

POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES AS A RISK FACTOR IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY

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This paper is primarily based on the observation of conditions and effects of functioning of Belgrade, the Capital of Serbia, in the period of its multiparty constellation. Although there were no significant intentions of political instrumentalisation of this segment of city functioning that would sacrifice social usefulness and efficiency of development to political marketing in the domain of urban planning, carrying out plans, and construction, , it is appropriate to point to these tendencies and needed to face the problem in order to operate according to the processes of free political competition and not opposing them.

INTRODUCTION

Political competition and rivalry have still not become a part of expected, established, defined constellation (system) at the level of local authority or administration.

Present competitive relations of influence in the process of governing urban development of the city, that can be determined as irrational according to the efficiency and efficacy of governance, should be understood as necessary and desirable part of the process of development directing. Therefore, system of governance and administration should be adjusted to the circumstance in order to achieve maximum effect, instead of searching for a way to avoid competition, disguise it, muffle or exclude it.

In the case that system is not adjusted to political competition as a necessary part of process of directing and governing urban development of the city, the rivalry becomes unwanted since it endangers efficiency of the city functioning, and, naturally, efforts are developed to defeat competition or, even worse, prevent it.

This work treats some of the problems of governance, primarily of urban development of the city in the present conditions, but also expected political competition, which under certain circumstances may evolve to political confrontation. It points to possible fields where

such adjustments or reconstruction of local administration system and authority and competence, may be expected. It is a review of problems that need to be solved so that organization at the local level, crucial for urban development of big cities, would become democratic, socially justified and economically effective, therefore politically adequate.

It is convenient to start with supposition that urban planning is the most important item of directing the urban development of each local community. The exact definition of urban planning took from the Encyclopedia Britannica is: "Urban planning is mostly performed through authorities functioning and it requires application of specific observation techniques, analyzes, presuming and assuming. According to this, urban planning can be described as social movement, as an authority function, as technical discipline. Each aspect poses own conceptions, history and theories. Together, those are connected in one big effort of modern society to shape and improve environment that surrounds humans more and more, implicating to the city".

It is considered that the aspect of planning based on authority functioning is the weakest part in our system; and too often the main reason of non-adequacy of plan realization, and of directing urban development of the city. This work, for the mentioned reasons, aspires to point out problems in domain of politics and

recharge mutual relations, so to direct reader's attention to some possibilities of its solutions.

POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF MANAGING THE CITY DEVELOPMENT

Management, as well as directing of the urban development of the city through local authority executing (at level of local community and the city), is public business visible and liable to citizens estimation, also it is "window" through which some political groups, formal and informal coalitions are showing their attitudes, values and programs to public. Each and every political group, either it has pretension to perform alone or together with some other, same orientated group, is demonstrating their values, establishing relations with other political groups and citizens, so it gets or loses its legitimacy by local authority executing.

Public interest in local authority work is a result of, on one hand, knowledge that daily or "small" politics is an indicator of potential "big" politics standing beside, so it is possible to estimate protagonists through local authority performances at global political scene. On the other hand, public attention is provided by nature of the problem that is local authority subjected to, considering extremely significant consequences of local authority decisions on every day life of citizens, on many town institutions and its economy. Not only

regarding communal service prices, quality and contents, the imperfection of authentic landowners relations in regards to decisions made by city government or local community, which can immediately become economical profit or damage. In other words, it can lead to the gaining of owners rights over building, land exploitation right (actually land owning), public land uses right, taking over the construction business, communal equipment and maintenance, therefore exploitation of the most important city resources (land, mechanization and income rights).

a) The fact is that on the level of local community problems (constructing, plans realizations, so as to consequences related to ownerships, economy and profit domain), the problems and interests which are far away from local are distinguishing, more exactly the problems that are connecting every day life with "big" politics interests are being resolved.

Local authority (either in domain of parliament jurisdiction or executives) is realized through activities on daily basis highly enclosing constructing and ownership problems and rights shaped that way, meaning urban plans realizations and other conditions essential for a city development. Regarded to mentioned transparency, obviousness of daily activities and functional result of local authorities, local authority operating becomes the basis of their political programs materialization and straight effects screening.

b) Political opposition to local authorities (either parliamentary or informal) is illustrated in public through the same ground of every day city functioning, criticizing the moves of local authorities and, in some cases, pointing out the other solutions usable in special occasions. In this manner, opposition is following primarily its high interest participating between restricted possibilities as on establishing fundamental strategies and politics, as well as on activities of public confrontation to executive authority decisions and its institutions.

c) At final point, more important role of third sector should be expected, as free conglomerate of citizen's associations, non-profitable nongovernmental organizations, diverse groups of specified interests and more significant influence, proportional to

independent surrounding, through medias or by clear lobbying on directing the processes of political rivalry and confrontations, i.e. on local authority decisions.

POLITICAL RIVALRY AND CONFRONTATION

The expression rivalry understands competition, a game with forward defined rules, a fight that is respectable to rules, above all the one that does not permit that fight endangers premises that form the system (long-term interests of city development, meaning many goals with wordlessly or explicitly shaped concordance). Rivalry in politics, economy or even art, has positive connotation and attribute to making the developing processes dynamic.

The expression confrontation is identified with conflict that causes a blockage, deactivating, and also disables action and does not generate alternative possibilities, but it has to be solved at the level on which it has been caused. Short-date and occasional confrontations are included components of rivalry status, although longer confrontations may cause major departs from essentials, undeniable common interest and completely impede some important components of urban development, or even in case of solution shortage, it makes inadequate effects in city space. Principally, confrontation has positive connotation only if it occurs in current process, but negative if it is permanent distinctive of any relation or system condition.

a) Local authority (beyond City Government) mostly controls the reveal of urban plans (Master Plan comes into effect when the Ministry of Constructions confirms decision of City Government, though the rest of plans come to effect by decision of City authorities), while their realizations is under the jurisdiction of administrative authorities and organizations (such as: Secretariat of Urbanism, City Planning, Headquarter of Land Business, Secretariat for Property and Constructing business etc). All these proceedings comply with republic law, i.e. they are in compliance with ahead-defined system with inbuilt jurisdiction of local authorities. Thus, political structure of local authorities has, as the polygon of its own work (as well as the

confrontation contents in usual political battle between parties and political groups), city performances that are taken as indicators of political attitudes and program performances, political strengths outlook, offering itself as key in resolving of more covering problems at level of all together community.

b) Considering that, the mentioned local authorities are just the part of bigger political businesses running by parties, therefore the city functioning takes place under direct influence of political programs and it is the game of political interests of those who are involved in local authorities and those who confront it. It is not needed to emphasize to which point it is possible that the results of these interests is away from the real ones of local authority. It is enough simply to remind on clash between city need for long-term defined and financially supported strategy of development, and political structures interests necessarily adapted to the rhythm of local and other elections, or rhythm of annual budget. This kind of interest conflict has to be resolved by establishing administratively legal and economical systems that will for sure grant continuity of urban development and for that reason rectify political rivalry influence that, on this occasion, presents a relation of previous, actual and the following political establishment.

c) Political rivalry induced from the outside projects, projects itself on city operating, in order to appear convincingly (considering that the whole thing is occurring under the eye of public). It may cause artificial attitudes polarization, i.e. it may lead to political confrontation in basic approaches about the mode how to manage the city, what plans are to be made, or more often, how to realize them. One group denies everything proposed or done by the other, as pointing out to the polarization of own main political structures through intended but false polarization of actual problems of local significance. It may come to endanger relatively rational city functioning in meaning of construction only because of those activities. In these cases, easily can happen (and it has been often bearing in mind that confrontations and political marketing existed even before multiparty system founding), that decisions are made for the cause of small and

temporary issues, instead of extensive and predetermined. This certainly presents the nonsense worth of fighting against, to each one responsible for public interest or public welfare.

d) Local situation becomes, in particular circumstances, an instrument or weapon of political marketing, as well as it is required, the instrument of tending the differentials or calling the attention to compatibilities – independently of real issue state considering local interests, in order that those obviously become ground of political rivalries competition and a political fight device. Decisions, attitudes, priorities – all these can be responses to questions regarding local authority jurisdiction. However, these responses are always segmental and not referred to posed questions only, but to line up of other inexpressible matters. It is normal that each decision has to be treated as publicly expressible manifest, as gesture of larger import than it is presented within local framework, but with constantly forming boundaries of this double implication so that damage would not be larger than benefit.

SOME TROUBLE ISSUES IN DIRECTING THE DEVELOPMENT IN POLITICAL RIVALRY CONDITIONS

Centralization and decentralization of authority in relation to local community, city government and republic are main problems whose solutions would improve the effects of urban development in conditions of political rivalry. It should be expected that existing rivalry would outgrow to more frequent and more significant confrontation that would be included in democratic transformations during transition to strategically different system of urban development.

Various political groups and parties hold different authority levels (local communities, city government and republic). Besides all favorable terms on needs for rivalry regarding programs and ideas, which certainly exists, the way of non alternative development, it may also be noticed a line of serious imperfections of an formal system, i.e. of an redistribution of responsibilities and authorizations which substantially diminish the efficiency and

rationality of managing and developing systems of the city.

Law, at one side, and responsibility at the other, mutually related in authority execution at level of local authority are uncoordinated vertically – from local authority, over city government, to republic. Local authority implies a certain least level of legal, financial and technological autonomy coordinated with responsibilities of providing developing framework for local authorities, providing conditions of usual every day life to city and citizens, as well as conditions of ordinary urban development. Currently, nevertheless, huge piece of logical functionally justified local authority obligations is out of reach to its formational authorizations. Local authority, the one that brings out a plan, has very limited possibilities for its implementation in domain of urban planning, so the overhaul plans considered to previous plans or existed state in the field became an important segment of local authority activities.

In this way the situation is not compliant with general world trend that forces reinforcement of local authorities, precisely emphasized in many documents and studies. For example, according to Habitat Conference II, it should be that local authorities are highly independent in particular administrative and financial issues taking into consideration their right to lead astray of own taxes. Alongside, local authorities may turn into landowners that would provide them to own a significant instrument of active land politics running, enabling them a very strong influence on process of directing the inhabitation development.

Mismatching of jurisdictions, close to us, is highlighted through expected political rivalry that exists among singular parties and coalitions, who are actually executing authority duties on different levels (from local, over city, to republic). In cases when authority is performing by the same political party or coalitional parties, there are less troubles in usual operating, although this type of system is directly bound to prove existing of our needs for real politics, and not for simply operative synchronization. Without denying the call for making contacts, or often a common problem solution and compromises, it would still be

that the jurisdictions cleaning up is the exact way toward larger and more distinctive responsibility of any authority, as well as toward correlating efficiency with pluralism and democratic procedure principals.

It is comprehensible that even before there were (unrecognized) political confrontations and that they have caused frequent system blockade meaningful exclusions between existent field state and the one documented. Disclosing of confrontations and its resolving require interventions in managing system, particularly in jurisdictions redefining in order to provide "clear accounts" conditions.

Changing of jurisdiction in the meaning of centralization in relation to local community, city government and republic has taken place in the period when the opposition took over local authorities on the level of individual community, and later even the Belgrade city government. It has found an obvious political aspect, even if it does not comply with true interests of some system levels operating. At one side, nowadays there is centralization of city jurisdictions that no doubt may be reduced, in the way that one part can be transferred to the level of local community (probably not in domain of making and bringing the plans, but surely in large part of the domain of their realization). On the other side, there are a number of city management mechanisms, such as immobility ownerships, taxes and fees, services and renounced rights prices, issuing of regulations, decisions realization through communal police and similar matters, that are mostly sited on the republic rank, and which in fact disable the local authority functioning and executing, in the full sense of the meaning.

This kind of displacement detected in jurisdictions correlation drastically reduces technological and managing system entirety. It is worth to declare that this entirety has existed earlier and it has not depended on official jurisdiction separation, although the single political scene has been connecting all decision levels. Today, when such political discipline and singularity are exceeded, dislocated strictly defined jurisdictions that were more disturbed for the period of political pluralism ascertaining (saving city government

by centralization of city functions during the opposition overcoming in certain communities) are provoking the real disturbances for operating, functioning and developing of the city.

Cities in some European countries were the symbol of independent political entities with high autonomy level centuries ago. City government supremely expresses fundamental characteristics of national regime. If political democracy exists on national level, like today in the most of west European countries and Japan, cities are enjoying high degree of local autonomy and democratic managing systems. Yet in case of authoritative regime, central government usually reduces or even completely crushes local authority and democratic initiatives. This is how countries with all the power and responsibilities concentrated on certain persons or groups mostly at city government rank are demonstrating the same attitude as in central government.

This standpoint meets the terms of the newest world programs of sustainable development, such as for example AGENDA 21, which is expecting from local authority to present decisional factor in the realization process of the nearly all goals of urban development. According to this document local authority is supposed to set, manage and sustain economical and social infrastructure, as well as environmental infrastructure and some of the future planning processes, also it is supposed to compose local laws regarded to environment and regulative as well as to assist in application and use of national environment law. Each local authority should be able to create dialogue with its residents, local organizations and private corporations and to adopt local Agenda 21. By using consultations, local authority may learn lots from the citizens, local city associations, business and private organizations, as well as to get information that will help to produce best development strategies. This sort of consultations would increase consciousness about problems hold to sustainable development. In order to achieve aims of Agenda 21 programs, law and regulative of local authority, should be applied and modified following the principles of local programs. Furthermore, strategies should be

used to support the offers for local, national, regional or international investing.

Especially significance in city functioning should be dedicate to public, as well to openness for the most important events, businesses and problems, and to all the acts that city government are performing to insure city functioning. Decisive assignment in public promotion of city outlook is in the hands of Medias who are seen as actual power sources, more or less independent from formal government executives. This is the reason why the development of independent medias and public opinion in general, so the entire communication with citizens are constituent part of the problem of directing the urban development in the conditions of political rivalry and confrontation, therefore it is recommended to explore this topic separately in framework of corresponding disciplines.

Diversities in political aims and programs, even more in political interests of differently ranked authorities, in conditions of no jurisdiction system, but mixed and technologically unsynchronized jurisdictions, are in possibility to endanger validity of any decision made on the level of local authority, still to completely disable their carrying out and cause long-standing and damaging confrontations. We consider needless to diminish or cover up those diversities, but to build new coordinated system of jurisdictions on the principles of decentralization and logical horizontal correlation of functions at the levels of community, city and republic.

CONCLUSION

At one side, basic troubles that are preventing existing system inadequacy to be misused, are in common sense and ethical aspect of all actors at the scene of local politics and local authority, as well as in an active part of independent medias (if there are some), who are following and indirectly controlling behavior of different groups and all events in daily city life.

At the other side, basic initiative strength that makes city functioning in spite of, and not gratitude to its own structure is in large persistency of the same actors and in huge effort putted so to reduce negative relation of

investments and effects caused by current system.

However neither of those is rational support for long-term periods. It is needed to transform formal systems, to coordinate responsibilities, jurisdictions and possibilities of local authority and adjust them to new circumstances of managing the city in the conditions of political rivalry, and then not only to permit city development, but to encourage it.

We are standing at the opinion that the most considerable step to improve the conditions of city functioning from the position of managing in branch of directing the urban development would be decentralization of jurisdictions and their mutual synchronization. Certainly, this would not matter only to urban development, but to entire system of local authority, thus from the bottom to the top on the system organization in the wholeness.

Although importance lay in horizontal distribution of responsibilities and authorizations in relation of local authority executives and their parliaments, even in the matter of professional autonomy management and their possibility of impoliticness, it is moved to the backside at present.

What comes as very interesting issue is how to organize functioning of local authority and its interior organs in one new constellation of authorizations. This problematic issue has to be resolved correspondingly to changes proposed in the lines of their straight consequence (i.e. as reason of their reconstruction).

There are obvious tendencies that local authority executives are becoming more powerful on the damage of their parliaments, as also tendencies that the role of city manager as politically autonomic professional in direct executing authority is becoming more important, so we are facing one of the issues that require special attention and treatment, somewhere out of this work.

The main principle is to incline towards horizontal connection of jurisdictions respecting whole autonomy principles at the lowest authority level (already accepted principles that are making efficiency and

rationality in managing increasing, and more direct democratic deciding referred to relevancies of local authority, not damaging to extensive community.

It can be that some communities that are capable to renew their local framework, are being crushed by local framework of the country. In order to prevent this, it is recommended that the authority is decentralized. Decentralization of authority by the principle of territorial distribution is making that citizens can become active members of society political life. The existence of local authority presents one of the most important suppositions in order to turn big city into democratic community. Choosing the type of local authority directly influence to further institutional types of local authorities in a big city, as well as on the type of relations and connections created in such community.

Therefore, city and local community have to have their own complete and effective local authority, i.e. true authority for the issues regarded to local community development, and already inbuilt in the largest part of European democracy. It is about decentralization of the city referring to the local community and decentralization of Republic referring to the city government. This kind of decentralization should be carried out in the domain of law (regulative), economy (ownerships, income – expense) and system functioning technologies that make city functioning dependent of (energy, traffic, police ...). All this mentioned would enable development from the bottom, what is marked as rational and democratic.

Finally, it should be underlined that democracy and strength increasing of local authority, by reducing the level of deciding to the lowest from the viewpoint of managing rationality are not simply the civilization establishment of the developed world that by established procedures are confirming the values of individual and community belonging to. It is about very rational systems that are reducing resistances in realizations of democratically made decisions, mostly hiring community efforts (voluntary and with precise interest) to achieve common goals.

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