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PERCEPTION OF HERITAGE VALUES: EXPERIENTIAL QUALITATIVE MODEL FOR ASSESSING THE URBAN POTENTIAL

ABSTRACT

Modern-day is defined as a period of globalization, a complex construct that can pose a threat to maintaining the uniqueness of a place and creating a distinctive city identity. The hypothesis of this paper is that, while the phenomenon of globalization is researched within different disciplines, a common interdisciplinary theme stands out - the experience and perception of urban space that further builds a unique impression of the observed scene. The assumption will be investigated through the formation of a qualitative model for examining the urban potential with the aim of affirming the visual quality of the place as an important factor in the construction of local identity. The established model is examined through case studies of the 20th-century heritage. This period was chosen because it represents the subject of a contemporary global discussion about the conservation, activation and use of heritage in urban structures. The premise is that the qualitative model can be adequately applied to architecture from this period and contribute to its visibility and understanding, as well as to the examination of its role in the creation of contemporary local identity. The research is significant because it enables an interdisciplinary consideration of heritage as a key factor in building the modern city identity based on its visual impression.

Keywords: *visual impression, identity, globalization, heritage, spatial cognition*

1. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has been established as a period of globalization. This complex phenomenon, in addition to numerous qualities, represents a risk to the preservation of the unique cultural heritage, striving for general economic, social and cultural globalization. Cultural heritage represents the legacy of the physical space and social and community values that makes the society distinctive. These physical and intangible values create a sense of belonging and place identity.

The contemporary city image is undergoing a constant transformation as a result of rapid urban development. The development of urban areas further conditions the adaptation of functional, ambient, social and cultural city parameters to current development tendencies. Rapid changes in the urban landscape can also lead to conflict between new and existing buildings and their contextual and visual connection. It is necessary to introduce continuity within the colorful network of contemporary and historical urban entities, which highlights the need for defining a new methodology of environmental analysis of heritage.

Cultural heritage is interpreted as significant within various disciplines: as a resource of economic and cultural capital or a sociologically significant factor for place recognition and the creation of belonging and identification with the observed. The common denominator of all recognized interpretations of heritage is the experience of space - the unique urban impression that allows the user to form a viewpoint through the perception of space and interpret it as unique. Contemporary heritage research and its preservation methodologies predominantly focus on tangible conservation aspects, such as adaptive reuse and building reconstruction. A disproportionately small amount of research focuses on the *values* embedded in heritage sights, the specific meaning they communicate to people and its role in the formation of individual and collective identity. It can be argued that the preservation of the unique values that stakeholders bring to heritage buildings is not preserved as equally as the material aspects of the buildings themselves. The analysis of the value that heritage carries is complex due to its shifting character - new stakeholders, fickle social conditions and time deviation can greatly affect the way we perceive heritage, as well as the value we assign to it based on personal conclusions. Due to the observed neglect of heritage values in relation to its material components, the research within this paper focuses on the formation of a qualitative model for examining the relationship between an observer and heritage through the visual perception of urban space. The research is based in the field of architecture, in view of the fact that it focuses on the perception of the built structure and the conditionality that the context and the building carry in understanding the experiential potential. The research outcome within this paper is the formation of a model for the valorization of the visual impression of urban structures that are rich in heritage which, with its application, enables (1) the formation of an objective overview of urban space, with a special focus on intangible values it carries to the observer, (2) recommendations for improving the location and (3) the highlighting of perceptually significant zones within observed context.

The qualitative model will be examined through a case study of 20th-century heritage. A significant discussion is taking place about the way in which these contemporary artefacts are treated and conserved, as well as their recognition and presentation on a global level. I believe that the qualitative model especially contributes to the understanding and valorization of 20th-century heritage from an architectural perspective by illustrating the building-observer relationship and the values embedded in this exchange.

2. HERITAGE AND IDENTITY: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Place identity is a key concept in the discussion of contemporary cities and local heritage. When interpreting the future development and “behavior” of European cities, Manuel Castells points out that cities are increasingly turning to local heritage, concluding that the weakening of national identity makes people insecure and distrustful of the environment, politics and social relations [1]. This claim inspired much future research and the overall impression that modern-day cities are now perceived as active factors when tackling contemporary societal challenges, ranging from social cohesion to local peculiarities [2]. Cultural heritage can be seen as an effective tool that conditions the identity of a place and our perception of urban space in several ways. A unique urban landscape creates a sense of community and belonging to a certain social entity. Cultural heritage contributes to the economic development of cities as tourist places and business centers. In this way, a sense of social solidarity based on local and global development perspectives is created [3: 232].

Cultural heritage is one of the building elements of the unique identity of the observed place. The influence of identity on the observer's attitude towards space can be positive or negative. Gregory Ashworth points out that a positive attitude represents a universal benefit to local development just because of its existence, calling this phenomenon the *identity dividend* [4: 10]. Identity profit, whether economic, social or psychological, characterizes a territory as rich in experiences, culture and history and affirms an initially positive view towards the inhabitants and users of said space. The instrumentalization of heritage is not the only way to create an approving attitude towards space, but it represents a direct and recognizable pattern for establishing a memorable place identity.

During the process of economic globalization, many of the world's cities become connected by intangible characteristics of the environment that are outside their territories, creating a unified network of urban structures - global culture [5: 32]. The built structure, events or notable people from the past represent elements of identity that are interpreted and adapted to contemporary demand. The unique value of heritage includes not only the observed cultural heritage but also its meaning in the historical, cultural, social and psychological context of the perceived territory, independent of the market or financial value it possesses. Heritage is defined as a part of cultural capital, i.e. an integral part of the territory's wealth [6: 438]. Upon contact with the heritage space, this specific heritage value is recognized by the observer. Therefore, it can be concluded that this value depends on the quality and intensity of the exchange of various information between the observer and the built environment.

2.1. VALUE VS MATERIALITY: SCALE 1:1

The value of cultural heritage does not derive from the profits and businesses it encourages but rather from the values inherent in the wealth of heritage. Local peculiarities, history and culture become part of the spatial development strategy. The link between heritage and identity is undeniable. However, the existing built structure in many cities creates a unique urban landscape that is universally recognizable and standardized and is therefore considered insufficient in the struggle to establish an authentic and noticeable impression of space. Contemporary research examines the impact of innovative architectural feats and large projects in the age of economic and cultural globalization on the “branding” of the city [7]. Striking architectural projects create a unique contemporary image of the place. New

elements of urban morphology become recognizable and contribute to the creation of contemporary identity and the desired image of space.

Modern methodologies for the implementation of heritage in everyday city life engage predominantly in research of the tangible building aspects – the technical and technological adaptation to the modern needs and use, the building repurposing in accordance with current necessities or the use of new materials and innovative technologies. A significantly smaller quantity of research deals with the values that heritage carries and the importance it has in shaping the image of the place and the local community. Researching the value of heritage is complex due to its impermanent character. Different stakeholders/groups of observers can interpret a certain spatial zone in a completely different way, depending on age, gender, social conditions or cultural differences. The value can also be affected by the passage of time - the development of the city over time transforms the way we perceive the area of interest in relation to the wider context. It is commonly accepted that the values attributed to heritage places are not an immutable constant, but rather that they evolve in respect to both time and space [8: 58]. The observed transformable character of heritage value mapping thus must be taken into account in the process of forming any future research methodology.

Considering the presented views, the research within this paper is focused on the topics of identity and spatial (inter)relationships. The recognition of defined research areas as significant stems from the potential for establishing a quality connection with research from the domain of architecture. The topics of identity and space largely depend on the determinants of the physical, functional, historical and ambient context and characteristics of the place, making them adequate fields of analysis for defining the contemporary image of the city.

2.2. SPATIAL IDENTITY: AN ARCHITECTURAL PERSPECTIVE

The construction of meaning through the interplay of place-making, architecture and collective memory has always given shape and embodied spatial identity within the built environment. The physicality of place has provided a sense of continuity, and with that, architecture has constructed a tangible spatial identity through the manipulation of space, employment of materials and technology, and the resultant appearance and associated experiences [9: 14]. In the formation of the contemporary image of the city, heritage is a significant factor affecting the definition of the immediate representation and personal experience of the environment. The influence of cultural heritage on the contemporary social context is illustrated through the degree of connection of an individual or community with space, that is, the desire for further participation in its construction. Defining the collective place identity rests in culture as the bearer of social heritage, patterns of behavior, thoughts, feelings and actions. The urban environment can be interpreted as a unique expression of culture in a local context; therefore, when interacting with the elements of the built structure, the user of space participates in the construction of collective identity. Recognizing the building elements of identity in the architectural discourse opens the possibility for interdisciplinary cooperation and exchange of methodologies between architecture and related disciplines. The expected outcome of the research involves examining the potential of contextual analysis of heritage through the hypothesis that this type of research is inseparable from the spatial, social, historical and environmental context in which it is located.

Architectural research on the topic of identity predominantly focuses on the experience of space and the unique relationship between the user and the environment. Architect Aldo Rossi points out that the research of collective identity is inseparable from the territory, considering that this relationship is crucial for understanding the architecture of the city. The continuity of urban development, which is observed through the transformation of the physical and functional structure, is of essential importance for the understanding and interpretation of the city's identity. In his exploration of the urban context identity, Rossi classifies the elements of the built environment into (1) propelling and (2) pathological spatial artifacts [10: 373]. He recognizes the driving elements in historical monuments that permanently contribute to the city's vitality due to the permanent economic or social role of monuments within the city structure. The pathological characteristics of the urban environment include historical artifacts that have lost their functional value and deviated from the dynamic development of the territory over time. Although they do not participate in urban transformation, they can be significant from the aspect of establishing a connection with the past. It can be concluded that the driving elements are significant because they form a collective identity through continuous experience, while the pathological elements attach to a history with which the user has no direct connection. The interpretation of identity viewed in this way highlights the problem of the dominance of pathological spatial elements where the historical context is illustrated as distant and foreign.

3. CONCEPTION OF A MODEL FOR DEFINING THE EXPERIENTIAL URBAN POTENTIAL

Observing the identity theme within the framework of architectural theory requires the introduction of scale into spatial analysis. Defining the subject of investigation as a city, settlement or person greatly affects the issue of identity and its perception. The exploration of the experience of space in this paper predominantly focuses on the scale 1:1 - the immediate view of the user on the urban environment. Central to the understanding of the identity of space – viewed through heritage – is the experience of space, which represents the basis for further interpretation of heritage in different disciplines. The location memorability defines how the space will be further interpreted from a sociological, psychological, economic or geographical point of view. The observer is a reference point for all mentioned spatial qualities, such as perception, memory, affection and evaluation [11: 71].

Identity can be seen as a form of non-verbal communication of the physical environment. Polish architect Amos Rapoport is considered one of the pioneers of environmental-behavioral research in the field of architecture. A special review within the research of spatial identity as a form of non-verbal communication is defined by observing the influence of scale on the way we perceive space. Elements of the urban structure and the spatial (inter)relationships they build are divided by Rapoport into (1) fixed elements of the environment, (2) partially fixed and (3) variable elements of the environment [12]. Fixed elements of the environment refer to features of the built structure that change rarely or very slowly, such as infrastructure and facilities. The way in which these elements are placed in the space relating dimension, location and composition communicates meaning to traditional culture, but it also represents a favorable place for observing the (inter)relationship with other elements of the environment [13]. Partially fixed characteristics of the environment include urban elements that can be changed quite

quickly and easily, such as furniture and other attributes of interior decoration, clothing, urban furniture, advertisements, etc. These elements are of particular importance for identity analysis because they provide more information about the observed place compared to fixed elements of the environment. Variable elements are space users; their dynamic positions, formed relationships with other users and spatial elements define different forms of verbal and non-verbal behavior and experience of space.

When forming a model for the valorization of the perceptual quality of heritage, this paper will focus on the period of the 20th century. Recognition of heritage from the recent past is not sufficiently expressed on a global level. Defining a model for recognizing the perceptual quality of architecture can contribute to the improvement of recognition of this sensitive heritage group. A large number of architectural works of the 20th century with high historical value are still unprotected and pose a risk of inadequate maintenance and conservation. Furthermore, researchers conclude that the sharp decline in various resources calls for a wider reflection on heritage preservation, which should converge not only on the restoration of iconic monuments from the past but also on built heritage in the broad sense – most of which is from the 20th century – as a resource that is spread all across the territory [14: 42]. The interest in the twentieth-century heritage has developed in recent decades into an independent research practice through various initiatives for the preservation and conversion of modernist period buildings, such as Docomomo International, ICOMOS and the Association for Preservation Technology. In recent years research has been focused on methodology advancements, such as the formation of new tools for assessing the twentieth-century thematic framework [15].

Space provokes the observer's curiosity and becomes a place of infinite construction of experiences by evoking successive memories and relations within the moment of perception. In this way, an open space is left for upgrading the experience with the help of new knowledge and through the generalization of the visible and cognitive [16]. The preservation of 20th-century heritage is now one of the most challenging debates taking place in the field of architectural conservation [14]. The heritage of the 20th century does not have established forms of conservation and global recognition, although it often, to a large extent, participates in creating the identity and uniqueness of a place. The formation of a qualitative model enables the verification and valorization of the authenticity of heritage and its role in building global recognition. Memorability is based on the experience of space, specifically on the visual perception of the observed. The quality of perception is an objectively important factor of analysis because it can be studied equally in diametrically opposite contexts. The subjects of qualitative model analysis are fixed elements of space [12] – architecture, built structure and space. It is important to consider the subject of analysis as an integral part of the immediate environment while valorizing the continuity of viewing the built structure. The goal of the analysis is to determine how identifiable the building is at the perceptual level, which conditions the possibility of creating a globally affirmed identity.

3.1. WHAT DO WE SEE? DEFINING RELEVANT CHARACTERISTICS OF EXPERIENCE

When we talk about the perception of space, an important factor is the perceptual intensity that the observer achieves in direct contact with the environment. The object of observation is the border of perception, which in most cases is the street front - the silhouette of the built structure. In the process of perception, four types of variables are recognized: (1) observer, (2) mode of observation, (3) environment and (4) attributes of the

environment [17]. In the framework of this research, the observer and his mode of observation refer to a person watching the location in direct contact with a built structure through pedestrian movement. The subject of research - environment refers to the mandatory observation of heritage buildings as part of the context in which they are located. The attributes of the environment are defined through a qualitative model that will be presented below (Table 1).

In the process of perceiving the environment, the eye recognizes patterns of materiality that are open to further interpretation. Throughout visual contact with the built environment, the observer notices spatial (inter)relationships of tangible spatial elements, which can then be further cognitively interpreted. During the visual process, the observed characteristics are distinguished: the space of grouping (uniform character of the space) and the space of contrast (dynamic/heterogeneous character). In order to attract attention and interest, the composition of the built structure must be diverse, original, complex and ambivalent [17]. Order, organization, repetition and symmetry keep the viewer's interest within satisfactory limits, creating a moderate perceptual intensity. The environment should be continuous, varied and full of patterns in order for the perceptual process to be sufficiently interesting for the observer. In this way, a high-quality perceptive experience is formed with zones of greater intensity that make the built structure recognizable.

Table 1. Review of environment attributes relevant to the experiential qualitative model

PERCEPTUAL INTENSITY	ENVIRONMENT ATTRIBUTES	URBAN POTENTIAL	LIMITATIONS
moderate perceptual intensity	Predictability Organization Repetition Symmetry Uniformity Recognizability	The basic process is grouping - the observer notices zones of perceptually similar characteristics and further interprets them in cognitive processes as uniform groups	Visual perception of constant uniformity can be too boring and uneventful, which further causes the unrecognizability of the observed
high perceptual intensity	Diversity Originality Complexity Ambivalence Contrast Continuity Pattern recognition Characteristic	The high intensity of perception abounds in contrasts that suddenly attract the observer's attention. A person perceives (inter)relationships between built elements, which create a memorable image of the place	Constant high intensity of perception can lead to perceptual fatigue due to an excessive amount of stimuli from the environment

4. CASE STUDY: EMERGING HERITAGE

The problem of recognizing the importance of the 20th-century heritage lies in the short temporal distance from the present. A growing interest in recent heritage artifacts has been greatly intertwined with different markers of city identity from the architectural, epistemological or ideological point of view. Great changes are also taking place in the way we interpret heritage from different periods - the principles of preservation are not only related to the traditional protection of a building, historically significant place or archaeological site; the whole process becomes more dynamic in order to respond to the economic, spatial and social needs of modern society. This *living heritage* requires complex preservation modes in order to be protected but also integrated into everyday life. Ignoring the process of globalization and its impact on heritage and identity can pose a great risk to local identity safeguarding – with it being ultimately forgotten or marginalized.

Modernism marked the architectural theory of the 20th century through new paradigms and the transformation of architectural form. The use of mass production and prefabrication in construction represented a sign of a new social order and architecture that followed modern society's infrastructure and standard of living. New Belgrade is a municipality of Belgrade, planned and built in the second half of the 20th century. It is founded on the principles of modern urbanism and the modernist movement. New Belgrade was constructed as a modern, post-war city that illustrates the specific discourse of its time. Central zones of New Belgrade now hold the status of cultural heritage, which is one of the rare examples of mass housing being recognized as historically valuable and necessary for conservation. New Belgrade was recognized as an adequate scope for assessing the established qualitative model on the example of *living heritage*. The selection of cultural property of New Belgrade (Table 2) is taken from the database of the *Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Belgrade*, which primarily deals with the protection of cultural monuments, spatial cultural and historical zones, archaeological sites and notable places in the city of Belgrade.

Table 2. Immovable cultural property on the territory of the municipality "NOVI BEOGRAD" [18]

Cultural monuments	Museum of Contemporary Art Staro Sajmište – Gestapo Camp Church of St. Georgia in Bežanija Palace of the Federal Executive Council in New Belgrade Hangar of the Old Airport in New Belgrade The building of the Old Primary School in Bežanija
Notable places	Jewish cemetery in Ledine Memorial cemetery Friendship Park in New Belgrade
Facilities	"Sava Center" and "Intercontinental" Hotel (Crowne Plaza) "Fontana" Local community center "Genex" Residential and business center
Zones with historical or architectural value	Central zone of New Belgrade (blocks 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30) Blocks 1 and 2 in New Belgrade Coastal zone of New Belgrade

One representative from categories (a) Cultural monuments, (b) Facilities and (c) Zones with historical or architectural value was chosen for further research through a case study with the experiential model for assessing the urban potential. The selection was made through these categories with the aim of evaluating the model behavior in different spatial intervals – from single building assessment to multiple block exploration. The assumption is that comprehensive testing of the qualitative model in different scopes enables a critical evaluation of its success and potential further use in heritage research. Selected tangible cultural property includes (1) the Museum of Contemporary Art, (2) *Genex* Residential and business center, and (3) Blocks 1 and 2 in New Belgrade.

4.1. MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

The Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade is located opposite the Kalemegdan fortress and represents a notable architectural work by architects Ivan Antić and Ivanka Raspopović. The project was the winning entry in the 1960 competition for a contemporary museum building and represented a masterpiece of 20th-century Belgrade architecture. This institution has a high design quality, as well as functional support allowing it to continue to be the main location for the presentation of contemporary art in the capital after its reconstruction in 2017.



Figure 1. Museum of Contemporary Art. Image source: <https://msub.org.rs/>

The example of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade illustrates the favorable positioning of the built structure in the context of perception. The museum is located within a landscaped green area as the only built structure, so all attention is focused on it. Regarding the analysis of visual intensity using the set model, the museum is positioned as high-quality because it creates an optimal balance. Visual intensity is dominantly moderated through the perception of landscaped greenery, which achieves visual continuity and predictability. At the same time, the museum building represents a clear contrast in relation to the environment and thus attracts the attention of passers-by with its high intensity of

perception. A major contribution in terms of visual quality is the recognizable silhouette of the museum, which participates in creating the building's recognition and a local identity. Also, the prominence of the building as the only one in the immediate environment suggests to the observer that it is a building of notable purpose. A pedestrian unfamiliar with the building's contents can guess which typology it belongs to, which additionally affirms the visual impression as an important topic in terms of local recognition (Figure 1).

4.2. GENEX RESIDENTIAL AND BUSINESS CENTER

The *Genex* high-rise building in New Belgrade was designed by architect Mihajlo Mitrović in the second half of the 20th century. The building consists of two units, commercial and residential, with a restaurant at the very top. In 2021, the tower was included in the list of cultural assets and was under the protection of the *Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments*. It represents one of the most significant architectural works of its time and depicts the development of the capital.

The block in which the *Genex* tower is located is predominantly residential, with a built structure of uniform quality and appearance (Figure 2). This perceptual uniformity of the context allows the tower to stand out visually as a dominant benchmark and a zone of high perceptual intensity that contrasts with the rest of the block. In this way, the observer, without any prior knowledge of the location he is visiting, gets the impression that it is an important visually dominant building. This balance of moderate and high-intensity zones represents a quality relationship because it creates a perceptual experience for pedestrians that is dominantly moderate, full of patterns that repeat and create continuity, with a contrasting structure that visually appears complex, challenging and recognizable to the observer. This intensity ratio can be considered very favorable for the presentation of heritage within the immediate environment because, without any additional intervention, it calls for attention and creates a striking impression of the place.



Figure 2. *Genex* Tower. Image source: <https://nationalgeographic.rs/ekologija/a39194/Novi-beograd-ostaje-bez-zelenila.html>

4.3. BLOCKS 1 AND 2

Blocks 1 and 2 in New Belgrade are of great importance in the architectural activity of multi-family housing in the 20th century. The first blocks were realized in the big campaign of building apartments in New Belgrade in the 1960s, and for that reason, they are often called *experimental blocks* [19]. The authors of the project are architects Branko Petričić, Tihomir Ivanović and Dušan Milenković. The built structure was designed in accordance with the original block plans made of free-standing buildings, paying special attention to the amount of open public areas and greenery. Further development of the blocks led to the formation of informal built structures that do not follow the given geometry of the original block.

The analysis of the perceptual qualities of blocks 1 and 2 in New Belgrade using a qualitative model positions this zone dominantly as a zone of moderate perceptual intensity. The visual characteristics that stand out are continuity, uniformity and predictability. Even though the two blocks are separated by high-traffic roads, the similarities that the locality bears in the visual experience interpret these zones as one visual entity. Observing the two blocks clearly shows the sensory unity of the context and architecture, which connects this whole into a unique atmospheric group.



Figure 3. Block 1 and Fontana local community center. Image source: <https://www.gradnja.rs/novi-beograd-simbol-socijalizma-simbol-kapitalizma/>

The category of contrast is not observed in the expected tangible categories, such as residential towers of larger volume, because their repetition introduces them to the general continuity of the locality. The identified zones of higher intensity can be classified architecturally into (1) planned and (2) non-planned structures. The planned building of the “Fontana” local community center occupies a corner position within Block 1. It is a planned

building defined as a local commercial center for residents of multi-family buildings in its hinterland (Figure 3). Plan-defined visual contrast represents a perceptually important element, which diminishes the potentially too uniform or bland visual impression of residential architecture. It is successful if it has no experiential competition, that is, it clearly stands out as visually important. Adding an unplanned built structure poses a risk for the visual detection of a valuable building pattern. Contemporary single-story buildings built on the perimeters of blocks 1 and 2 represent unplanned buildings that greatly disturb the clearly defined concept of blocks and, in the perceptual analysis, represent zones that attract attention due to their deviation from the recognized building pattern.

It can be concluded that the analyzed zone represents one sensory unity within the layered city structure. In the analysis and valorization of heritage, this zone is not independently visually recognized as very significant. Still, it participates in the wider construction of the local identity of New Belgrade, which is globally recognized, carrying architectural values that are visually detectable. Using the experiential qualitative model for assessing the urban potential allows us to identify zones of higher interest for further exploration, which in this case refers to non-planned structures that potentially limit the value and recognition of the analyzed heritage.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS: *LIVING HERITAGE*

It is certain that the preservation of cultural heritage affirms the ecological, social, cultural and economic sustainability of the city. Adequate treatment of cultural heritage contributes to the quality of life of the social community by mitigating the impact of cultural globalization and encouraging sustainable economic city development. By interpreting the role of heritage in creating a unique identity of a place, we see the advantages and potential problems of its use within development strategies. The global character of modern information technology leads to a simple and direct acquaintance with different cultures and a selective, concise and simplified observation of the territory. It can be concluded that cultural heritage has different economic, social and cultural dimensions that can represent a significant role in the local development of the analyzed place. Cultural heritage can be viewed as a flexible and recognizable resource that is instrumentalized for the purpose of more effective local development. Future research trajectories must also interpret contemporary heritage through modern-day tools of experiencing and visualizing – rapid digitalization and everyday use of social media. Our sense of place can also be greatly influenced through digital networks that create borderless space, which can ultimately support engagement with different territories and expand our understanding on local identity.

This paper analyzes heritage as an initiator of the process of conceptualizing places. This phenomenological approach emphasizes heritage as a marker of urban space experience and forms a methodological apparatus that examines space from the perspective of observers. Personal contact at a scale 1:1 opens the possibility of viewing places from different perspectives - physical, functional, ambiental, historical or social. The analysis is in the domain of architectural spatial research, since the recognized research polygon is comprised of tangible built context components. The research result is a qualitative model for examining the experiential potential that, through the analysis of spatial (inter)relationships, illustrates the existing position of the analyzed heritage building in the immediate context and allows us to understand better its current role in the exchange

between the observer and the building. The attempt to objectify complex spatial relations represents a step towards a wider application of the set model in different contexts.

The established qualitative model measures the strength of the visual intensity of the observed building in the immediate context, thus emphasizing the urban place potential. The model represents a starting point for further development of the heritage area in the local context with the purpose of achieving global recognition. The limitations of the set model are recognized in its generality and objectivity - as much as these qualities can be considered favorable for the wider applicability of the model in different contexts, there is a danger of making too general conclusions that ignore the place peculiarities. Having this in mind, the application area of the qualitative model should be an introductory segment of a complex heritage analysis - a base and an overview of locational conditions that enable further qualitative analysis. Case studies in the area of New Belgrade enabled the verification of the model in real space and in different scopes, which can additionally affirm the use of the presented model for assessing heritage. The period of the 20th century is especially singled out because I believe that the qualitative model can make a special contribution to the examination of *living heritage*. Living heritage is an active part of the surrounding context; it is important to understand its position in the environment before making additional interventions. By assessing the current state and the visual impression that the artifacts of the recent past left in the current, it is possible to valorize its position in the immediate environment.

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ОПАЖАЊЕ ВРЕДНОСТИ НАСЛЕЂА: ИСКУСТВЕНИ КВАЛИТАТИВНИ МОДЕЛ ПРОЦЕНЕ УРБАНОГ ПОТЕНЦИЈАЛА

Сажетак: Савремени тренутак дефинисан је као период глобализације, сложен конструкт који може представљати опасност по неговање јединствености места и изградњу препознатљивог идентитета града. Хипотеза овог рада је да се, упркос истраживању феномена глобализације у различитим дисциплинама, издваја заједничка интердисциплинарна тема – искуство и доживљај простора који даље гради јединствен утисак о посматраном месту. Претпоставка ће бити истражена кроз формирање квалитативног модела за испитивање урбаног потенцијала са циљем афирмисања визуелног квалитета места као значајног фактора у изградњи локалног идентитета. Постављени модел испитује се кроз студије случаја наслеђа 20. века. Овај период је изабран јер представља предмет опште дискусије на глобалном нивоу о начину конзервације, активирања и коришћења наслеђа у урбаним структурама. Претпоставка је да се квалитативни модел може адекватно применити на артефакте из овог периода и допринети њиховој видљивости и разумевању, као и испитивању њихове улоге у креирању савременог локалног идентитета. Истраживање је важно јер омогућава интердисциплинарно разматрање наслеђа као важног фактора изградње савременог идентитета места утемељеног на визуелном утиску простора.

Кључне ријечи: визуелни утисак, идентитет, глобализација, наслеђе, просторна когниција