

City Building and Urban Failure: Why Urban Development in Serbia Does Not Achieve Planned Results

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1 ABSTRACT¹

Societies in which cities are diminishing are no longer developing and getting wealthier. They decay (Jacobs 2007, 248). Jacobs believes that the cities, not the state, are the engines of economic development. The traditional approach (top-down) is characterized by centralized decision-making and interventionism, management from the center, the sectoral approach to development, the development of large industrial projects as stimulation mechanisms of other economic aspects and financial support, incentives as instruments of economic activity. Due to the fact that this has been proved as negative and unproductive for many reasons, the bottom-up approach is today more favoured. It involves local economic development, which includes the promotion of the development of all community sections, decentralization of vertical cooperation with different establishment levels and horizontal cooperation with economy, territorial approach to development, maximizing the development potential of each region and adjusting the local system to changes in the economic environment, and the creation of conditions for economic activity, ie. improving the local environment. Generally, it should correspond with the environmentally responsible economic, socially-fair and spatially balanced regional development / growth.

Having in mind that Serbia is still a highly centralized state, with only initial forms of decentralization in development management, it is necessary to establish modalities for its inclusion into current trends. Starting from the fact that the general development regulations in the EU reserves the supranational and national levels, and that most of the development documents are adapted at the regional, metropolitan and local level, such an approach should be necessarily applied in Serbia too. Those adjustments would be accompanied by changes in the policy of regional development in the EU, where is, among other things, insisted on an integral approach to policy development, integral territorial management and establishing a sustainable business.

The research focus has been placed on determining the possibilities of applying the concept of "smart cities", "smart regions" or "smart clusters" as a planning tool, which proved to be suitable for the new developmental ideas and initiatives. The starting point is that all areas should better use their own territorial capital/potential, especially activating all stakeholders, as well as available natural, technical and human resources, etc. However, simple downloading of the model is not possible, because of the general and specific conditions that characterize the territory. In order to recognize the code for better functioning and offer guidance for the future, it is necessary to consider the specifics of planning policies and urban development in the period prior to and after 2000.

2 PRECONDITION OF SERBIAN MODERN PLANNING

The Eastern Mediterranean and South-East Europe are burdened by the historical deficit of urban development. Their cities have entered the era of the industrial revolution as conglomerates of immediate rural origin and character, devoid of professional, scientific and technological resources needed for investment in new economic, cultural and social values. In the long era of Muslim domination and Islamization on the sidelines of the great pre-modern civilizations, the periphery of the peripheries, the Balkans have remained isolated from the influence of the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment

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and rationalism. Impacts on the European periphery, nationalism and colonial imperialism of the nineteenth century were also hinder the emancipation of urban culture.

The beginnings of democratization, when there were any, also relied on the prevailing political will of the archaic agrarian society and dominant layers of power. This mentality has contributed to the survival of the patriarchal, paternalistic and authoritarian political model that generated the autarchic economy. Islam and Eastern Orthodoxy rejected individualism, capitalism, and work ethic. The first national writers of Balkan literary realism and naturalism were exposing the local urban civilization in gloomy colors of deplorable and neglected communities, emphasizing the darkest features of the human soul, and the historical spell of ignorance and poverty. At the periphery of the Habsburg Empire Balkan long endured relics of feudalism and clericalism. European peripheral countries in the early twentieth century still had around one half or more of their population dependent on agriculture and with incomes per capita of less than 50 per cent of those of the advanced nations of Western Europe. As being predominantly rural, their demographic potentials have remained weak and badly structured. Post feudal, rural cultures and mentalities have undermined the power of the already thin layers of urban civilization. Cities were identified with the enemies of the nation and the church.

In comparison to already poor Southern Europe, comparing to the West, with 45–50 per cent of rural population, in the Balkans 70–81 per cent were living in the villages at the beginnings of the twentieth century, with very low productivity levels and high illiteracy rate.

A very specific problem related to the urban structure and the place of the cities stemmed from the circumstances in which they were often a national, religious and cultural minorities habitat, or even a refuge. Minority nationality problems were one of the most acute causes of tension in South-east Europe, confronting the cities and their potentially tolerant, pluralistic environment, with the huge rural hinterland and its traditional notions and influences.

The low urbanization level was also connected to a poor industrial development. Mostly basic trade orientated, the Western Balkans remained, through a century, weak and vulnerable economy, closely related to the state and privileged groups, instead to a business-orientated urban society. Low living standards encouraged the survival of traditional strata of economic and social power and the nomenclature. Domestic economic structure dictated the state of economic culture, as the primary commodities, and, in the second half of the twentieth century, low rated industrial products tended to dominate the export trade. Generally, all external parameters of urban development remained extremely unfavorable, as public and commodity transport, communications, housing supply, health care, and educational and cultural service.

Citizenship has never been able to gain a historical reputation and political prestige. Traditional rural society and a violent elite consisted the basic social mass, further filled with the soldiers, clergy and highly obedient bureaucrats, lacking the substantial middling bourgeoisie as the driving force in mercantile and industrial pursuits. The key roles in trade, industry and finance were historically due to the foreigners, to Germans, Jews, etc., and the social mobility was limited as much as its foundations that could be provided in successful urban development. The interwar, "first" Yugoslavia was the state with the smallest percentage of Jews in Europe, and it was one of the symptoms of the modest urban development, rather than some general bad feeling.

3 AFTERWAR SERBIAN MODERN(IST) 'PLANNING TIMES'

From today's perspective, the idea of long-term city planning in Serbia appeared after the WWII, as a part of the general ideological orientation. Namely, the Urban Institute of Serbia was founded in 1945, followed by the first concept of renewal of war-devastated country. Further development path is characterized by a number of modifications as a reflection of general societal changes, impacts from other environments or adjacent disciplines. By the end of the 1960s, the paradigm was established, which remained almost unchanged to this day. With regard to long-term, city planning represented the only institutionalized mode of action. Monitoring of its development is actually monitoring the development of one model. In other words, the process of establishment and implementation of the general planning can be presented as development of single paradigm. Therefore, general planning in Serbia has undergone the whole process of a paradigm change but with very specific dynamic, where some phases last an unusually long, while others very short (Brkovic Bajic, 2002).

Planning in Socialist Yugoslavia was the dominant type of regulation and control of modern society, economy and urban space. It is related to the fundamental processes of domination and social culture, as well as with the growth of modernity. According to Escobar (2001), the concept of planning reflects the belief that social change can be planned, managed and produced at will. Finally, in all its variants, rationalist model of planning is practiced as an 'eminently modernist project' (Vujosevic, 2004).

This model can be recognized in all cities in Serbia. Spatial planning was subordinated to economic, as economic growth is identified with the development. City development was considered through opportunities and the power of a country that has had a leading role in decision-making. Thus, all decisions were taken in the political centre. One of the examples was New Belgrade, built after the WWII on the empty land between two historical cores of Belgrade and Zemun. The initiative for the construction of Belgrade on the left bank of the river Sava came from the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and its head Tito. The whole period of conceiving and realization was under the strong influence of political ideology, namely that the city of New Belgrade serves as the capital of a modern and progressive Yugoslavia and its multicultural society. The main actors were professionals working on a plans, politicians and government bodies at various levels. From the very beginning, all the results of the experts have been subject to permanent supervision of the state leadership that gave opinions and suggestions for further work and development. After all, all plans were eventually at the hands of Tito for proofing.

4 'THE CRISIS OF NON-CONCEPT': POST-MODERN TURN AND POST-SOCIALIST TRANSITION

In Yugoslavia, socialism was more open and liberal than in other Central and Eastern European countries. Economic organizations had the opportunity for more liberal market performance, cultural freedoms were recognizable, the citizens were free to leave the country. After Tito's death in 1980, the level of political differentiation increased. Almost a decade later, the fall of the Berlin Wall symbolized the end of the socialist system. At this time, Serbia's position was much better, because in 1990 (as the initial year of transitional processes) most of the republics of the former Yugoslavia was ahead of the socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe by the level of economic development. However, the price of transition, interrupted by disintegration of the state and war, increased several times, while the time of completion shifted for nearly two decades. As a result, these countries found themselves at the bottom of the list for accession into the European Union.

The way in which Yugoslavia disintegrated determined the transformational path of Serbia during most of the 1990s. As there were certain specifics that were associated with Yugoslavia, the transition process which Serbia entered (as part of the former Yugoslavia) had some different characteristics from Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, etc. Taking into account the collapse of Yugoslavia, civil war, UN sanctions, hyperinflation and economic collapse, these processes were difficult for Serbian society. The transition has not appeared in a peaceful way, because the wars strongly influenced newly formed states. These circumstances have created a situation of external as well as internal isolation, under the rule of Milosevic's authoritarian regime. Most distinctive was the case of Serbia under the full UN sanctions since 1992 to 1995. In this situation, the question of 'collective identity' of citizens became confusing, given that Milosevic's structures promoted and had a monopoly on all media, with aim to achieve the new 'national identity'.

In the field of urban planning and design, these processes were most reflected in a changed interpretation of the relationship between interests and values. Interests were based on the needs, which are "individual and collective organic substrate from which they spring" (Vujosevic, 2004). According to Vujosevic, "They may come from kind of value orientation (such as normative criteria, or general ideas about desirable etc.), which is not necessarily about material interests, but also others". In urban planning, the last decade of the century was marked with the trend of 'deplannification', which is legitimized on the basis of decisions made in the political centre, but is achieved primarily through the decentralized decisions of many actors. In terms of the emergence of 'wild capitalism', unregulated privatization and uncontrolled private accumulation, the importance of the public good in planning and social, environmental and spatial implication of these processes has been pushed into the background" (Vujosevic, 2004).

Social enterprises changed their status into the private, and an additional incentive for success is guaranteed by already built political and business connections. In such constellation, the state becomes the user, not the regulator, while more authority is transferred to the municipalities. Urban planning lost its centralized

character causing a hyper production of detailed plans by different offices, without the influence of the Town Planning Institute. New architectural and planning paradigms were embraced by the professionals inclined to post-modern flows, while modernist models lost their importance in a changed socio-economic context (Vujošević, 2004). Consequently, this situation created a fertile ground for different malversations, while urban planning represented an uncoordinated set of fragmented interventions, 'justified' by the lack of funds, regulations, tools for implementation and, above all, well-defined, comprehensive development concepts.

After the 5th October 2000, the great pro-democratic energy went on stronger economic action, partly (and associated with it) in the mass consumerism. In regard of values, this situation "threatens the level of (social) solidarity and blurs the contours of common goals and the constituted community around them in Serbia" (Cvejic, 2010). By strengthening the decentralization, local governments were given greater powers and possibilities for influence in the local economic development. Cvejic also claims that the current developmental crossroad is in the cultural sphere. It can be said as well that the new cultural patterns are most importantly of value. However, the action potential of civil society is reduced by consumerism and its primary orientation on economic goals and activity.

5 REVIEW OF THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING SITUATION IN SERBIA

Report on the development of Serbia in 2009 states that the main characteristic of regional development of Serbia is a distinct territorial disparity. This kind of imbalance is manifested through several levels: undeveloped territory, developed centre and insufficiently developed periphery. The same source indicates that uneven development and regional differences are caused by numerous economic, demographic and social factors with the special emphasis on multi-decadal marginalization of the process of regional development strategic management. The consequence is the regional disproportion which is manifested in a high level of unemployment, reducing the scope of a total economic activity and a constant decline in population especially in undeveloped area (Republički zavod za razvoj, 2009). According to the researches of the Republic institute, the regional polarization of Serbia is multi-layered and is evinced in interregional differences manifested in demographic movements in Serbia, regional educational structure of the population, interregional economic differences, infrastructural gap and poverty. Regional disproportions of the level of development in Serbia are the biggest in Europe and in time they grow even bigger.

The most illustrative review of this situation is the trend of evolution of demographic situation, a sort of logic response to the social-economic situation in the country. The migration² of population towards economically active centres is noted, all in order to ensure their own existence. This trend would lead to the forming of only one demographically vital territory, the one that would connect present regions of Belgrade and Novi Sad. Centralization is manifested in all levels, the state, the province as well as the level of municipality.³ Considering negative trend of regional development of Serbia but also strategic orientation to join the European Union, regionalization and more even development are set as a primary goal for solving this situation. Its purpose lies in setting the equalities, not literally but in the form of various opportunities and chances. Edvard Jakopin (2009) determines five reasons for which the regionalization is necessary: (1) Regionalization as the basic instrument of state in terms of economic, social and demographic development, (2) Development of each part of the state with geo-strategic character, (3) Economic and social homogeneity, (4) Dialog and tolerance and (5) Political relaxation. However, the current orientation to regionalization and equal development entails three crucial problems: deficiency of laws regulating restitution, denationalization, laws of public or municipality property, and deficiency of systematic decentralization as an expression of political will and the political appropriation of the system of regionalization (Stojkov, 2009).

In the period of time from 2003, after ratifying the Law of planning and construction, series of activities have been initiated and series of legal acts have been adapted which have as their goal to contribute to more equal regional development of Serbia. Among them stands out the Spatial development strategy, which is based on

² The facts of the migration without return from urban municipality centers to three large cities in Serbia: Belgrade, Novi Sad and Niš (Kovačević 2009)

³ If you consider only the examples of the positive example such as the autonomous region of Vojvodina or the city of Belgrade, you will notice the enormous differences in development of the municipalities in Vojvodina between south and north Backa and, for example, municipalities on the east and southeast of Vojvodina, as well as in the city of Belgrade between Belgrade and Barajevo, Sopot etc. Therefore, the relationship between center and periphery appears dramatically on all levels (Stojkov, 2009).

the fact that the cities (urban system and urban net) are in every way a pillar and regional catalyst of the economic development.⁴ Zekovic (2009) states that the cause of recession in our cities is rapid decline in industry which led to the most powerful regional deindustrialization in Europe.

After analysing the results of the 2012 Census and forming the Report on establishing the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia and state of spatial development (RAPP, 2012) the following indicators were observed: (1) balanced regional development and social cohesion level, (2) regional competitiveness and accessibility, (3) indicators of sustainable use of natural resources and state of the environment, (4) protection and sustainability of use of natural and cultural heritage and district and (5) indicators of spatial and functional integrity in the surrounding. For the purpose of this paper results which can be observed from the Smart City concept were singled out.

Key performance indicators are represented Serbia in the Report which was published in March 2012 and they are presented below. The population density (Fig. 1a) indicator in the capital city area is largely disproportionate to the rest of districts in the country. It is observed that in four border districts the population density is below 50 inhabitants per km², six districts (all in the zone of influence of Pan-European corridors) have over 100 per km², while only the Belgrade District has over 200. The average population density is around 85 inhabitants per km², but if observed from the perspective of districts they range from 40 to 500. As for migration rate level, migratory movement in Serbia is largely directed towards the capital city and to a large extent lower to South Backa, Nisavska and Raska districts, while in the rest of districts the negative migration level is observed, which indicates emigration, or continuation of emigration from those regions. By comparative analysis of the three basic age categories of population it is recorded that the concentration of inhabitants older than 65 is the highest in Eastern Serbia, where at the same time the lowest concentration of young and middle aged population is recorded, which is the bearer of economic development in the observed moment in comparison to the rest of districts in Serbia.

The share of highly educated population (Fig 1b), which is the direct factor of economic and social progress of certain territory is unfavourable, both on the level of certain district and when observed on the national level. The highest share of highly educated population is measured in the Belgrade District (13.76 %), the lowest in Branicevski District (below 5 %). Additionally, except for the Belgrade, South Banat and Nisavska districts, the percentage of highly-educated inhabitants among the population older than 15 is always lower than 5 % which polarizes the development and inequality in terms of living conditions in Serbia. On the national level, the share of the highly educated employed population in the total number of those who are employed accounts to only 14.6 %. In the Belgrade District the share of the highly educated employed population is the highest (26.5 %). This estimate is expected, if considered that the highest number of highly educated inhabitants can be found in the Serbian capital and the labour market and economy are most vibrant. In other three districts, the share of highly educated in the total share of the employed population is similar and it ranges from 10.9 % in the Vojvodina Region, 10.8 % in the Sumadija and Western Serbia regions, while the lowest is recorded in Southern and Eastern Serbia and it accounts for 10.6 %. In all 25 districts for which there are data, the share of dependents and those with personal income, in comparison to active persons with interest is higher, and this difference is the highest in the Toplicka District (28 %) and the lowest in Kolubarska District (7 %). In other words, the highest share of dependents and those with personal income is in Toplicka District (58.97 %) and in Kolubarska District in the total population (48.94 %). On the other side, the share of active persons with interest in the total population in the total population is the highest in Kolubarska (42.16 %) and the lowest in Pcinjaska District (31.06 %). Finally, such low number of active persons who are engaged in comparison to dependants and those with personal income generates and it is to generate a series of socio-economic problems, which require the creation of new and/or implementation of existing measure for employment of working-age population, and creation of circumstances for positive development trends and higher level of social inclusion of population in all districts, i.e. regions of the Republic of Serbia.

Average travel time from the centre of district to one of the three centres with over 100.000 inhabitants ranges between 60 to 155 minutes. The inhabitants of the Belgrade, Pomoravska, Sumadijska and South Backa districts take the least time to travel to a regional centre, which can be explained by geographical

⁴ Over 90 %, and somewhere even over 95 % of the total economic development happens in cities.

location and position along the Corridor X, while the least accessible are border districts, which can be explained by both distance and level of development of traffic infrastructure.

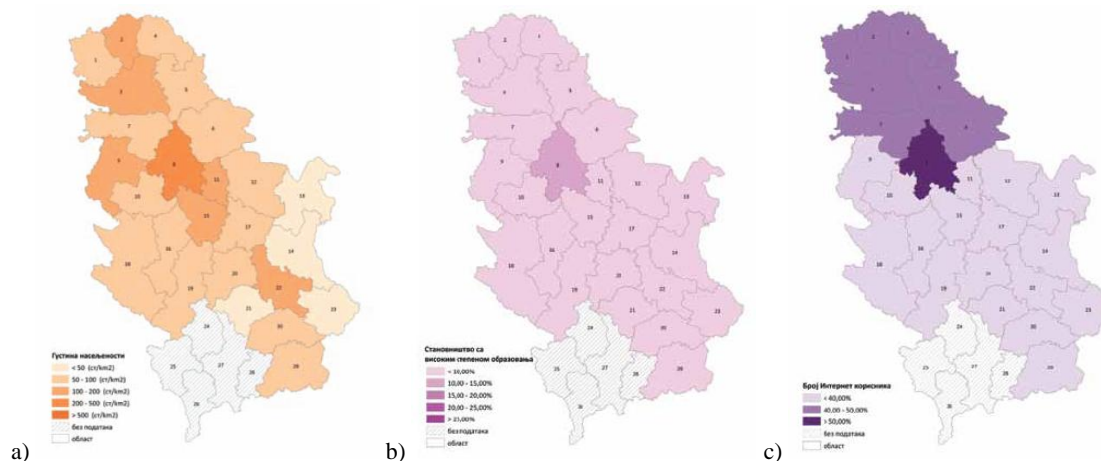


Fig. 1: a) Population density; b) Highly educated population and c) Internet users in Serbia. (RAPP, 2012)

As for the adapted planning documents in the year or 2011, there were four regional spatial plans and 14 plans on the level of local self-government. In 2009 and 2010 there were 10 plans adapted. The work on other regional spatial plans and spatial plans of local self-governments is in different phase of development (5 regional and 82 local) or harmonization (44 local) with the current legislature. By analysing the data from the municipal yearbook it is evident that tertiary sector of economy prevails, while based on the 2002 Census the results are more heterogeneous and it portrays the predominance of tertiary sector in all areas of big cities such as Belgrade, Novi Sad and Nis, while the primary sector is most present in the Macvanska, Kolubarska and Branicevska districts. The highest number of immovable cultural property is located in the Sremska and Beogradska districts, the high number of protected goods is also in South Banat and South Backa districts and also in Nisavska district. In other districts there is a lower number of protected goods, especially in South Serbia. The participation to international cooperation projects is most evident in the North parts of Serbia, especially in Backa and Banat. Lower number of projects in the central parts of the country is caused by high number of cross-border cooperation projects, which are concentrated in the border areas of the country. Also, in the last report of Republic geodetic authority it can be seen of the total number of cadastral municipalities (4527) 45 % drafted digital cadastral plans and placed in official use, 13 % of the work in progress. Other cadastral plans are in analogue format (RGZ, 2013).

The stated indicators and general long-year experience with implementation of planning documents in Serbia, as well as the actual situation on the global level, demonstrate the need for new approach which is implemented in development strategies of populated areas.

6 SMART CITY PLANNING TOOL

The current period is characterized by a situation in which a large number of cities, regardless of their size, formulate their development strategies on the basis of knowledge city and creative city concepts. These concepts arise as a consequence of rapid economic and social change. In these cities knowledge, creativity and innovation of citizens are considered to be crucial holders of creating prosperity and quality of life. The hybrid concept of smart city is formed by overlapping these concepts: knowledge city and creative city (Vukmirovic/Milakovic, 2012). This conception is also known as intelligent or digital city. Depending on the phrase used the primary focus varies: ICT, highly educated population, creative class etc. Although the smart city concept is already present in development visions of cities, some blueprints begin and end with a vision dominated by the physical design, resulting in a jumbled mess of engineering and architectural ideas supported by various technologies. Such visions are utopian and impossible to implement. However, the key characteristic of this concept is movement from vision to action (OVUM, 2011).

urban production factors in a common framework and, in particular, to highlight the importance of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the last 20 years for enhancing the competitive profile of a city. We believe a city to be smart when investments in human and social capital and traditional (transport) and modern (ICT) communication infrastructure fuel sustainable economic growth and a high

quality of life, with a wise management of natural resources, through participatory governance (Caragliu et al. 2009). A Smart City is a city well performing in 6 characteristics, built on the 'smart' combination of endowments and activities of self-decisive, independent and aware citizens. These characteristics encompass: smart economy, smart mobility, smart environment, smart people, smart living and smart governance (European smart city project, 2013). All of those can be measured by using the determined indicators: smart economy, smart mobility, smart environment, smart people, smart living and smart governance (Fig. 2). These indicators also serve as separate fields in which a city is to make an improvement.

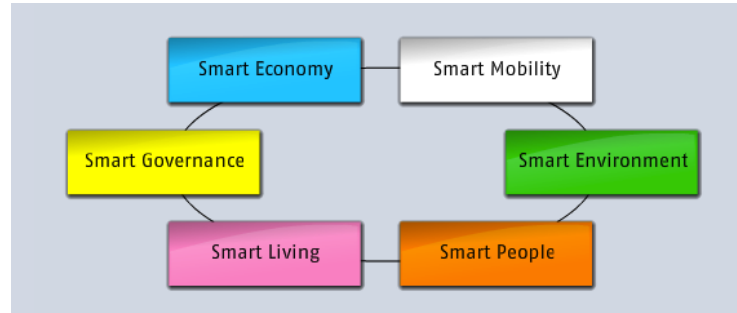


Fig. 2: Smart city indicators. Source: <http://www.smart-cities.eu>

The concept of the 'smart city' has recently been introduced as a strategic device to encompass modern Advantage of this conception is reflected in the possibility of implementation on cities of various sizes (from a metropolis to a small size city). Also, this principle favourise bottom-up planning approach. In this way, the size of intervention which is to initiate urban development varies from those of smaller scale to those on the regional level. Having this in mind, implemented strategies can be ranked as smart point, smart network, smart cluster, smart city and smart region. Specifics of the smart city approach are seen in several important elements (OVUM, 2011):

- The paradigm for a top-down approach is a tightly managed enterprise resource planning system for the entire city, including its distributed physical assets. The paradigm for a bottom-up model is an open source platform that supports instead of prescribes the creation of modular and diverse applications and extensions by third parties.
- Projects in Europe and North America tend to be focused on "retro-fitting", which is the use of ICT as an overlay for existing infrastructure. In these regions, it is more challenging to deploy an integrated approach as existing cities already have systems in place to discharge their functions. In addition, most cities have grown on a piecemeal basis as a result of individual initiatives and projects.
- Opportunities for complete retro-fits are also limited. While in the 1850s and 1860s, Haussmann could drive great boulevards through Paris's inner-city districts to fix the city's perceived circulation and political security problems, there are unlikely to be many "digital Haussmanns" as it is simply not possible to replace existing urban systems because too much relies on them. Therefore, urban projects increasingly make use of a "living laboratory" methodology. This methodology explicitly recognizes that new systems must be deployed in a real life context, with the experimental subjects drawn from the population of future service users.

In this way an advantage is given to ICT sector, which is seen as quick to develop and complementary to the existing infrastructure, which is underdeveloped in Serbia. The stated approach is implemented in the proposal for development of Trstenik. The development concept of this small size city is observed from three levels: (1) at the State level and its connections with other centres in the region, (2) at the regional level and (3) at the level of municipality.

- At the State level, Trstenik is recognized as the local centre in which agriculture has the potential to become the dominant sector of the economy. This would be achieved by specializing in specific production sectors of agriculture such as production of coils, fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, specialization would be reflected in the application of modern technologies and knowledge. This would aim to improve the yield, but also the retention of natural (organic) quality that is highly

desired and valued in developed countries. The creative agriculture is seen as a concept, which seeks the city development on the basis of the activity recognized to have great potential.

- At the regional level and the level of local centres network, position of Trstenik could be seen as a specialized centre – a smart town, which would aim to complete the offer.
- As the centre of the municipality and the network of rural settlements, Trstenik should direct its actions towards the development of these settlements, primarily for the purpose of promoting various forms of rural tourism, which is becoming increasingly attractive to both domestic and foreign population (Vukmirovic/Milakovic, 2012).

The stated idea is presented at the competition Small Towns of Serbia organized by the Agency for Spatial Planning of the Republic of Serbia in 2011. The jury composed of six spatial planning experts evaluated the proposal as good in a visionary sense, but requiring several massive factors which are to initiate it during the development process of a city. However, the jury considered that the way this idea communicates can be improved in the qualified professional circles, but it is at the same time harder to achieve in the general public.

7 CONCLUSION

Hitherto urban planning experience in Serbia and current development indicators demonstrate a rather complex situation. Still, planning tools have managed, to a certain extent at some periods, to produce good results, which indicates their necessity. The inconsistency of expert opinions with those of the public is seen as a main problem for implementing planning documents, which leads towards something which can be named “spontaneous occurrence”.

The contemporary approach to planning is primarily based on sustainable development and it implies education and inclusion of citizens in the process of decision-making and creation of planning documents. Although this trend is in the development phase, certain positive results can be observed. However, the specific mentality/identity of this region and its inhabitants is observed as a second important factor, which is clearly seen from the historical analysis. For this reason, it is necessary adapt best practices which are “imported” to areas where they are implemented, so as to avoid misbalance and unexpected results – spontaneous occurrences. Accordingly, the contemporary concepts such as smart city should be implemented in the “local way”, which implies their adaption to the local area and mentality.

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