Potential of Culture for Sustainable Urban Development

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Abstract. Urban development, implemented on the principle of a creative city, is one of the principles of the transformation of urban structures, which is based on a thorough evaluation of its potential. It is one of the principles of the development of cities that are responsible for their environment (Sustainable City). A creative city is based on the city's dignities and the communities in which it lives. It builds on the specificities and creative potential of institutions, schools, the social composition of the population, but also on the particularities of the urban structure, the traditions of the city and its cultural climate. Many cities draw on this exception and use it for their own benefit and for the benefit of their citizens (Saint Etienne, Copenhagen, Lisbon, Graz, Glasgow, Košice ...). For the prosperity of the city to be based on the principle of the development of culture and the creative industry, its potential for this type of transformation need to be assessed. The key factors that make the success of a "creative city" conditional are specific economic, social and political conditions. Favourable economic factors include: a labour market with a rich offer of a wide range of job opportunities, with existing creative industries, incubators, the IT sector, and intensive tourism. Relevant social factors include open social climate, characteristic tolerance, living city atmosphere, rich social life, informal social activities. Appropriate policy factors include: Urban policy and public administration applying the creative form of city management and working with local authorities and citizens. The character of the urban structure is also significant: its image, the quality of the urban environment, a rich array of cultural facilities, education based on the promotion of creative thinking. Just like the tradition of active social and cultural life. The paper aims to evaluate the potential of selected locations in Slovakia – Bratislava, Komárom and Lučenec. These cities represent two poles of the settlement structure in terms of their hierarchy, size, economic strength, localization. They have a strong cultural background. Their potential for applying the "smart city" principles, with an emphasis on the use of cultural potential, is analysed and subsequently evaluated through a range of economic, political and social criteria that correspond to the principles of a cultural city. In view of the authors' focus on urban planning, the assessment of the potential of the urban structure of the selected cities is an essential consideration as one of the factors determining the development of their creative base. The goal is intensity and quality of the cultural activities, which supporting the transformation of the urban structure with a view to viable and sustainable urban development.

1. Introduction

The key factors influencing the potential of cultural towns and cultural tourism include the image of the city. He is particularly perceived and studied by the profession of architect, urban designer and planner, but also by landscape architect.
It consists of a distinctive urban structure and architecture, a preserved and creatively protected cultural, but also a natural heritage, unique neighbourhoods, memory of the places and people. The researched cities were chosen on the basis of their distinctive image.

2. Culture potential for sustainable urban development

The basic principle of sustainable cities is the balance between the three basic pillars: economic, social and environmental [1, 2] with an emphasis on efficient and balanced growth to ensure quality of life. Urban management competence plays an important role in this process. [3] However, according to the Cavalcanti [4], sustainable cities also stand on the fourth pillar of so-called cultural sustainability, which reflects the ability of cities to preserve cultural identity while at the same time allowing them to apply new values to support socio-economic transformations. Urban sustainability thus includes four pillars: economic, social, environmental and cultural.

![Urban stability matrix theory by Michalka and Kováč (Source: [3])](image)

2.1. Basic principles of creative city

The creative city's pillars are the creative class (creative, talented individuals) who are irreplaceable for economic prosperity, as they generate new creative ideas. An important aspect in addition to the creative class is a whole host of other social aspects that underlie the development of the creative industry. The creative city model can also be based on the basics of creative tourism. Cultural traditions and cultural heritage are the basis for it.

While the cultural city model based on the cultural industry is typical for larger cities or metropolises, the centres of education, or the concentration of a certain kind of industry, the model of the cultural city, which stand on the principle of cultural tourism is applied also for small and medium-sized towns outside economic centres. The principles of creating creative cities were described by wide range of publications on this subject. [5] Typical examples of creative cities in Europe are Barcelona, Glasgow, Dresden, Rotterdam and Amsterdam, Saint Etienne, Copenhagen, Lisbon, Graz... [6] When analysing the conditions and nature of these cities and their areas, many cities have the potential to develop their economy through cultural industry or cultural tourism. In order to fulfil this premise, they need to meet certain framework criteria and conditions. [7] Local governments can support on this potential with an appropriate strategy and active policy.
Table 1. Factors conducive to sustainable urban development through culture

| Factors          | Details                                                                 |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Economic factors | The job market with a wide range of job opportunities, with the possibility of applying talented employees, operating creative industry as an independent sector, with the relation to IT and new media and creative incubators. Existence of intensive tourism with adequate infrastructure |
| Social factors   | An open social climate, manifested by social tolerance, an active lifestyle, a vibrant urban atmosphere, a rich social life, informal social activities |
| Political factors| Urban Policy and governance focusing on the creative form of city leadership |

(Source: Authors)

2.2. Urban environment factors

- Unique urban structure, architectural and cultural heritage, characteristic city image – genius loci
- The quality of the urban (living) environment created by the variety of types and forms; buildings; proximity to functions; high-quality public spaces; authentic neighborhoods; compact built-up areas with higher built-up density; smaller urban areas with the potential of old buildings (former factories, warehouses, …)
- Richness and cultural facilities and civic amenities – cultural facilities, parks, schools, libraries, service facilities, specialized shops, cafes and restaurants, creative areas, cultural festivals
- Network of higher and secondary schools of art, art schools
- The tradition of cultural events
- Infrastructure for tourism – hotels of various categories, catering facilities
- Strategic location of the city – proximity to European metropolises, location in an economically strong region, location in a region with a strong cultural tradition
- Good transport links – air, rail, automotive and ship connections

3. Verify the potential of selected locations by applying criteria of the creative city model

In our study, we verify the potential of selected cities by applying criteria of the creative city model. To the process of assessment, we have included three differentiated Slovak cities in terms of their significance, character and location. However, they also have many common characteristics. For all of them was characteristic multicultural environment in the past, they are border towns, or they are the centre of the region at a borderline, which enriched them significantly in terms of mixed cultures.

Bratislava is the capital of Slovakia, it is an administrative, economic and cultural centre of the state. Bratislava is the city with a long cultural tradition and at the same time it is an attractive tourist destination.

Komárno is a district border town, with a strong cultural tradition and several sights. It lies on the Danube River, which linking it to a wider cultural and economic space.

Lučenec is town of the border region, with a cultural tradition and currently with an interesting and active social background. It lies outside the developmental areas of settlement.
### Table 2. Verification of application of criteria for development of creative city – Bratislava

| Factors                | Potential                                                                 | Barriers                                                                 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Economic factors       | Concentration of higher schools (art schools, IT technologies...) creative employees | Less support of creative incubators                                      |
| Social factors         | Rich social and cultural life, the rise of the influence of civic associations and activism | Lower rates of civic engagement                                         |
| Political factors      | Support culture, creative and civic initiatives,                            | A bureaucratic form of administration, the absence of participation in planning process |

| Factors of city environment | Potential                                                                 | Barriers                                                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| City image, genius loci     | Historical city centre, enclaves of culture heritage, quality of architecture of the thirties, sixties, seventies, nature elements – Danube, Carpathian | Loss of complexes and objects of industrial heritage, the construction of global character of architecture |
| Quality of city environment | The diversity, richness and density of urban fabric in the inner city     | The lack of good quality public spaces, suburban development             |
| Amenities and cultural facilities | cultural facilities, outdoor sports facilities, parks, schools, libraries, shops, cafes, restaurants, cultural festivals | The uneven distribution of facilities of culture and recreation in the structure of the city. |

(Source: Authors)

### Table 3. Verification of application of criteria for development of creative city – Komárno

| Factors                | Potential                                                                 | Barriers                                                                 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Economic factors       | University, Art schools, potential creative employees, creating creative centres “from bottom to up” | Focus on large industry companies, production without added value |
| Social factors         | Multiculturality, cultural life and institutions, civic associations and active residents | Leaving the city by young people for work                                |
| Political factors      | Support culture, tourism development, civic associations support          | A bureaucratic form of administration, the absence of participation in planning process |

| Factors of city environment | Potential                                                                 | Barriers                                                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| City image, genius loci     | Historical city centre, historical monuments, enclaves and buildings of industrial heritage | Lot of complexes and objects of industrial heritage are empty and without function |
| Quality of city environment | The diversity, richness and density of urban fabric in the inner city, compact city | The lack of good system of quality public spaces, lack of active waterfront |
| Amenities and cultural facilities | Cultural facilities, outdoor sports facilities, parks, restaurants, cultural festivals | Weak connection between buildings, activities and public spaces |

(Source: Authors)
Table 4. Verification of application of criteria for development of creative city – Lučenec

| Factors                        | Potential                                                                 | Barriers                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Economic factors               | A lot of High schools, creating coworking centre “from bottom to up”, cross-border cooperation with partners, more smaller employers | Low educational level of employees, production without added value, high unemployment in surrounding region |
| Social factors                 | Multiculturality, cultural life and institutions, civic associations and active residents, available rental housing    | Leaving the city by young people for work, many inhabitants on the poverty line             |
| Political factors              | Support culture development, civic associations support                    | Lack of tourism development, a bureaucratic form of administration, the absence of participation in processes |
| Factors of city environment    |                                                                           |                                                                           |
| City image, genius loci        | Historical city centre, historical monuments, attractive surroundings of the city | Lot of complexes and objects are empty and without function                               |
| Quality of city environment    | Compact inner city, the diversity, richness and density of urban fabric    | The lack of good system of quality public spaces, lack of care on greenery                  |
| Amenities and cultural facilities | Cultural facilities, outdoor sports facilities, parks, restaurants, cultural festivals | Weak connections between city and surroundings                                           |

(Source: Authors)

4. Case study Lučenec – from initiatives to cooperation

The case study presents a part of applied research, which was part of the dissertation of Ivan Siláči, one of the authors. We will deal with an example of cooperation between a selected civic association and local government. When the YOUNG FOLKS LC civic association was established in 2011, it had the only condition - active cooperation with the municipality of Lučenec. Municipalities are the main, but they cannot be the only proprietors of the development of our cities. Civic associations, activists and volunteers raise funds, implement projects, contribute volunteering. In Lučenec they understood it and went further - from mutual acceptance to cooperation for a common goal. [8]

When we analyse the public space for the first time, it is necessary to identify, as in other cities, the main problem of its quality. The problem with transport and parking areas is enhanced by the fact that it is not possible to make a pedestrian zone in the city. It was looking for a way to communicate ways of handling public space and started to organize Park(ing) Day. The project was created in 2005 in San Francisco and is a world phenomenon to date. Designers, local artists and activists transform parking places into a relaxation zone, an open-air gallery or a provisional sports venue. The condition of the project is that they intervene annually in the public space, but only for one day. Since 2012, it has always been organized in Lučenec at the most frequent places in the centre. The city's "take-over" of parking places has never been charged and has always helped organizationally and materially. The activity, which was purely agitating, prompted not only further discussions but also more.

4.1. Cooperation in creating the public spaces

In 2014, we were invited to address the reconstruction of Komenského Street in the historical centre of the city. The process of selecting the contracting authority for the project documentation was standard, setting up a working group was non-standard. We have clearly refused to continue to use the street as a minimum pedestrian area. Several dozens of parking spaces have been removed in the historic centre, and a generous pedestrian promenade with a source of groundwater and furniture has been created from the narrow walkway. A similar procedure was applied in 2016 in the solution of Herzova...
Street. The task has changed, from a working group member to a co-author of the solution. We replaced the parking lot with a rest zone, a car-lined street with a restored historic tree-lined street. Our activities are not alone. In the book Barrier Monitoring (“Monitoring bariér” in Slovak), Roman Vrábel writes about the problems of wheelchair movement after Lučenec. With additional public space support and collaboration with the city, we now see dozens of refurbished pedestrian crossings and crossroads adjustments, with a focus on universal design. [9]

4.2. Stone Flowers – rescue and restoration
Rescuing this sculptural work is a precedent in dealing with the material substance of socialism in the public space. The art work was to end in liquidation. With long-term effort has saved him. It has been placed in a context, that gives it the role of a dominant in a public space. Author – Karol Lacko created the artwork for the first time for the sculpture symposium “Statue of Piešťany Parks” in 1970. The author gave the permanent appearance of the work as a part of the foundation on the reconstructed square – Námestie republiky in Lučenec in a few years later. Since that reconstruction by 2005, no more public resources were spent on the square.

In 2005, a public tender was launched to deal with the entire square. The form of the sale of squares and another public space is a frequent example of the deprivation of local government property in Slovakia. The competition was cancelled. One of the reasons why the square was not selling was a petition with several thousand signatures. The public refused the sell the square and waited for the local government react. The decision of municipality was surprising. The idea of selling one part of the square and another part reconstructed from the EU funds can be evaluated as the most fundamental mistake in the process of square regeneration. A third of the square was sold and the rest two third was reconstructed from the EU funds.

The new management of the city, which inherited the square in the process of reconstruction, was looking for solve the situation. When we held a public debate about the future of the artwork in 2012, after several months of discussions with the municipality, it was not clear how to the new landowner would build on their third of square. In generous the debate held a unified view that the artwork Stone Flowers should be preserved. In the process of rescue, a turning point occurred in 2014, when the investor decided to respect the city’s condition to save the artwork. This condition was mainly due to the long-term interest of activist’s activities in this process. In our research we must find a new suitable site for new location of the artwork. The process was not easy. The original context, feasibility, public opinion and professional opinion were considered. The new location is the “green heart” of the city’s largest housing estate, with the character of public park. Intervention in the public space does not have the ambition to depreciate it but give it a higher social value. This higher social value can lead to the large promotion of the creativity in the public space. Also, we understand this process as a tribute to the original author. The work returned to the environment for which it was original created by the author – a natural connection and relationship of greenery and sculpture. [8]

4.3. Marketing and Image of the city
One of the most important tools for promoting local development and creativity is marketing. When in 2012 the local government processed the marketing strategy, we entered the process as a professional consultant. We cannot narrow, that marketing is just the promotion and communication. It’s the whole concept of creating a city as a product. One of our basic comments was the absence of something like a “roof” of marketing concept. We considered a symbol or a tool that would stand above the concept and the bearer of the fundamental idea. At the end of process, processing team can present a product with a clear city framework as a product – Enjoy Lučenec (“Zaži Lučenec” in Slovak). Over the few last years, the city successful implementation its strategy in locations that have a huge impact on public space and its quality and visibility. In 2015 In cooperation with the Slovak Design Centre local government declared a competition about the visual identity of the city. The winner of this competition, the local creative studio PINCHOF_ gave the city a completely new face.
### Table 5. Infrastructure for culture and creativity in Lučenec

| Cultural places and institutions | Sector       |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| **Cinemas**                      |              |
| Cinema Apollo                    | Public       |
| Cinema Star                      | Private      |
| Open-air Cinema                  | Public       |
| Film club PRIESTOR               | Private      |
| **Theatres**                     |              |
| Theatre of B. S. Timrava         | Public       |
| **Museums and galleries**        |              |
| Novohrad Museum and Gallery      | Public       |
| City Museum in Lučenec           | Public       |
| Memorial Hall of prominent personalities | Public |
| Július Szabó Memorial House      | Private      |
| **Libraries and Archives**       |              |
| Novohrad Library                 | Public       |
| National Archives                | Public       |
| **Cultural centres**             |              |
| Synagogue                         | Public       |
| House of Matica Slovenská in Lučenec | Public |
| Novohrad Cultural Centre         | Public       |
| Brewery and Music Club FRANZ     | Private      |

(Source: Authors)

### Table 6. Infrastructure for sport and leisure time in Lučenec

| Activities and places | Sector       |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| **Hiking**            |              |
| Town Park             | Public       |
| Tow forest            | Public       |
| **Horse riding**      |              |
| Horse team riding club| Private      |
| **Swimming**          |              |
| Summer swimming pool  | Public       |
| Novolandia Thermal resort | Semi-private |
| Miraj Resort          | Private      |
| Indoor swimm. Pool /under construction/ | Public |
| **Fishing**           |              |
| The Water Reservoir “Ladovo” | Public |
| **Cycling**           |              |
| Educational paths for cyclist | Public |
| **Stadiums**          |              |
| City Stadium          | Public       |
| Ice hockey Stadium    | Public       |
| **Sports hall**       |              |
| SH ARENA              | Public       |
| Old sport hall        | Public       |
| **Gymnasiums**        |              |
| 10 Public gymnasiums  | Public       |

(Source: Authors)
Figure 2. An example of applying a new visual identity (Source: authors)

In terms of investment construction, in relation to marketing strategy, several buildings and public spaces have been reconstructed. Today, the information centre and the newly City Museum have established in the building of renewed Town hall. The reconstructed synagogue, which was awarded the “Cultural Monument of the Year 2015 in Slovakia”, today serves a venue for concerts, exhibitions and other events. The long-term dilapidated building of the morgue at the local cemetery today serves as the Memorial Hall of prominent personalities. The artwork, that we create as a part of exposition, bears the symbol of the co-operation of the personalities who contributed to the developed the city. All of these restored monuments and the program they offer are already making full use of the new visual and communication style of Lučenec. It becomes a full-fledged part of the strategy. The city continues to prepare other products to fulfil its marketing strategy of creative city in cooperation with the professional and the third sector.
5. Results and conclusions
The cultural cities are characterized by the distinctive character of their urban structure as well as social ties. Their economic prosperity largely depends on their location and importance. Bratislava, as the capital of Slovakia with its exceptional geographical location, its cultural and social potential supported by systems of art education and creative class, has the best conditions to use them optimally. The first steps of the development of creative industry are already beginning to form.

The other two smaller towns Komárno and Lučenec are characterized by shrinking the number of inhabitants and reducing their economic vitality. This is due to their location outside the main development centres. This phenomenon is typical for many cities around Europe. However, this phenomenon is more pronounced in Slovakia than in one of the post-socialist country. The reason for this is to interrupt the natural development of these cities (in terms of private business and private ownership) during the period of socialism. The strong orientation to the industry in the past has resulted in the loss of employment of many during the transition to a market economy. Their economy and the quality of the urban structure can be strengthened by focusing on the untapped cultural potential of cities and regions. The capital of many Slovak small and medium-sized cities is their tangible and intangible cultural heritage. It is a good basis for the development of a creative industry or a sustainable culture-oriented tourism. These can be a driving force for the local economy and the quality of the environment for the local population.

Targeted activities of groups of creative young people, support of self-government as well as cooperation of citizens and entrepreneurs bring the first results in Slovakia cities.

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