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Ksenija Martinović^{1*}

** Independent researcher*

TIVAT'S URBAN REGENERATION—FROM ARSENAL TO PORTO MONTENEGRO

Abstract: This paper examines how and to what extent urban regeneration works in practice through the lens of Tivat's regeneration. The paper enlightens Tivat's economic and physical transformations from the town known as a base of the Naval-shipyard "Arsenal" to the nautical-touristic complex "Porto Montenegro". Since its development in 1889, Arsenal became the main employer in town and shaped the town's identity. Arsenal employed experienced skilled workers, mostly engineers and craftsmen, and enjoyed an international reputation for a quality ship repair (Radovic, 2015). In 1990's, the turbulent political and economic situation in ex-Yugoslavia countries and UN sanctions resulted with a decrease of demand and the downfall of Arsenal resulted with decline of Tivat's economy. Additionally, Montenegro was making strategic turnover from a socialist centrally planned to an open market economy. Montenegro wanted to attract inward investments and create an image of an attractive tourist destination that would result with economic revitalization. These circumstances led to the Montenegrin government decision to sell Arsenal to a private investor who showed the initiative to transform it and create the nautical resort "Porto Montenegro". Regeneration of Tivat, in terms of its vision, seems to be a successful story - the town's image was changed, Arsenal's site became a part of wider urban tissue, and new economic opportunities were made. However, this regeneration did not go without negative consequences, including the displacement of skilled workers, social exclusion and missed opportunity to reintegrate the urban fabric and reconnect the town with the sea.

Key words: regeneration, Tivat, economic transition, physical change, transformation, tourism

¹ ksenijamart@yahoo.co (corresponding author)
Ksenija Martinović (<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-3536-6311>)

Introduction

Jones and Evans (2013) refer to cities as “never finished objects; land-uses change, neighbourhoods are redeveloped, the urban area itself expands and, occasionally, shrinks” (p.3). This means that urban planning and development presents never-ending work and often requires adaptability strategy. The pressure for change comes from both external and internal factors and cities are required to adapt in response (Roberts & Sykes, 2000). Furthermore, urban planning is a key for managing not just physical conditions, but also different complex issues such as social, economic, cultural etc. (Rydin, 2011). The history of modern planning in the 1980s introduced a new concept of urban regeneration as “something more than simply demolition and rebuilding” (Jones & Evans, 2013: p. 3). Similarly, O’Brien and Matthews (2016) argue that regeneration is a concept, which tries to address more than social, economic and physical circumstances. Moreover, they refer that regeneration is typically in the urban environment, but not exclusively, as it could happen in any other place(s), although it is usually an intervention after a certain decline. This decline can be the consequence of global economic changes, such as the “long recession” in the 1970s, and failure of traditional manufacturing activities (Paddison, 1993: p. 339; Rogerson, 2012). Sometimes regeneration is required in places that have long-standing problems and regeneration provides a ground for place transformation, which could change a negative image, improve the economy, and attract inward investments and tourists (Bradley et al., 2002; Hasting & Dean, 2002; Paddison, 1993). However, in practice, urban regeneration is not always successful as it fails to make a holistic approach and to consider the roots of the issues (O’Brien & Matthews, 2016). Urban regeneration could often result in gentrification and displacement of long-term residents (Smith, 2007). Moreover, it could lead to the privatisation of urban spaces, creating both physical and psychological barriers that fragment the urban fabric (Jones & Evans 2013).

This paper explores how and to what extent regeneration works in practice through the lens of Tivat’s regeneration. Most precisely, the paper discusses the trajectory from the Naval-shipyard “Arsenal” to the nautical-touristic complex “Porto Montenegro”. To address the theoretical framework of regeneration influence, the case study approach was utilised as it allows a more detailed analysis of a particular issue. Tivat’s case was selected since it is considered the most successful regeneration projects in Montenegro. Additionally, this transformation exceptionally shaped and changed Tivat image in the last two decades. The paper seeks to examine the extent to which the Porto Montenegro project has succeeded in meeting its economic and physical goals, while also considering the side effects created by this regeneration.

Historical background

Tivat is a coastal town situated in Bay of Kotor on the coast of Montenegro (Figure 1). Its urban development in the modern history was related to the Naval-shipyard “Sava Kovacevic”, most often referred to by its old name “Arsenal” (Figure 2). Arsenal was developed as a military site by the Austro-Hungarian Navy, which at that time administrated territories in Bay of Kotor. Development in 1889, Arsenal became the main employer in town. The primacy in employment had local inhabitants and the number

of employees has been between 1.000 to 1.300 (Bajic Scepanovic, 2017; Stamatovic Vuckovic, 2017). Arsenal employed experienced skilled workers, mostly engineers and craftsmen, and enjoyed an international reputation for a quality ship repair, modernisation of control systems etc. (Radovic, 2015). Consequently, the image of Tivat was closely connected with Arsenal and its demographic structure culturally and socially relied on Arsenal development.

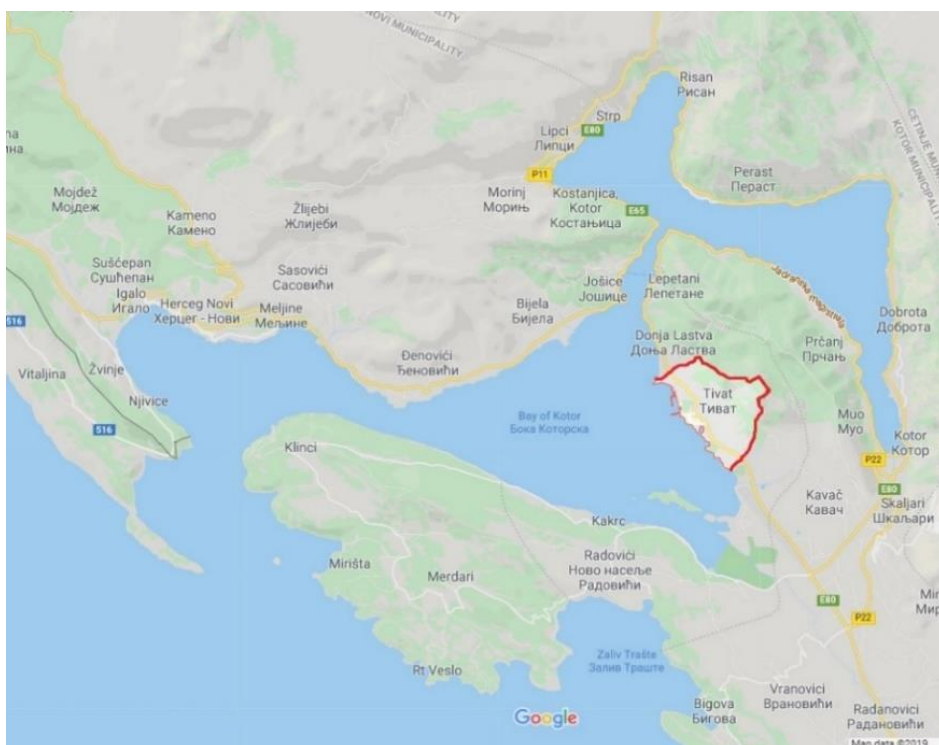


Fig. 1. Location of Tivat in Bay of Kotor, 2019 (Source: Google maps)

The late 1980s became the turning point for Montenegro, as one of the six republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Yugoslavia), whose previous political and economic development was based on the socialist ideology. The post-socialist period marked a significant systematic transition from socialist centrally planned to an open market economy. In the 1990s, this change was followed by the war in the ex-Yugoslav countries, the NATO bombardment and UN sanctions imposed on Serbia and Montenegro federation (which continued their federation after four out of six Yugoslav countries decided to declare independency). Hence, the turbulent political and economic situation had a negative influence on the entire country. Tivat was not exception, and it resulted with the downfall of Arsenal and decline of Tivat's economy. Although in the next decade the situation improved slightly, new issues appeared, such as irregular payment and pollution of water from old shipbuilding's materials (Djordjevic, 2015).

Beginning of 2000s brought additional challenge for Arsenal. Montenegro started military reform that included the abolishment of compulsory military service, reducing the number of soldiers and demilitarisation. Thus, military bases were

reducing and losing their function, including Arsenal. Simultaneously, the Montenegrin government wanted to use Montenegrin natural assets for attracting inward investments and create an image of an attractive tourist destination. As large part of Montenegrin military sites were on the coast of country, the privatisation was directed to these localities.



Fig. 2. Arsenal, 2004 (Source: Boka News, 2004)

These external and internal pressures in 2007 resulted with a decision by the Montenegrin government to sell Arsenal to a private investor. The investor showed interest to regenerate a place and follow the government's vision in creating a new tourist image of Tivat. After the negotiation process, the site was privatised for around €29 million, which included payment for a social programme (repaying Arsenal workers), environmental intervention and remediation of location. Apart from that, the investor promised that in the upcoming 4 years, they would invest €106 million in the new touristic complex (Djordjevic, 2015; Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, 2014)². Since then, Tivat became recognised as a place of a first luxury nautical resort in Montenegro, called Porto Montenegro (Figure 3).

² See the contract amount distribution: Djordjevic, A., 2015, The Effect and Influence of Privatization on Tourism in ex-Yugoslavian Countries, more Specifically Serbia and Montenegro. Bachelor. MOD-UL University Vienna, on pp.30-31; See for the investment amount distribution and exact prices of facilities: Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, 2014, Information on the privatisation status of hotel and tourism companies, pp. 37-38



Fig. 3. Porto Montenegro complex after the development, with the Regent five-star hotel in Focus 2004, Author: Anon, source Forbes

Economic transformation

The first aspect of Tivat's tourism-led regeneration that will be discussed is economic transition and employment change. The aim of city regeneration is to create more employment opportunities that will in turn provide economic growth and increase competitiveness (Jones & Evans, 2013). The global economic shift replaced traditional industries with more service-oriented industries and thus created a pressure on cities to adjust to new market demands (Dicken, 2004). Smith (2007) refers to this shift as transformation "from centres of production to centres of consumption" (p. 26). In this sense, tourism and leisure activities became an integral part of city economy and a form of local employment. Thus, cities tend to create tourist-planned zones, which will increase economic activity and expand entry-level employment opportunities (O'Brien & Matthews, 2016; Smith, 2007). However, in practice this does not go without some serious challenges, especially for residents who pre-date the regeneration intervention.

In the case of Tivat's regeneration, the previous skilled workers and engineers suddenly faced a situation where their specialisation was no longer required. In 2006, when Arsenal was privatised, Arsenal had around 470 workers, which stayed without jobs, while in 2012 "Adriatic Marinas", the owner of Porto Montenegro, hired only 93 employees (Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, 2014)³. The absence of new appropriate skills resulted partially in workers exclusion from the labour market and in the long-term it could have caused even social exclusion (Roberts & Sykes, 2000). The economic transformation raised the question of how to retrain these workers for careers in the emerging tertiary industry. Arsenal as the town's main industry for more than 100 years oriented the entire demographic structure not just in skills and educational specialisation, but in overall social and cultural mentality (Radovic, 2015). The change urgently required that the population possess "a certain level of service mentality", which was not a mentality that Tivat's population had (Aitchison, Richards and Tallon 2007, 59; Radovic, 2015). Additionally, although the shift created an opportunity for less skilled citizens to enter the labour market, the value for money is often low and quite competitive (O'Brien & Matthews, 2016). According to Radovic (2015) the jobs offered in "Porto Montenegro" were well paid and

³ It was not specified the qualification of workers and if they were employed before by Arsenal

the investor provided training for nautical tourism workers. However, it still did not provide enough opportunities and skilled workers were left behind.

One of the issues in regenerated places, especially in post-socialist countries, is the fact that often development projects do not have a larger influence on local employment rate, rather they create mobilisations of jobholders. The promoted employment policy of Porto Montenegro continued to give the primacy to local inhabitants. While there is no precise data on how many local residents work in Porto Montenegro, in 2016 it was reported that 79% of employees are from Montenegro (Lukovic, 2016). In terms of numbers of employees, in 2019 the company representative stated that they have around 350 employees and the number goes up to 1.000 with the employees from shop tenants located in Porto Montenegro Village⁴. However, bearing in mind the seasonal character of tourism industry it is not clear what is the number of employees who work during the entire year, nor positions they cover. Finally, one of the concerns is related to presumption that in business urban investments the local people will have low qualification work positions, while the high positions will be covered by the foreign workers (Molotch, 1976). In the case of Porto Montenegro, this could be supported by the fact that since its establishment the majority of employed senior and executive level were foreigners, and currently half of executive team are foreigners⁵.

Tourism regeneration of Tivat required business-like and entrepreneurial planning in order to redesign itself as an appealing product with a marketing strategy that would promote it (Spirou, 2011). Tivat was known as an Arsenal base, a military ship repairing brand and suddenly there was an urgent need to make an entirely new town image. In the regeneration process, the city marketing was supposed to have multiple objectives oriented towards the creation of a place that would attract people and investments and ensure the well-being of the population (Paddison, 1993). Nevertheless, it is argued that the previous city identity can predict how the new one will be perceived externally (Bradley et al., 2002; Spirou, 2011). Furthermore, Spirou (2001) explains that "cities with strong past industrial images that had gone through significant reorganisation towards the travel industry, were more successful than those with weaker manufacturing identities that had experienced similar restricting" (p.63). Porto Montenegro's marketing strategy indeed changed Tivat's image internationally and it became a well-known destination for mega-yacht owners and high-income people (Radovic, 2015). Nevertheless, this did not necessarily lead to the change of local citizen's perception and their vision of the opportunities that Tivat regeneration could have offer.

In a larger scale, Porto Montenegro was promoted as a project, which will increase taxation income, and it would be one of the main long-term benefits of this investment. Yet, at the same time the Government of Montenegro started creating the unevenly investment ambient favouring the inward investments by decreasing taxation. Particularly, at the time of Arsenal privatisation, marina tax services were only

⁴ "U samoj našoj matičnoj kompaniji imamo 350 zaposlenih, s tim što "Porto Montenegro" kao naselje, uz sve naše zakupce, hotel "Ridžent", bazen "Lido", zapošljava 1000 ljudi..." for more see the interview (in Serbian): Available at: <<https://www1.wdr.de/radio/cosmo/programm/sendungen/radio-forum/reisen/porto-montenegro-100.html>[Accessed 25 November 2019].

⁵ See Porto Montenegro website: Meet the Team | Por-to Montenegro [Accessed 17 October 2024]

7%. In the following years, the Government of Montenegro continued introducing new benefits to investor(s), which kept the discussion on this privatisation live. Some of those measures were the reduction of the VAT taxes for services in 5-star hotels from 21% to 7%, while for other tourist service providers the taxation stayed the same. Moreover, the ongoing controversy was related to the fact that in 2018 the Municipality of Tivat decided not to charge Porto Montenegro for a debt for utility equipment of €5,6 million. This raised even a political discussion over who is actually benefiting more from the Porto Montenegro – Tivat and the state or the investor itself?⁶. Nevertheless, since Arsenal was privatised, Tivat's transformation of 165 ha inner-city land began from a place “forbidden to the public (...) the untouchable island and barrier of its physical development” became a nautical resort “Porto Montenegro” (Radonjic, 2008, cited in Radovic, 2015: p. 108).

Physical transformation

Tivat's Arsenal area required adaptation to meet the tourist-led regeneration, and meet physical conditions required to attract people, both local community and tourists. In the regeneration process, physical conditions are a sufficient reason for making the urban change (Jeffrey & Pounder, 2000). According to Jeffrey and Pounder (2000) the physical and environmental qualities are closely connected with a city's prosperity, the residents' quality of life and enterprises and thus their adaptability to social and economic change is the key for preventing city decline. Moreover, they refer that the environmental decay “can damage both the functioning and reputation of a city” (p. 87). Furthermore, successful urban planning needs to create a balance between economic success, environmental protection and people's interests (Jones & Evans, 2013). Additionally, during the 118 years of Arsenal's existence, the heavy-metal and other waste material accumulated in the area and created major concerns for their influence on the environment and on public health (Djordjevic, 2015).

Arsenal's area in Tivat was an area of “two-meter-high stone wall” at the coastal part of the town and as a military base it was not accessible to the public (Radovic, 2015, p. 108). This was the reason why regeneration vision was “the formation of a coastal place oriented and open to the sea, which, during the season and off-season, will function actively, in accordance with the needs of the population, visitors and users of space” (Jelovac, 2013: p. 45). The Arsenal area needed better road accessibility and connection of urban matrix with other parts of the town and the sea. For these reasons the master plan predicted demolition of Arsenal facilities and the wall that surrounded the area which will be the base for this physical improvement. Nevertheless, while from broader perspective the vision was in accordance to the national strategy of branding Montenegro as a tourist destination and with valorisation of natural potential that the country has from simply observation it did not succeed to become a “part of the urban tissue”, as academics described the process in 2007⁷. The Porto Montenegro Village physical still creates division from Westside where is sur-

⁶ “više su “Porto Montenegro” i svi njegovi dosadašnji vlasnici imali koristi od Tivta i Tivčana, nego što su Tivčani imali od njih” (in Serbian): Available at <Petković: Više je Porto Montenegro imao koristi od Tivčana, nego građani od njih (vijesti.me) [Accessed 18 October 2024].

⁷ The review of academic literature mostly indicates that with Porto Montenegro, the blockade created by Arsenal ended and that it finally reconnected the town towards the coast. See for more: Radovic, G., 2015; Stamatovic-Vuckovic, S. 2017.

rounded by the fences (Figure 4), which clearly indicated that is private and not a public place, and it is accessible only from a limited number of entries (Figure 5).



Fig. 4. Westside entrance of Porto Montenegro, 2019 (Author: Ksenija Martinović)



Fig. 5. Limited accessibility of Porto Montenegro complex, 2019 (Author: Ksenija Martinović)

To achieve the successful outcome, the physical regeneration process needs to take into consideration existing complementarities and the residents' perspective. Regeneration that involves the understanding of a place and its potential could lead to improvement and reach its goal (Smith, 2007; Jeffrey & Pounder, 2000). The adopted approach for meeting Tivat's vision was creating a nautical tourist resort with a marina for small boats and mega-yachts, mixed with other service, mostly with retail and commercial facilities (Jelovac, 2013). Transformation from a prominent naval repair complex into "the biggest and the most modern Mediterranean marina" took advantage of coastal accessibility and pre-existing docks (Radovic, 2015, p.110). One additional precondition that was successfully considered its Tivat airport and Tivat's proximity to Dubrovnik airport enhances accessibility for international tourists. This regeneration process also included resolving of environmental decay, and investor organised a cleaning of the 64 tons of rusted ships and submarines and related shipyard material, in order to secure the water quality for both residents and tourists (Djordjevic, 2015). However, it only partially considered resident' social-economic aspects.

As part of the investment, a five-star hotel complex "Regent" was opened, significantly altering the area and providing visitors with beautiful seaside views. However, Porto Montenegro as nautical-touristic complex attracts yacht owners and high-status tourists who can afford to stay in its accommodation premises, while the middle-class people can enjoy in some of the food services and drinks (Djordjevic, 2015). Despite Tivat has the highest average salary in Montenegro, comparing to Porto Montenegro prices it is not enough even to enjoy the basic food services, especially for those who unemployed. Thus, while the regeneration creates a chance for physical accessibility the tourism-led development the approach used for Porto Montenegro can create a "tourism bubble" and new barriers (Bosley & Brothers, 2008; Smith, 2007). Finally, Alihodzic et. al. (2021) in their research confirmed that in Tivat now faces elements of gentrification and social segregation. Thus, more work is required to achieve the full potential of the regeneration.

Conclusion

Cities are complex socio-economic systems which face different challenges. Their management depends on their characteristics such as physical conditions, social capital and their policies (O'Brien & Matthews, 2016; Roberts & Sykes, 2000). Yet, with time and with changing circumstances some cities start facing major issues and decline. In the urban context, the solution is seen in regeneration that should be guided by effective policy, but nevertheless could have limited effectiveness (O'Brien & Matthews, 2016). Regeneration is criticised as its "aggregate impacts will tend to be small and incremental as most urban regeneration programmes are 'microsolutions for megaproblems'" (O'Brien & Matthews, 2016: p. 69). However, Tivat's case to a certain degree showed that regeneration strategies could include large-scale intervention and provide success. Tivat's regeneration in terms of its vision seems a successful one – the new nautical-touristic complex was created, and the town's image has been internationally accepted. Previous Arsenal's site became more accessible place, and new economic opportunities were made. However, this regeneration is not without concerns of its consequences. The existing data shows certain level of

social segregation, while there is no data regarding the status of previous Arsenal's skilled workers. This it is questionable how citizens adapted to the new jobs offers in tertiary industry. Moreover, the change towards service mentality of residents is a long-term process and could not be achieved in a short time (Aitchison et al., 2007). Nevertheless, although Porto Montenegro project increased physical accessibility and took care of the accumulated water pollution this could be seen both as negative and positive impact. While the environmental component was not largely discussed in this paper, large inflow of touristic yachts in a short time period of time could negatively affect Tivat. Similarly, the number of international flights and motorway vehicles will increase and the impact on environment still needs to be measured. Lastly, high-status tourism increased the prices in the area, and it contributed to gentrification and potentially to the loss of local identity for residents (Alihodzic et al., 2021; Smith, 2007).

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