).

Consequently to the regional situation, Ulcinj is not an exception. The newly established economic structure of the city caused changes to the physical entity of spaces (see fig. 6). Therefore changes in economic structure had a great impact on the social structure and the change of physical spaces. From the critical analysis of the new developing part of the town from a socio - economic point of view, it seems that one of the main reasons for today's mass urbanization in Ulcinj is the breakup of Yugoslavia and the subsequent privatization. Privatization was one of the channels of converting collective to private ownership. Heavily influenced by the legacy of worker self - management and social property, the newly elected political structures, more or less, tried to keep old patterns despite new changes and thus put the pressure on the choice of privatization models. The misuse of social ownership specifics, weak public institutions and corruption were the cause of poor privatization in the city's confines. As a result, these processes were effective in altering the urban identity. After the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 90s and the subsequent privatization, the city was not prepared for the upcoming modernization. The new urban regulations were adapted to the new market conditions to gain competitiveness. Unfortunately, this



Figure 5



Figure 6

Figure 5
The Promenade with a park in the distance (source: Iva Shokoska).

Figure 6
Building site, with building on the edge of the street (source: Elez Podrimja).

did not develop into urban improvement, but rather into radical drawback in the urban environment. To make rapid production on a global scale, the modal housing construction started execution without consideration of local elements in the city so, that Ulcinj has fallen into the danger of losing its identity in the process of similarisation. Such is this kind of similarisation everywhere in the city.

The city has always been famous for its tourism, but in the last twenty years, as a result of the precarious situation in the neighboring countries and the ensuing crisis that chased away the deep-pocketed tourists, it predominantly turned to mass tourism. Turning to private building development investments in order to increase the hosting capacities of the town, reflects on the prevailing contemporary cityscape.

During Yugoslavia, the tourism and the tourist facilities were conceived as monuments of modernization, combining modern architecture, design and lifestyle, to serve as meeting points of national and transnational reconciliation and represent the cosmopolitan and unique system of socialist self-management. With the lack of economic development in the post-Yugoslavian era and therefore, the lacking social values, is visibly reflected in the planning doctrines of Ulcinj. These circumstances led to the decrease of the behavioural interactions between groups and individuals and a deep drop in the quality of the relations between the economics and social values in the city.

This means that the urban environment has been totally exhausted due to the over urbanization because of the economic crisis, and the formation of social norms and the social market has been totally abandoned. In 2015, more than over 4.968 buildings were built without any regulations, which means that almost 90% of the new structures are illegally constructed. These circumstances are not just deeply affecting the harmony of the city image, but they also have a huge impact on the socio-economical interrelations. The tendency of aiming for a compact, frequent, architectonically homogeneous cityscape, the determination and commitment towards a homogeneous city image are sorely lacking, leading to a poor environmental management and no sustainable infrastructure in Ulcinj.

"If you go now through the town with a car, you will notice an enormous amount of new buildings. Those are all more or less illegal. The legalization is being announced for this summer, so everyone is in a hurry to finish before summer and to have them legalized later. Ulcinj was selected, from the media, as the place with the most illegally erected buildings, even though that is not quite correct. If you pass the Montenegrin coast you will see that we have the same situation in all towns. After that, the state decided to intervene and they have sent an inspection to Ulcinj to restore order. So, if you had 10 illegal buildings before that, after the government decided to intervene, you had 150 illegal buildings. Just then did the illegal construction boom. The Montenegrin coast is small. It is very short. But you cannot go anywhere anymore to the coast to look at the undisturbed landscape. Still, the state advertises the wild beauty; but where is it? Firstly, where is the wilderness? Secondly, where is the beauty? The people that do these things in Ulcinj are forced to do so because they have no place to work because the very

same state closed up all the hotels, companies, the Solana!" (From an interview with a Bosnian novelist, columnist, and political adviser based in Ulcinj, Andrej Nikolaidis, 2017)

Built structures emerge without any regulation, or any aesthetic value attached to them. Unfortunately, in this process of mass construction almost no efforts are being made to highlight the historical identity of the city and it seems that the financial gain is the main driver of the urban "development". This situation leads to disturbances of the structure in the neighbourhoods as well. If we state that neighbourhoods are chosen according to people's needs and demands and they require some services and functional elements to be useful in order to satisfy its residents' needs, then the neighbourhoods' structure in Ulcinj are completely failing their residents.

5.4. Socio - Cultural Factors

The latest constructed part of the New Town happened around the second half of the XX century. This was the highlight of the modernization in the Yugoslav countries and their development. In this area, the civic as well as the buildings for collective housing were positioned. They represent a linear centre in which a market, shopping mall, cultural centre, civic buildings and a hospital exist. Moreover, there is a complex of educational objects as well. The bus station and the aligned commercial objects along this axis represent in a way an addition to the linear centre. These structures, on the outer part of the walled city of Ulcinj are witnessing the increasing effect of the globalization in the region.

"Where previously the houses had been constructed horizontally, later were designed vertically due to increasing population. Therefore the families have to live together and a different type of culture evolves due to the residential development. Lifestyle, neighborliness, identity, and the terms of belonging were provided for sharing, participation and consensus. Generally, the lifestyle of the people who live in apartments changed, and this changing process provided for changes in the urban identity" (From an interview with a local, Almir Brsljani, 2017).

The apartments have, also, led to weakening the concept of social relations in the city. Today, one of the most important factors of losing the identity of the city is that the elimination of cultural icons; as a consequence people lost the sense of belonging to the environment. However, with the rates of consumption increasing, the "fashions" today are changing rapidly. This accelerated the process of changing the urban identity. It's obvious from this part that socio-cultural factors in the new development of the city have been changed; globalization is the main factor in the changing of lifestyles of people.

The findings revealed that in the most recent developed residential areas of the New Town, which constitute more than a five times bigger area than the Old Town, not sufficient attention was paid to the residents and that no structures can be referred as "authentic" or "identity for the cityscape". This result is harmonious with the statement "cities which accommodate homogeneous societies and show a slow growth produce more legible and

perceptible urban environments in a long period of time" (Southworth, 1985, p. 52). Consequently, it can be argued that the Old Town is more likely to present an urban identity for the Ulcinjanins compared to the residential areas created in a short period of time (see fig. 7).



Figure 7

6. POTENTIALS

To find an answer to the current state of affairs is no easy task. The uncontrolled building boom and disrespect towards the public spaces is (mostly) a direct result of the economic situation and wrong policies, especially during the privatisation after the breakup of Yugoslavia. It is unrealistic to hope that one can completely dismantle the city and destroy the buildings that disrupt the urban fabric, but re-adaptation and return of the lost public room is a possible strategy that can turn things around. What we often forget is that we should adapt to nature, and not nature to us, and that leads to cases like Ulcinj, when the local identity gets lost when globalisation and consumerism, as well as mass production hit.

First, the local population has to be allowed to play a bigger role in the development of the town policies and strategies. A centralised government cannot be expected to deal with and intimately know of all the problems and difficulties that local residents face. One always knows one's town best; even when we take into consideration that each of us is biased to see either the best or the worst of our local community and place of birth/residence, locals still are the best judges and should decide for themselves in which direction they want to steer their town. Of course, there must be a substantial investment, financial or otherwise, into educating the population in order to form a collective mentality that can work as one, while discussing different points of view and making mutual democratic decisions, having in mind that the town belongs to everybody and that each contribution to the city image is a gain for every resident and provides for a stronger, more coherent urban identity.

Second, introducing the locals to their own rich building tradition, the development of their own town throughout history and the conditions under which that development took place strengthens the bonds people have to their town and enhances the respect towards the built heritage. Furthermore, it is important to note that the idea is not to "imitate" what has been done before - nobody would recommend using the same techniques as in medieval times - but to observe, learn and extract the essence of the mastery: local materials, using natural circumstances - using the topography and terrain to one's advantage, adapting to nature - protecting

from (harsh) climate conditions typical to the region, using previous urbanisation - not destroying, but building on the layers before, and a lot of other lessons crucial to protecting the built heritage and creation of worthy contemporary architecture.

Another important point is giving back the spaces to the public. Because of mass tourism as a main source of income for most of the local population, a great number of the publicly owned spaces, such as squares and parks have been privatised and over-urbanised so as to turn a profit. The fact that town has (almost) no public parks and very little open public spaces is a defeating factor in the alienation of the townspeople from the community spirit and the respect for the environment, built or unbuilt. Activating existing and creating new community spaces is a key-factor in the revitalisation of any town and can be a positive educational opportunity for the local population.

An interesting example of a movement of citizens to promote sustainability and lifestyle quality in cities is the "Slow City" organisation. In 1999, inspired by the successful Slow Food Movement, a group of traditional Italian towns banded together in the hopes of protecting and supporting their cultural traditions and heritage, as well as green and sustainable living, and created the global organisation "Cittaslow", which literally translates to "slow city" (The Wellbeing Team). Cittaslow supports tradition and cultural diversity within towns, achieved and maintained by the collective community that strives to protect and preserve its distinctive features and surrounding environment, preserve history and heritage, support the production and consumption of organic foods, promote products and practices with their roots in tradition and encourage widespread friendliness and hospitality. "Slow cities" abound with quality public spaces, theatres, shops, cafés, inns, historic buildings, and unspoiled landscapes.

7. CONCLUSION

The urban analysis of the city usually concentrates on the social, political and economic factors that shaped the spatial habitat. What tends to be forgotten is that urban structures are not just products of the governments and ruling bodies, of their appearance and the relationship between the built and unbuilt environment - houses, streets, squares, gardens etc., but their shape is meaningful in and of itself. The forms that shape the urban fabric all reveal the previous urban tenure and the social and cultural conventions of the groups that inhabited the city. Urban dwellers manipulate the environment according to their needs and alter the landscape by building new structures, re-using others, modifying and moulding them, so that the city is a product of this process and the context in which they were made. Understanding the influence under which change happens in urban dwellings leads to a more detailed analysis of the dynamic of the factors that resulted in the given state of the city.

Social, cultural and personal attitudes have an important effect on the urban change. The quality of the urban environment can be improved by way of considering every aspect which shapes the physical form of the cities and residents' views can contribute to the decision-making process. The views of the residents, on the other hand, can change in the course of time and it is clearly necessary to manage and direct them by way of building up the local identity and *urban image construction*.

Figure 7
Example of the over urbanisation of the town, with terraces right next to each other, or over each other and buildings very close (source: Elez Podrimja).

Built heritage can make an enormous contribution to improving the quality of life for people, understanding the past, assisting territorial cohesion, driving economic growth, opening up employment opportunities and supporting wider developments of cities and countries. Conserving the historic urban environment became an urgent and important priority in the last century around the world, because of the threats that appeared as a result of the rapid urban growth and development and the urban transformation in the cities. The most important factors that affect the changes in urban environment are the globalization, quick and uncontrolled development, demographic changes, and the economic pressures. In front of all these challenges lies the success of the conservation of historic centres which is determined by the success of their management. We need to understand that cities are living environments, and their change is a normal thing as we can't keep the city as a museum without any modifications. The importance and the midpoint between the success and failure of these mentioned changes lies in the management of change in the city.

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