RESEARCH REPORTS

Russification in the Bay of Kotor:
Urbanization According to Standards of Russian Immigration

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This ethnographic research on Russian entrepreneurship and urbanization of the old city core was carried out in the Bay of Kotor (Montenegro) and addressed the growing interest of Russian people in business economics. Cross-cultural cooperation among different nationalities involved changing aspects of home culture and their differentiation in relation to the capital city, where such a culture is an integral part, and to the public image of the state. Therefore, my aim was to develop an understanding of the macro processes that mark the local context in which people operate according to different political interventions and public and private interests.

Montenegro and its coastal region (the Bay of Kotor) are characterized by weak industrial development, corruption, a tension between legal and illegal powers and blurred boundaries between the formal and the informal sector of the economy. In this environment, the new social and cultural context displays new forms of urban structure as a field for understanding strong relationship between authoritative locals and new entrepreneurs. In this new socio-economic arena, market urbanism may play a leading role in the process of reflective use of the public and private domains for technological, political and financial purposes. Newly formed neighborhoods, also known as Russian areas, have led to a new type of settlements — associated settlements which are often related to the local proactive promotion of economic development by the local authorities.

Image 1: Typical Russian Settlements

In this sense, the Bay of Kotor has entrepreneurial potential, conditional to the development of institutional and organizational incentives for innovation, whereby entrepreneurship can be equated with investment; that is, obtaining capital to be invested in existing enterprises or in the establishment of new businesses (Knox 1995). Beyond these cultural and political tensions, it would be reasonable to say that in a number of cases 'entrepreneurs must have known that they were dealing with corrupt rulers, bureaucratic buck-passing and legal wrangling that brings out much that can go wrong in the relationship between bureaucracy and politics in contemporary democratic society ' (Pardo 2009: 105). In other words, lack of sanction from state institutions produces new political connections and networks that act as mechanisms for the 'legal' adaptation of new settlements and of the settlers involved in the reproduction of the local social and economic life. For example, a law passed in the early 1990s forbids the sale of land to foreigners, with the exception of completed residential or commercial buildings. Bearing in mind such legislation, new entrepreneurs started businesses in association with local investors (citizens of the state) who were interested in buying or selling land. The issue of land transactions has changed with the 'explosion of the real-estate market' in Montenegro in 2001, when a new law granted foreigners who are legal owners of firms or land the same access to the land market as enjoyed by the citizens of the state. This raises issues of legal and political responsibility, particularly in relation to the way in which the actions of those who rule and make laws affects the situation on the ground.

The significance of people's actions brings out an atmosphere of urban regime, making particularly useful urban anthropological research in an attempt to understand the connections between entrepreneurship, the local context and the politics of business. Proving to be a useful tool for investigating two leading groups — that is, the members of local government and the owners of private businesses — the empirical research addresses the development of an efficient system of city government which became part of an effective partnership between private and public areas. These changes have opened up new directions in making of public polices an instrument of power in shaping the urban market; but they have also proved to be a mechanism for promoting efficiency and effectiveness. In this line, these policies can be seen as political phenomena (see Shore and Wright 1997) and modern forms of governance in contemporary society.

In the light of contested political spaces, urban anthropology today highlights a dynamic field of competition (for 'symbolic capital'; see Bourdieu 1977) between local

people in charge of governance and new entrepreneurs. This process of competition entails the understanding of market urbanism and urban regime as fields for 'identification', 'formulation', 'implementation' of (urban) public politics that intervene at social, political, economic, cultural and personal level.

Key words: urbanization, urban identity, entrepreneurship, ethnic business, Russians, Bay of Kotor

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IRAM: An Innovative Research Center about Digital Issues and Contemporary Society

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IRAM (International Rhône-Alpes Media) is an international training and research centre focusing on new media and intelligence tools. It is a digital platform created by the Rhône-Alpes region and the University of Saint-Etienne. It develops cross-disciplinary research which focuses on the digital dimension of the public domain and its articulation with contemporary issues. IRAM is a space endowed with high technological equipment and a newspaper workroom called Newsplex. This space allows one to publish information in

several media (paper, Web, phones and Touchpad) and to access equipment facilities such as tactile tables, broadcasting studios, multimedia tablets, Smartphones etc. IRAM brings together several players in the digital field. This academic centre aims at developing original research in numerous fields such as communication anthropology, new heritage practices (such as 'Museolab' and 'Fablab'), social networks studies, digital imaginary and trans-media.

The public area and digital dimensions are among the major issues of today's society, marked by profound changes brought about by the omnipresence of Information and Communication Technologies. Our links to the surrounding world are thus modified. The strong presence of digital technology in urban areas alters the very structure of places as well as our perception of public areas.

This research addresses not only the modalities of change in the social sphere but also the way in which our perceptions are modified. As regards the digital dimension, perceptions are now to be redefined or at least questioned. Perceptions are characterized by unrest which distorts our relationship to reality and to the other. The idea is to set up these 'new communicative configurations' in an urban space that is connected to digital technology. In other words, this research focuses, for example, on these sensitive types of communications within the research framework at the IRAM.

These issues have led us to establish links between disciplines of the Social and Human Sciences, but also with Art, Communication and Technical Sciences of Information. My research is at the crossroads of various theoretical and disciplinary fields. This combination allows us to question the digital transition in our contemporary society. IRAM's research is transversal in order to produce the sensitive conditions of a singular exploration of the digital dimension in contemporary society.