# OLD model of NEW social and cultural REALITY

Author 1: Mihajlo Zinoski, PhD, Associate Professor, Faculty of Architecture, UKIM;
Author 2: Iva Kolevska, M Arch, Architect, Faculty of Architecture, UKIM.

## Abstract

This paper presents the project design process where local authorities should anticipate the key aspects of socially significant needs in the process of planning considerations. The success of implementation of sustainable architectural project depends on development of social process that meet the needs of community current members, but also to support the future generation development.

The key assumption presented in this paper is architectural research project as a tool to argue between aprioristic doctrines of ecological sustainability versus social sustainability. Therefore the key hypothesis is that hybrid architectural concept with multiple meanings shall produce social cohesion by attracting diverse group of users.

*Key words: Social sustainability, multiplicity, hybrid.*

## 1. Introduction

This paper focuses on architectural design process based on previous research on participatory action project toward fostering social sustainability.

The final considerations were achieved from the participatory action project that there is a certain methodology of creating successful story involving different common interests of the involved stakeholders. Guided by the assumption of creating social sustainability research project by involving the different parties in the participatory action process, an architectural concept could be created with social significance for the final users.

In this attempt of implementation of final considerations regarding the social sustainability, this paper will present the methodological guidelines through redefining the aprioristic approach of the design project, which doesn't meet significant results for the local community regarding the sustainable concept as an estimative goal.

This paper presents the project design process where local authorities should anticipate the key aspects of socially significant needs in the process of planning considerations. Local habitants and their needs from the local scale in the neighborhood should be considered in the process of programming and planning the Urban Detailed Plan as project documentation.

The success of sustainable development programs in transitional societies is determined by their ability to achieve the highest attainable increase in the living standards without measuring the least possible environmental and social degradation. This condition is present especially in the post socialist countries such as the Republic of Macedonia who are attempting to reach the European Union standards for living environment without acquiring of certain knowledge. It seems that the local authorities and experts in that area of expertise emphasize environmental or economic sustainability on macro level avoiding the aspects of social sustainability of the future development at the local level. There is a great possibility for "environmental degradation to occur in areas of high poverty and low social cohesion" – McKenzie[1]. Even then, when local authorities considering the macro level, a priory plan the green parks in the central area by removing so called "problematic" activities at the micro level, they represent a lack of knowledge of sustainability. Even Jane Jacobs in 1960's demanded the old aprioristic definition of "ecological sustainability" regarding the enlarging of green areas in the cities to decrease the CO2 emission by facts. She emphasizes the psychological and social importance of these "problematic" parts of the city rather than their so called "fundamental" ecological importance in overpopulated cities.

Beside this theoretical Plato of opposite ideologies between global trends and local effects, the city of Skopje has its own superimposed morphology of realized Urban Plans during the centuries. One of these "overlapped" parts of the city could be called "social oasis" in the middle of the urban block of Kenzo Tange in the center of the city of Skopje. This territory where social sustainability model was the guideline was subject of creating social sustainable architectural concept.

## 2. SUSTAINABLE MODEL

For successful implementation of architectural project with sustainable development in mind, is the ability of members of certain local community to develop social processes and structures which not only meet the needs of its current members, but also support the ability of future generations to maintain a healthy and sustainable community. To avoid the increasing of the most common problem of high poverty and create even deeper low social cohesion, social interactions within community should define the identity of public domain and should be represented by authorities. Brundtland's definition established in 1980's is: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

This project develops an architectural research methodology which satisfies the needs of involved stakeholders implementing the model of sustainable city planning and designing. This project should represent an example of "development methodology" for different sites in the central area of city of Skopje.

Thereby the main goal of research presented here is plausibility of basic theoretical and methodological principles to achieve a social sustainability as a collaborative condition within communities.

The key aspect of social sustainability depends on societal conditions of community on its local level. In that sense Phillip Sutton's words are: "sustainability is not "about" the integration of ecological, social and economic issues, nor is it "about" widespread consultation nor is it "about" improving quality of life. It is about maintaining or sustaining something". To understand this concept there is a necessity to identify the focus of concerning of local community. Since the identity of the place is historically, spatially and culturally diverse, its development and further growth is compatible with harmonious growth of civil society. To sustain this environment conductive and compatible, cohabitation of culturally and socially diverse groups should at the same time encourage social integration and improving the quality of life for all segments of the population.

To quote Philip Sutton again, the focus on the "local" in all these matters is due to recognition that "the social sustainability of cities is affected not only by nationwide spatial policies, but also, if not chiefly, by policy decisions and implementation at the local level".

It is required to focus on local policies and institutions, to build up "comparative knowledge" about the key factors that make urban policies successful. Particular societies in transition such as Macedonian cannot be studied through policy or institutional change without reference to the transformation of space (local region) they occupy, such things as the allocation of public civic space, street design, and the location of services in relation to population. The principle of "best practice experience" became model for social sustainability research that takes the focus away from "scientific" measurement of a condition and emphasizes "comparative knowledge". By doing this it allows for a wide range of collaborative research projects to be considered under the heading of social sustainability and community integration.

## 3. OLD model of NEW social and cultural REALITY

Each local community has its particular condition where architectural research problem has its own characteristics. Thereby, each indicator of that condition becomes actions, which can be implemented by the community as a whole in order to increase or preserve its current level of sustainability over time.

According the fact that even one fifth (1/5) of the population in Macedonia is involved in agricultural production, a third dominant sector creating the national GDP, it is obvious the importance of open green market role in the Macedonian society. Beside economic importance of green market it inherits and preserves the spirit of tradition in society and cultural habits of purchasing goods on open space. One of the most important characteristics of that type of trading is unexpected encounters at the market creating its phenomenology as a social hub. Fig.1.


Figure1: *Skopje open green market*

Actions: First aspects of local authorities perceiving the macro level should be social priorities. Community integration should be a model that takes the focus away from scientific approach of rationalism. Scientific measurement of a condition by proposing green areas as "lungs of the city" is the aprioristic doctrine of sustainability. More green areas instead of open green market cannot solve the "problems" on micro level. As J. Jacobs states at least 3 acres of green area are necessary to absorb CO2 emission of only 4

citizens. Therefore she emphasizes the psychological health and social cohesion instead of "ecological sustainability". On the contrary, comparative knowledge of empiricism by preserving the native social and economic activities of open green market instead, will sustain as a community key aspect of social cohesion on micro level. J. Jacobs states further what we realized from the modernistic model of the cities is largeness and no articulated green areas that caused an opposite effect of sustainable principles. By expansion of green areas the coherency of the cities becomes destroyed. The pedestrian routes become obsoletely long between the functional city units. Maintaining the green areas drain the city budget and in the end they become deserted points in the city unsafe and attractors of illegal activities. We may conclude that from the point of comparative empirical knowledge a hybrid architectural concept shall produce a catalytic social cohesion and unexpected encounters.

## 4. MULTIPLICITY

The idea for the title of the project "Multiplicity" comes from the allegoric painting of Pieter Bruegel the Elder, "Tower of Babel" from 1563. In its style the painting belongs to the Netherlands Renaissance. The narrative of the painting is multiplication of meanings. The tower is Babylonian in meaning, but Roman in design. The tower is in a costal landscape reflecting the facts that waterways carried most of the heavy goods during the 16th century. Fig.2.

Figure2: *Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Tower of Babel (1563)*

Methods: From the position of plan we can realize the principle of physical interpolation of a new "theme" in existing built structure. Similar to the painting of P. Bruegel the project has multiple meanings. The dominant shape of dwelling is Babylonian by meaning, but from the typology of the floor plan it is noticeable the application of order and clear organization of open market and its components referring to the "Hellenistic Agora". Fig.3.

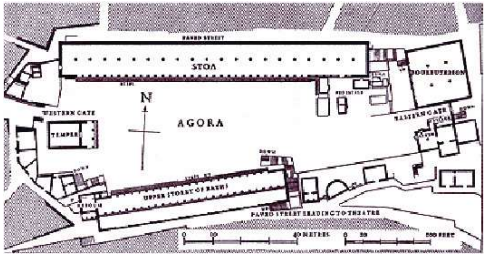


Figure3: *Agora in Athens, Greece*

The morphology of the open market is three partition division of the volume where lateral parts becomes "Hellenistic stoa" with the counters, and the central module as an "agora" between the "stoas" initiates interactions, communication and social activities. Similar to the Turkish bazar there is segregation of counters by smell of different types of spices in the lateral parts of the "stoas". Fig.4.

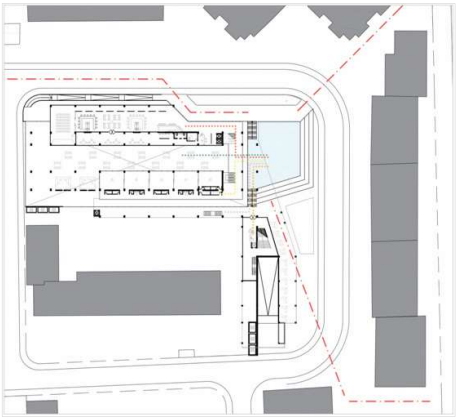

Figure4: *Interpolation of open market*

The concept of "hybrid" architecture shall produce social cohesion and will attract a diverse group of users. The key aspect of social sustainability is a catalytic social program such as culture and recreation. These programs are carefully selected to reinforce the healthy physical and mental habits of people as a large problem of contemporary living. The performing rooms and educational nutritionist center are proposed for this reason. Fig.5.

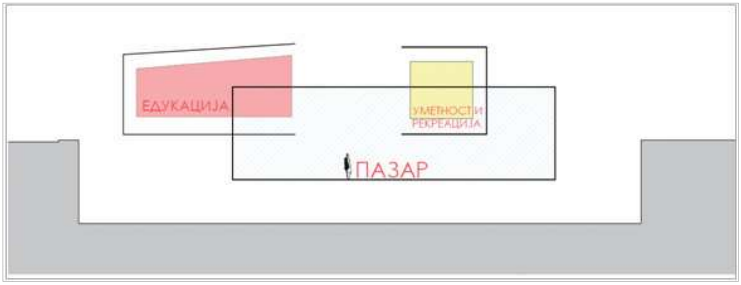


Figure5: *Multiplicity of program*

Social housing is proposed to reinforce the social aspect of the space. Their presence here will give them possibility of integration in society, to participate and not be marginalised. Furthermore the program clearly emphasizes the social aspect of the hybrid building; there is a maximum of economical sustainability too. The site is not attractive only for housing, so the offices and creative workshops are included in the concept. Fig.6.


Figure6: *A view to the social housing*

Each local community has its particular condition where architectural research problem has its own characteristics. Thereby, each indicator of that condition becomes actions, which can be implemented by the community as a whole in order to increase or preserve its current level of sustainability over time.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Contemporary city is facing intensive process of mass urbanization. Social and economic sustainability are doctrines to overcome the problems of low quality of living as consequences of over urbanized cities. Hybrid or disparate program integration in architecture offers one of the possibilities for social sustainability. By redefinition of the territory with more complex, but at the same time more flexible and transformative architectural and urban concepts, we encourage coexistence and offer possibilities for chance, unexpected relationships and non-programmed situations, which are the key to the improvement and establishment of the social relations.

Disparate program integration also helps the local economy, increases the population density, but decreases used resources which in turn boost the property's value while taking advantage of its full potential, hence solving the problems with sustainability and the rest of the current social challenges.

## References

[1] Gehl, J., Cities for people. Island Press, 2010.

[2] Green Innovations Inc., Sutton, P., Sustainability: what does it mean, 2000, http://www.green-innovations.asn.au/sustblty.htm.

[3] Kolevska. I., New Architectural concept, Model of New Social and Cultural Reality, Master Thesis Project, 2017.

[4] McKenzie, S., Social Sustainability: Towards Some Definition, Magill: Hawke Research Institute University of South Australia, pp. 3, 2004.

[5] Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water, Annual report of Agriculture and Rural Development, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia, 2012.

[6] World Commission on Environment and Development, Our common future, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 2, 1987.