

Public policies for cultural heritage valorization in the XXth century. Case study of city's soft power consolidation processes in Verona and Bistrita.

VEACESLAV MIR

Doctoral School of Administration and
Public Policy, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca,
ROMANIA

Abstract: Public administration is a complex structure, which, due to bureaucratization, is extremely difficult to change. During XX century, in the rapidly changing world, it was not enough to be specialized in just one particular area, because the world was becoming more and more interdisciplinary, requiring knowledge in many not so much related areas. The present study of cities' soft power consolidation processes was possible due to the interdisciplinary approach that combines expertise in public administration and history. This made it possible to identify causal links between local cultural institutions and creative industries and the place of local public administration in the development of the city through an overarching cultural policy. Study presents the results of a comparative interdisciplinary approach to the consolidation of the cities' soft power through the valorization of cultural heritage on the example of the cities of Verona (Italy) and Bistrita (Romania) in the context of popular literary characters with which these cities are associated.

Key words: city's soft power, interdisciplinary research, cultural policy, urban history, local public administration

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1. Introduction

Public administration is a fairly beadleom structure, which, due to bureaucratization, is extremely difficult to change.

The current global crisis of mistrust in public administration caused by the COVID-19 pandemic only confirms that public administration needs changes, and these changes should primarily concern human capital and the continuing education approach for public administration specialists. But similar processes could be observed during all XX century.

In the rapidly changing world, colliding with decay of the old world order, experiencing revolutions and two world wars, it was not enough to simply be specialized in any particular area, because

the world around was becoming more and more interdisciplinary, requiring knowledge in not so much related areas.

The understanding of public administration is also aided by the humanities, such as history, philosophy, literature and poetic images, etc. (Raadschelders, 2013, p. 80), due to the public administration involvement in all aspects of life. In the western world it became obvious that specialists in public administration needed to have interdisciplinary preparation for efficiently solving complex issues. In the eastern world, predominately communist, public administration did not concentrate on specialization and knowledge, but rather on loyalty to the party. This led to the emergence of a completely different approach of the development of cultural

policies for the valorization of cultural heritage, and thus, the consolidation of the soft power at the city, regional and national levels.

In the course of research, this point of view was confirmed. In the previous stages of the research, it was revealed that sustainable urban development could be based on the concept of soft power as spreading the influence of the city and attracting certain groups of the population with the help of various socio-cultural characteristics that distinguish the city from the others, despite relatively equal level of economic development. Cultural heritage and events, as a main part those various socio-cultural characteristics, have a significant role for urban development, as cultural production becomes a major element of the urban economy, affecting both the image of places and urban life in general (Richards, Palmer, 2010, pp. 3-5).

The study was possible due to the interdisciplinary approach that combines expertise in public administration and history. This made it possible to identify causal links between local cultural institutions and creative industries and the place of local public administration in the development of the city through an overarching cultural policy. Study presents the results of a comparative interdisciplinary approach to the consolidation of the cities' soft power through the valorization of its cultural heritage on the example of the cities of Verona (Italy) and Bistrita (Romania) in the context of popular literary characters with which these cities are associated.

According to the context described above, the article will be structured as follows:

- Interdisciplinary research: opportunities for Public Administration
- Cities' soft power and interdisciplinary approach
- Case study: Verona vs. Bistrita soft power consolidation approach

2. Interdisciplinary research: opportunities for Public Administration

Interdisciplinary research is a way of comprehensive consideration of a certain phenomenon. In the case of present study, it is about the phenomenon of the cities' soft power, its consolidation from the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary (Piaget, 1972, p. 127) points of view, because essentially public administration is also studying history and cultural politics in case of the cities. Such an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach in the course of research makes it possible to deal with the "manageable part within the context of the whole" (Vigoda-Gadot, 2002, p. 173), to achieve a synergistic result in terms of solving scientific problems and tasks.

In the conditions of an actively changing world, interpretation difficulties arise in the course of linear monodisciplinary research. The tendency towards the multipolarity of knowledge and, consequently, its systematization within a more global system that goes beyond traditional disciplines (The Danish Business Research Academy, 2008, p. 26). Present approach forms more integrated and complex studies that describe scientific issues much more accurately and lead to much more relevant results due to adaptation to the requirements of the time (Niculescu, Usaci, 2013, p. 7).

It is obvious that when studying such a complex phenomenon as the city and especially the soft power of the city, it is impossible to resort only to the public administration discipline to improve the city so that it could meet the expectations of its residents. This approach allowed us to most fully assess the phenomenon of city's soft power, gave it a comprehensive definition and analyze effective ways to consolidate the soft power of the city from

the cultural and historical points of view as well as from the public policies points of view.

Public administration as a discipline was originally interdisciplinary, relying on other academic disciplines (Vigoda, 2003, p. 10), borrowing elements from sociology, statistics, economics, history, political science, jurisprudence, etc., since the area of interest of public administration affects many interests at once, relating to all aspects of social life (Pollitt, 2010, p. 293). This applies to all social sciences, which in one way or another are forced to turn primarily to history as a discipline in order to explain the emergence and changes of certain social and cultural phenomenon that determine the development of society (Dogan, 1975, p. 101).

3. Cities' soft power and interdisciplinary approach

The concept of soft power represents a way of influencing and achieving desired results through voluntary participation, which can be also summered as non-military methods of influencing at different levels, predominately state ones. Development of the soft power concept allows extrapolating its principles on cities as new actor in the international relations field. There is a distinction between the soft power of a city and urban attractiveness. Soft power represents 'something special' that does not refer to economic criteria: urban attractiveness is a universal concept for all cities, but the concept of the soft power of a city always refers to the certain cases.

The city as an administrative unit, offered the convenience of living almost anywhere due to economic and socio-cultural development compared to rural areas. But there always was a need for a certain competitive advantage that was not just about economic criteria. The city can

attract tourists or qualified professionals only through its image (Van der Borg, Russo, 2005). The author of the concept Nye stated that soft power is based on culture (places that are attractive to others), political values (after which the individual guides to live home or abroad) and foreign policies (when others considers them legitimate) (Nye, 2011).

The processes of globalization led to the acceleration of regionalization processes, especially noticeable in Europe, where the concept of 'Europe of Regions' emerged. As a result of such deconcentrating and decentralization of power, the city actually receives state-like functions at different levels, so it's clearly noticeable the end of development cycle within a centralized state. There are several historical parallels with this process of regionalization. Although history is best viewed in its continuum, the closest historical parallel to our time is the disintegration of the Frankish Empire, especially after 987. The collapse led to the formation in the territories of modern Italy, the famous independent city-states of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Milan, Bologna, Verona, Genoa, Turin, Florence, Pisa, Venice, etc. (Lodolini, 1967).

The cultural sector is one of the key sectors for the consolidation of city soft power. It is the level of cultural sector development, its transmission to the masses that determines the level of general development of the urban community.

4. Case study: Verona vs. Bistrita soft power consolidation approach

From the point of view of the cities' soft power, Verona (Italy) and Bistrita (Romania) have a lot in common: perhaps some of the most famous literary characters in history are somehow associated with these cities. We are talking about Romeo and Juliet, whom Shakespeare settled in Verona (Shakespeare, 1871), and Count Dracula

(Stoker, 1897), whom Stoker settled near Bistrita, at the Borgo Pass and where Jonathan Harker makes his last stop before coming to the Count's castle. However, the approach of the public administration of these cities in relation to the consolidation of the city's soft power by using the fame of its literary "residents" for the purposes of the city's cultural diplomacy and creating an attractive image of the city not only for tourism, but also to attract new residents and the form a regional center because of city's fame were quite different.

It is important to note that neither of these two literary masterpieces contains a detailed description of the mentioned real estate, the authors give us the opportunity to dream and imagine, since the real estate does not serve as a plot-defining subject. In this case can be observed that the "boundaries between factual and fictional are blurred" (Lipovsek, Kesic, 2015, p. 109).

While Verona's public administration opted for involvement of professionals in history and culture, Bistrita's public administration opted for involvement of amateurs in history and culture, giving preference to economic factors in the development of cultural policy for the valorization of cultural heritage. The public administration of Verona took the path of developing the city's image as a center of romantic story, transforming and adjusting the appearance of the city and its particular buildings to the general public's ideas of what Verona looked like at the time of the events described in "Romeo and Juliet". The public administration of Bistrita took a slightly different approach, trying to replicate the experience of Verona, but without considering historical realities, using names from the novel "Dracula", but not taking into account the general public's ideas about the impression that places associated with Dracula should give. Hereby, the public administration of Verona used an interdisciplinary approach,

which gave a much more interesting and sustainable result than in the case of Bistrita, where decisions were taken by monodisciplinary specialists, strictly controlled by Romanian Communist Party, ignoring the culture and economy are "intertwined, socially constructed processes, rather than naturally separate spheres" (McCann, 2002, p. 389). To illustrate this idea most accurately, let us consider the Juliet's House in Verona and the Golden Crown Hotel and Dracula's Castle Hotel in the Bistrita.

The building known as "Juliet's House" can be considered rather "appointed" as her home, since the building was once owned by the Dal Capello family, whose name is simply consonant with the Capulets surname (Oggiano, 2021, p. 111). However, by the 19th century, the building fell into disrepair, it housed "a most miserable little inn" according to Goethe (D'Anniballe, 2010, p. 92). Quite a lot of tourists came to Juliet's house since the popularity of the Grand Tours in the 17th and 18th centuries, but until 1905 the house was privately owned and the city authorities decided to purchase it only under public pressure.

As well as in case of Count Dracula, cinema has played an important role in promoting the story. Although there were earlier films dedicated to Romeo and Juliet, it was John Cukor's film that became the breakthrough, and the love scene on the balcony became iconic, representing true love story as it should be.

Then the public administration of Verona decided to use the fame of the film and in the period 1937-1940 practically reconstructed the building, repeating the experience of Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc's restorations, that is, practically, remodeling the building in accordance with their own idea of how the romantic Juliet's house should look like. One of the most significant changes was the

construction of the famous Juliet balcony (Marini, 2003). So, for the balcony fence, the author of the restoration project Antonio Avena used spolia - parts of an antique, judging by its artistic features, sarcophagus, which for a long time was kept in one of the city museums.

In general, during the reconstruction of the building, many original medieval elements were used, which gave the final appearance of the building a credible eclecticism. Juliet's House got a second life and a new round of popularity, despite the fact that only walls remained from the original building, and it is generally impossible to prove that this house is somehow related to the fictional family of the Capulets, but as a part of cultural policy, on local administration level, it was a successful project, despite the fact Avena's ideas were not approved by Ministry of Education of that period.

In Bistrita, awareness about the vast historical, ethnographical and touristic potential existed among scientists (Nagler, 1981, pp. 123-128) and communist public administration (Morariu, T., Buta, I., Maier, 1972, p. 138). The idea to build the Golden Crown Hotel and Dracula's Castle Hotel originated in the 1970s, when the head of the Tourism Office of the Bistrita County Alexandru Misiuga read the Bram Stoker's novel and hit upon the idea of building a hotels reminiscent about the Count. Despite the correctness of such an idea in terms of the image of the city and the consolidation of its soft power, the history of Bistrita is much more closely connected to Borgo Pass. There is a belief among historians that it was the strategic proximity to Borgo Pass that influenced the choice of the location of the settlement, and then the fortress and the city, which today we know as Bistrita (Niedermaier, 1994, p. 80).

At the time of construction, the Dracula's Castle Hotel was called Tihuta because of

communist authorities, insisting on the Romanian name for the Borgo Pass. Only after the Romanian Revolution in 1989 hotel was renamed the Dracula's Castle Hotel (Baca, Rusu, 2017, pp. 112-118).

These hotels were quite popular among tourists at that time, but their popularity cannot be compared with the popularity of the Juliet's House. A coherent question arises, why?

The answer lies in the approach to the construction of the hotels: the projects were a fairly ordinary multi-storey buildings, in the spirit of socialistic architecture and Ceausescu's megalithic projects of that time. There is no hint of a romanticized Gothic style, no mystery (Lipovsek, Kesic, 2014, p. 56) the invention of a place corresponding to the action of the novel and its laconic description, as it was in the case of the Juliet's House. The absence of the atmosphere described in the novel and any stylistic attributes that would provide immersion in the Dark Ages era make the hotels rather ordinary and uninteresting to visit (Hovi, 2014, p. 69), despite the fact that local historians were aware about the special eclectic style developed during Bistrita's "golden era", combining Renaissance main structures with later Baroque elements into a unique architectural ensemble in the historic city's center (Gaiu, Popescu-Dolj, 2012, pp. 369-382)

In addition, the construction site for the Dracula's Castle Hotel was chosen too literally - the Borgo pass. In that place there are no ruins of old castles or fortresses that could serve as an entourage for the construction of a modern hotel. However, if the administration involved historians or had interdisciplinary expertise, then it would be easy to identify the ruined Rodna Fortress, which is located only in 50 km from the Borgo pass and could hypothetically be the prototype for Dracula's castle placement.

Even placing future Dracula's Castle Hotel in Borgo pass due to economic considerations, project's architecture could be way more gothic-like. The characteristic features of medieval defensive structures could be added, or using pseudo-spolies, copies of the original fragments of medieval buildings from the museum funds of the region. In this case the hotel would receive much more credibility, as happened in the case of the Juliet's House.

5. Conclusions

It must be understood that both Juliet's House and Dracula's Castle Hotel are essentially the results of the Shakespeare's and Stoker's fantasy, which were later materialized by the local authorities in order to consolidate the soft power of the city. However, the authorities of Verona succeeded to a much greater extent, since the house and especially Juliet's balcony represent already an integral part of the city of Verona itself (Bassi, 2016, p. 143).

Such differences in the results of local cultural and urban policy, despite of similar goals, are dictated by the different approach of local public administrations to solving the tasks set due to the different training and background of its representatives as specialists.

In the case of Verona, there can clearly be seen an interdisciplinary approach in the development of cultural policies for the valorization of Juliet's House and the consolidation of the city's soft power, with an emphasis on using historical sources for more credibility. In the case of Bistrizia, the approach of local authorities to the valorization of cultural heritage and the attempt to create a landmark place for fans of the Count Dracula was purely economic. Such a monodisciplinary approach of the local authorities to the project has deprived it of a significant part of its attractiveness for the target audience, precisely because of the lack of the right image for the resulting building, thereby

failing the attempt to consolidate the soft power of the city.

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