

NON-MATERIAL HERITAGE POTENTIALS IN INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING – CASE STUDIES OF BUJE IN ISTRIA, CROATIA¹

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Introduction

The methodology of mapping and programming spatial potentials are in need of a new platform – a kind of programming agenda – in order to achieve maximal result which would facilitate developmental goals. Namely, both: official physical and/or master plans, and strategic economic studies, lack holistic approach. While the former are not fruitful in terms of economic growth, the latter are not greatly concerned with the specificities of space. The fore mentioned disadvantages could be overcome by interdisciplinary on-site cooperation, which would result in a “Programming agenda” a substitute for the lack of a strategic physical planning document. It presents a synthesis of development goals and planning principles centred primarily on those spatial and economic qualities which define a unique identity of a place, city or area². It is therefore a package of spatial and programmatic functions, measures and activities aimed at being data entries for integral physical planning. The realization of common development goals implies the application of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills in a joined effort to solve problems and respond to challenges which the traditional disciplines are largely unable to cope with individually. It is therefore necessary to encourage an on-site cooperation in order to identify the character of the space, take into consideration its potential and turn it into development advantages and possibilities.

What this method differs from standard procedures in physical planning is the selective approach to those supports – locally specific, unique and unrepeatable – which underpin the development. Methodology does not neglect general objectives (investments in facilities which aim to develop and raise municipal standards), but simply they are not the subject.

In the scope of expected results when applying the „programming agenda” any concrete spatial investigation should provide a clear and stimulating long-term vision of development which would serve for the selecting development projects and measures supported by citizens and local governments.

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² Ellin, Nan. “Practising Integral Urbanism in Metropolitan Phoenix”, *Canalscape*, 15 (4), 2010, p. 604.

Mapping and programming spatial potentials of Buje in Istria

This paper deals specifically with such implications and with interactions between physical planning and strategic economic development related to the potentials of non-material values of a particular region. Those values are fluid, yet universal – situated nowhere and occurring anywhere. They are not strictly linked to tangible heritage remains and that is the fact which complicates their proper preservation. Economic heritage as a non-material form of heritage, encompass a vast array of forms (homestead in a broad sense of the word, including activities such as feedstock production, traditional cuisine, handcraft and personal services, manufacture and industry), which may be deeply rooted in a local environment.

The planning process in Croatia is often reduced to a custom-made production of plans,³ particularly in small municipalities. Due to professional insufficiencies⁴ the planning decisions are arbitrary and palliative, and therefore pose a threat to space-code changes. The code is in jeopardy not only in historic cities but also in those cities which have recently managed to establish it. However, the code is not just a physical, spatial and perceptive phenomenon, but also a cultural category whose protection is entrusted to all who are involved in planning⁵.

The codification of those values is motivated as a group of *contextual regimes: issues depending on the immediate context and its preservation, economics and social regimes, traditions, etc*⁶.

Our planning team made out of architects, an economist and a town planner, has been working in situ in various small towns in Croatia during a four year period. Previously mentioned methodological approach aims to develop strategic goals by invoking new programs which should be implemented into urban plans, in order to set ideas in motion through the architectural design proposals. The project as such presents a synthesis of development goals and planning principles centred primarily on those spatial, economic and heritage qualities which define a unique identity of a place, city or area⁷.

The Municipality of Buje in Istria, a coastal region of Croatia, has recognized our vision of revitalization in the proposed project "Mapping Space Potential and

³ „... physical plans have not been paralleled by the expected economic results in the last twenty years of Croatian history. The cause lies partly in an insufficient coordination between physical planning and development programming and partly in monopolizing the decision-making process regarding physical planning by the political establishment invoking the will of the electorate to entrust them with the upcoming four-year mandate.” Horvat, Jesenko, Pavković Marina. “Physical planning and Programming Agenda”, *Prostor*, 21 (2), 2013, p. 301.

⁴ „... local authorities and their professional departments cannot articulate their own space strategy, and conduct the integral development politics according to it.” The authors name this phenomena – a lack of vision. Horvat, Jesenko, Pavković Marina. “Physical planning and Programming Agenda”, *Prostor*, 21 (2), 2013, p. 295.

⁵ Jivén, Gunila; J. Larkham, Peter. “Sense of Place, Authenticity and Character: A Commentary”, *Journal of Urban Design*, 8 (1), 2003, p. 76.

⁶ Explaining the key for systematization of role categories, Alex Lehnerer perceives the specifics of phenomena which we recognize as intangible value. Lehnerer, Alex. *Grand Urban Rules*, Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2009, p. 12.

⁷ Kranjčević, Jasenka. “Territorial approach as a starting point for rural development planning”, *Central European Agriculture Journal*, 7 (3), 2006, p. 549.

Programming Economic and Tourist Offerings”, and has given our team the opportunity to make inquiries on benchmarks (existing, but never recognized potentials) which could induce and improve sustainable development. Not only does the town of Buje, as the capital of the municipality, require special attention but the micro region as a whole possesses an inspiring potential to develop further projects, mostly in inactive areas such as historical ruins, queries, muddy and shallow bays, as well as abandoned paths. The project provides the local community with ways in which to develop their programs of primary interest⁸. Many of these programs in the realm of both public, as well as private investments, would be ideal candidates for European funds, and the municipality would be willing to help finance the prospective projects.

The methodology has been tested on several settlements and sites in the area of the Municipality of Buje (see Fig. 2). The analyses have been publicly presented as the first stage in the preparation of the platform for the codification of development, i.e. physical planning. The procedure was going on in two stages. The first stage was concerned with the analysis of the situation, as well as some possibilities and limitations. All interested public bodies (the local government, citizens, prospective investors) have been involved as consultants, in order to be informed and have their needs and wishes considered. Priorities were set and possible solutions proposed in the second stage. Further implementation of the accepted physical planning solutions and recommendations is within the competence of the local government, which is, by selecting measures and resources, working out a plan with the aim of transforming the proposed solutions into actual physical plans, projects and interventions through a legislative process.

This talk will focus on three of the multitude of programs proposed in the Project. The cases have been chosen on the account of the fact that in all three situations the preservation of cultural heritage does not focus on the subject of material culture, but rather on the existence of non-material traditional activities or historic traces:

The “Digitron” factory brand

The first case in question refers to the historical significance of „Digitron”, the factory in the industrial zone close to the town of Buje⁹, that produced the first (!) commercial calculator in Europe, which is an example of the image of industrial

⁸ Kordej De Villa, Željka; Sumpor, Marijana; Stubbs, Paul. *Participating management for sustainable development*, Zagreb: Ekonomski institut, 2009, p. 52.

⁹ “In 1971, soon after the company was established, it threw on the open market the first European electronic pocket calculator, immediately after the Americans and the Japanese. Ime te tvrtke, Digitron, u bivšoj je Jugoslaviji postalo eponim za “džepna računala”, baš kao što je to bio slučaj s Kalodontom kod pasta za zube. Name of the company, in former Yugoslavia became the eponym for “Pocket PCs”. In that time the city had only partially resolved status, being a part of former Free Zone of Trieste, which in 1954 fell under Zone B and thus belonged to Yugoslavia. However, the issue of the final borders of Italy and Yugoslavia will be resolved until 1975 Osimo Treaty. Visionary opted for electronics, the growing sector in the Yugoslav market practically had no competition”. <http://www.jutarnji.hr/40-rodendan-digitrona-u-bujama-je-izraden-prvi-europski-dzepni-kalkulator-te-1971-kostao-je-koliko-i-fico/954368/> Stanovništvo se rasipalo, bježeći iz Buja i okolice glavom bez obzira u borbi za голу egzistenciju. Vizionarski su se opredijelili za elektroniku, rastući sektor u kojemu na jugoslavenskom tržištu praktički i nije bilo konkuren.

heritage of relatively new origin. The company has not only become a synonym of the valuable brand, but still sends out a powerful message of innovation and success, even years after the factory was shut down.

This case shows the potential of intangible heritage in local surroundings and certain inhabitants' identification with their recent history, while prospectiveness were relied on the initial period of IT technology development, which made their municipality widely noticeable by the prosperity that lasted for some decades and invoked the respect of the rivals, as well as self-appreciation. The community is now willing to mark that period and to pose a „hommage to Digitron”. The proceeding actions are focused on finding the proper form of designation.

The intelligent way would be to promote all space potentials, especially the old protected city-core and its pedestrian street network. Precisely that was the study proposal for the next city investment. In this sense the main street ascending from the foothill suburb to the historic topos, carries the image of the site. Its initial widening is recognized in our vision as the new square – the starting point to the tourist sight-seeing trace and the location for the mentioned installation. The project of urban arrangement of the pedestrian street is currently in the process of getting the building permit.

The other question and a most delicate one, is the character of the memorabilia. Contrary to the conventional solutions, which would not be adequate, we believe that the virtual dimension of such an artifact should be highlighted – projecting the past of the IT brand „Digitron”. It should be structured in multi-medial art language form, but tangible in sense of its physical presence. An excellent reference to this are the well known installations in Zadar¹⁰ which communicate by sound and/or by light (see Fig. 1).

The Digitron brand and its heritage potentials in terms of any space intervention inside the local municipality area, need to be supported in three possible ways:

- by establishing an adequate start-up employment model for local people, based on IT heritage of the old factory (the cooperation with economist authorities is inevitable in space programming);



Fig. 1. Sea Organon and Sun Salute in Zadar

Source: http://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pozdrav_Suncu; <http://www.apartmanimanda.com/pics/zadar6.jpg> (accessed 27.03.2015).

¹⁰ The Installations: *Sea Organon*, constructed in 2005 and *Sun Salute*, raised in 2008 are authorized by the architect Nikola Bašić, becoming emblematic landmark icons of Zadar.

- by reconstructing and modernizing the industrial architecture for a forementioned purpose, and by putting its surrounding in urban function. The area in front of the east-facing facade should by all means become a new public city park-square that way the building of this powerful brand would be unveiled to its business potential and to the city itself;
- by labelling the brand of Digitron, on any convenient place. The importance of intangible heritage of Digitron lies not only in the fact that it marks the location of its origin, but also that it metaphorically designates the wider influential territory.

The possibility of Digitron's revitalization depends on the creativity and capability of the management and employees: with a powerful brand as their asset, they might reinforce their market presence.

The Revitalization of the “Parenzana” Railroad Trace

The second case deals with to the preservation and redefinition of the old „Parenzana”: the railway¹¹ trace out of use since 1935, which still remains the corridor for green traffic facilities. The trace has already been recognized as a valuable asset by bikers, properly furnished and incorporated within lucrative touristic itineraries, but it reveals potential for a much wider use.

The path is interrupted at several points, where the new road network has crossed over it. Certain interventions on the cross-sections would easily create capacities for the implementation of a public transport system which would connect the hinterland with the coastal zone, and thus allow commuting between regions by sophisticated means of transport. Possible programmatic interventions by the side of the road, such as (but not limited to) restaurants, accommodation and resorts would be a collateral benefit to the project. That would also be a considerable improvement for seasonal touristic accessibility, since the old railroad is a trans-border connection with Slovenia and the local airport is situated nearby the trace. Another benefit of such established communicating would come from better touristic use of the inactive littoral zone (wellness resorts and/or camping sites) and adequate public use of it (deficit of beaches for the inhabitants of interior).

In the nowadays sustainable paradigm, old railroads are commonly recognized as good communicators with the past. In some places the preserved infrastructure enables complete reconstruction of the railway network, regardless of how convenient and fast it is, but most frequently that approach is not possible because the path has been interrupted. The idea to put to use the broken sections which make up bike-route would be a pragmatic solution, and this is the most common way local decision-makers in Croatia think. However, that is not the proper way to emphasize the intangible heritage of local commuting tradition, largely based on the vanished public transport system. Bikers make up limited and profiled cluster of the population and only a small part of space consumers. Such a solution would therefore little by little cause conversion of public railroads into recreation paths and produce a complete distortion of the communication heritage.

¹¹ Parenzana is the narrow-gauge railway that connected the town of Poreč in Istria with railroad network in Slovenia and Italy (Trieste). The part of it passing Croatia is 64 km long. It was abolished due to unprofitability.

Planned investments often possess potentials to invoke other projects with developing results which were not in the primary focus. This collateral benefit is practically invisible in strategic plans and therefore unpredictable. Moreover, its full value is never absorbed within the cost-benefit estimate¹². Our opinion is that preserved corridors are an irretrievable capital for a better conjunction of the vital nodes in inhabited area. The autonomy of such a developed system provides safety, fluidity and comfort, despite the fact that it cannot provide a fast drive. In terms of design, motor vehicles must account for the compatibility with hikers or bikers, on a rather narrow trace and in modest capacity. The perception of the past would in this way be preserved, and the purpose of the communication channel restored, despite the altered specific function brought by requirements of modernity.

The Rural Environment of Momjan and its Rota Castle

The third case-study focuses on the historic place of Momjan¹³. In terms of widening the base for development, several intangible heritage values of the local area might be highlighted and put to use as highly compatible in the programming approach. The schedule of programs come from the trans-national and trans-lingual tradition of the region, as well as on rich tradition of Istrian gastronomy and oenology. Those programs continue a rather sporadic but rooted manifestations (*Vizura Aperta* is one of them). Hence the touristic profile of Momjan should be developed by encouraging individual family accommodation, but at the same time strongly supporting educative and cultural programs¹⁴ - creating logistic base for it by means of public and individual cooperation. The spatial availance for it is highly potential: two abandoned ruins are adequate for that purpose in capacity, property and their position in the very centre of the place.

Most of all, this programmatic approach has the importance of material appearance and in the lies the prospective status of the abandoned Castel Rota. This valuable registered historical monument is the icon of Momjan and its visual dominance – the ruins – now stand on the ridge nearby the settlement. There was once a stone bridge over the chasm leading into the castle but it collapsed. Now the Rota Castel stands as a protected, but inaccessible monument of the past, threatening to cave in. A reinterpretation of the vanished stone bridge, which once connected Castel with the settlement is considered to be a starting point for the programmatic enrichment in terms of cultural and touristic promotion of the place, and in terms of communication of heritage (see Fig. 2).

¹² „... the amount of the ‘extra-value’ is barely appreciable indeed, but predictable in qualitative, if not in quantitative scopes.” Horvat, Jesenko, Pavković Marina, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

¹³ Momjan is a rural settlement (283 inhabitants in 2011, 1075 inhabitants in 1021) 5 km away from Buje. Attraction base consists of compactly formed city core with streets directing views on typical hill landscape of Istria. There is a significant amount of valuable traditional architecture, but unfortunately in very bad condition. The place is known for its cuisine and *muškat* – unique product of small series but high quality vine.

¹⁴ The authors proposed: language courses (Italian, Slovenian, Croatian), culinary and oenology courses, art and craft workshops (painting, architecture, theatre, dance and music, art craft and musical instruments manufacturing) seminars, educative camps, competitions and festivals (poetry, journalism) and so on.

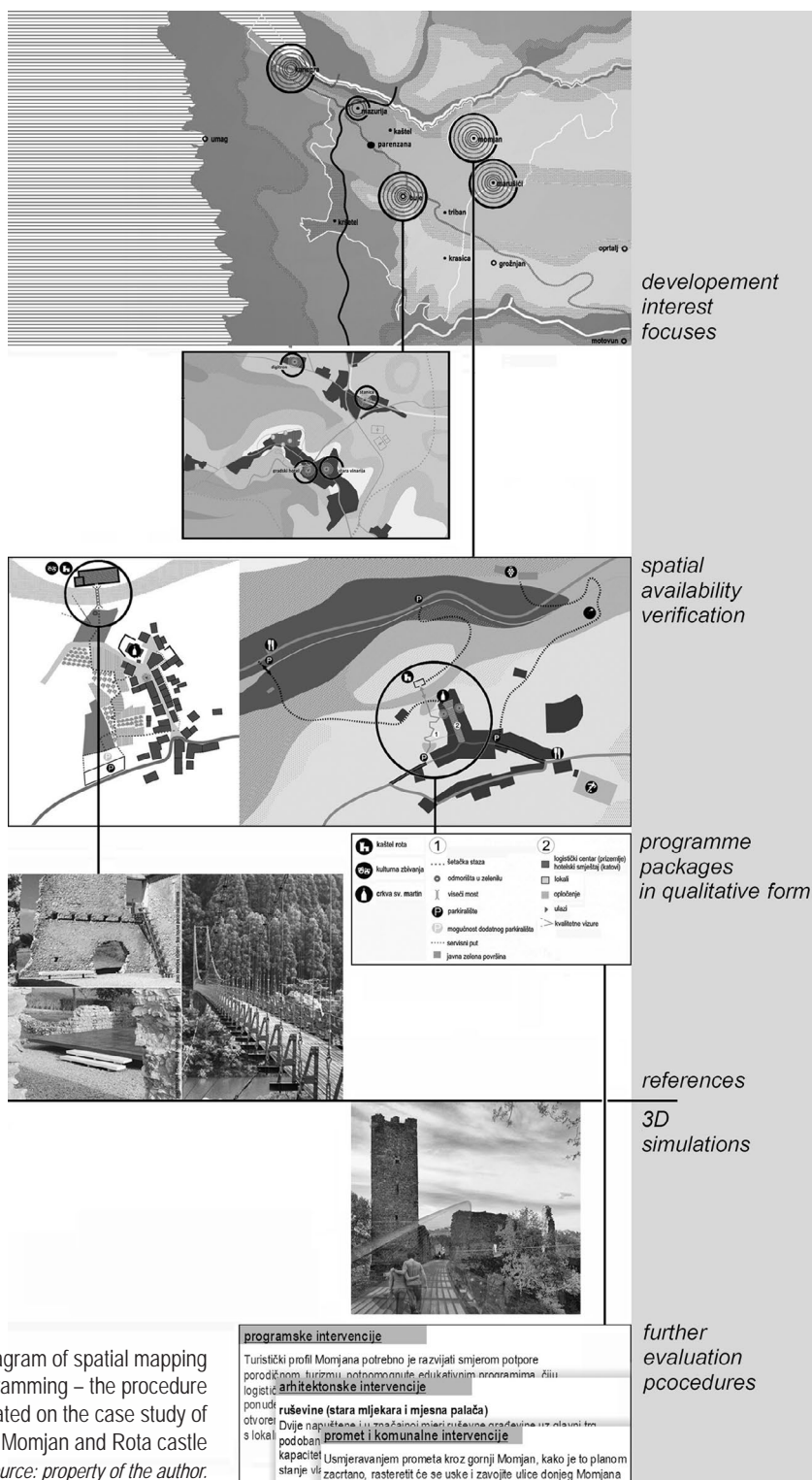


Fig. 2. Diagram of spatial mapping and programming – the procedure illustrated on the case study of Momjan and Rota castle
Source: property of the author.

The inner courtyard of the Castel is an acceptable scope for an open-air stage for various performing purposes. This way the monument would open up as a multipurpose arena, rather than an endpoint for hikers.

The culture of hiking is strongly rooted into the everyday inhabitants' habits. This fact alone supports the importance of investments proposed by the programmers. One of the aims is to activate and furnish the hiking path beneath the settlement edge, as a parallel *peripatetic* approach to the Castel which enriches the agrarian value of cultivated landscapes of Istria.

All these case-studies illustrate the strategy (and methodology) in which the common approach results with new values, and new object-forms constructed with "fluid material" of intangible heritage.

Conclusion

The recognition of one's own development potential is a key factor behind the success of any environment. Spatial potential of an area in terms of its geographical location, or its cultural and historic heritage may provide the same similar development basis. Even if heritage perishes, as is often the case in transition processes, or loses its material form, it still remains in the memory of space as a form of economic heritage – the brand of a place. This becomes particularly important in the context of an increasing space-consumption trend which, due to a tendency to serve only profits' interests, as well as a lack of proper space strategy, achieves a short term economic growth, but brings about long-term social deficit if the initial investment effect is not followed by strategic development results. A badly planned intervention in space remains an unfortunate intrusion into the social community, thus hindering long-term development.

Yet the achieved level of development can, in some areas, show considerable differences. This is the result of a different attitude to space use; a particular program which makes the development resources fully functional. Successful environments manage to recognize and activate those heritage resources which contribute to the competitiveness and productivity of the local economy. Others tend to copy development strategies and at the same time fulfil their economic needs by stereotype measures. Thus the result is precisely the opposite since the documents which only formally provide universal measures across the board aggravate the condition further by pushing the commissioner into an activity which might possibly result in an unwise investment.

Intangible heritage values function as ordinances of lifestyle, impregnated into the material form of an environment, and have to be codified within the set of rules for their proper maintenance¹⁵. In cases where a heritage form is not linked to the material remains, but rises up from cultural and behavioural background, there is no need to replicate, no need to reconstruct, no need for restore. It allows, against all generally accepted models of active protection of heritage, the appearance of completely new architecture forms fulfilled with the heritage *spleen*.

¹⁵ As Alex Lehnerer says: „Their implementation [of the rule] enables the precise formulation of degrees of freedom for specified area and for the protagonist of the planning process.” Lehnerer, Alex. *op. cit.*, p. 58.