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Living with the World Heritage. An Ethnographic Study of the Ancient City of Nessebar, Bulgaria

Since the mid-1950s the Ancient city of Nessebar has had the status of national cultural heritage; in 1983 it was inscribed in the World heritage list of UNESCO. The article makes an attempt to study the regimes of using of and living in the city – world cultural heritage in two different political and economic contexts. The pressure of the tourism industry on the value, which was visible even in the years of the late state socialism, became irresistible after 1989 in the context of the liberalised market economy, the interests of the private investors and the accepted as part of the "normal" market order corrupt practices of the institutions that are responsible for the safeguarding and management of the cultural heritage. The ethnographic study argues that intertwined in a Gordian knot around the central question for the residents of the ancient city of Nessebar, viz. the occupation of the city, which has been declared a world heritage site, are issues like trust and distrust in the institutions, the experience of abiding by formal and informal rules for operation with private property, the notions of social justice, local identity, the use of the cultural heritage as symbolic capital by different social actors and its transformation into economic one, with the conflicting interconnection between tourist industry and cultural heritage.

Key words:

Nessebar, Ancient City, Bulgaria, town, world cultural heritage, tourism

Introduction

In November 2010 Nessebar entered the newscasts with scandalous news. The towns people had protested and had made a human chain and barricade in an attempt to prevent the demolition of illegally raised upgrades to several houses and shops in the Old Town, which has the status of a World Heritage Site. There were clashes with the dispatched security forces. Tension escalated, and for a few days in the media there were discussions about the danger the Old Town of Nesse-

bar to lose its status as a World Heritage Site. The news spread out that the local residents themselves wanted this to happen, so they had initiated a petition for getting out of the prestigious list of UNESCO; the forums were filled with comments for and against the locals, UNESCO, the value of antiquities as a national treasure, their use and so on. This conflict is now part of the city's past, but the problems that has underlied it are still pending and raise the controversial and turbulent emotions of the locals. Since they directly affect their lifestyle, property, present and future.

I visited Nessebar in May 2012 in an attempt to do an ethnographic study of the conflict and find out from the local people what it means for them to live in the only Bulgarian city inscribed in the UNESCO list of the World Heritage Sites. It turned out that I stepped on a hot spot where the fears and tensions caused by the threat of any further checks on the legality of the property of the residents of the Old Town were overflowing in emotional explanations of how their town should look like, what actually was and who was to be blamed for the crisis situation and what the normal social order should be. The ethnographic study showed that around the central issue for the residents of the Old Town of Nessebar – residing in a town, declared as world heritage, there were issues such as trust and distrust in institutions, the experience of following formal (legal) and informal rules in the exploitation of the private property in the Old Town, the notions of social justice, local identity, a sense of alienation from their town, the use of cultural heritage as a symbolic capital and its transformation into economic capital, the conflicting relationship between the tourism industry and the cultural heritage and so on.

Theoretical framework

The cultural heritage studies are a wide interdisciplinary field within which there are studies of various aspects of the cultural heritage: from archaeological and architectural that treat the detection, restoration and conservation of objects which has acquired the status of immovable cultural heritage; legal studies – dedicated to the legal regimes and the unification of the universal legal framework, set by the conventions and documents of UNESCO, with local national standards; studies in geography and economics considering the economic dimensions and management of sites and turning them into sites of tourism.

The interest of anthropologists in the cultural heritage originally stems from its proximity to the collective/national memory and the culture of remembrance that are considered in conjunction with the construction of collective and national identities (Gillis 1994; Lowenthal 2002). In the last two decades the studies of the cultural heritage as a bureaucratic and ideological project have multiplied. Individual cases are analyzed showing how global universal policies for the protection of the cultural heritage are implemented and have consequences in local frameworks. Ethnologists and social anthropologists are interested in inter-institutional relations – the communication between the committees of UNESCO and national bureaucracies which results in transferring and interpreting a policy at the local level (Bendix 2007; Brumann 2012; Bendix & all 2012). In this perspective, the cultural heritage is seen as an arena for the transformation of culture into

property (cultural propertization) and the question arises how becoming a heritage combines with the detection and use of the potential of cultural resources and the subsequent issues of property rights and responsibility (Bendix & all 2012: 13). Anthropological works, based on specific ethnographic studies, show how the acquisition of the status of world heritage and the associated measures for conservation of objects confront with the interests and objectives of different local agents (Herzfeld 2009a). It is clear that the universal heritage regime, imposed by UNESCO, turns into multiple, different heritage regimes at national and local levels due to the differences in the work of the bureaucracy, the political history, the experience of the previous regimes for the protection of values and various strategies for using it (Bendix & all 2012).

For anthropologists the cultural heritage is primarily a cultural construct that is created in the present and refers to the past (Herzfeld 1991; Herzfeld 2009a; Gillis 1994). In this perspective, it is defined as a set of ways in which the selected material artifacts, natural objects, memories and traditions become cultural, political and economic resources to the present (Howard, Graham 2008; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995; Bendix & all 2012: 229). It was found that the content, interpretation and representation of heritage resources are selected according to the needs of the present and in view of the imaginary future (Herzfeld 2009a; Herzfeld 2009b). Ashgate group studies have shown that the cultural heritage it's not so much about physical artifacts and intangible forms of the past per se, but rather about the meanings they carry or with which they are associated by the communities as well as the representations that are created thereof (Howard, Graham 2008). Several authors underline the dynamic character, the continuity of the heritage and introduce the concept “heritagisation”.

The interest of anthropologists in the social practices related to the cultural heritage and the actions from “below” as led to the formation of a new direction in the vast stream of research on cultural heritage – the so-called critical heritage studies which take account of both perspectives: the officially sanctioned discourses on heritage and related policies, institutions and social agents, on the one hand, and on the other – the socio-cultural practices and ways in which the heritage functions, is perceived and used locally.

Heritage is not an essential category; it is not static, immutable, existing outside of time or only in the dimension of eternity. Heritage is constructed socially, bears the marks of historical times and socio-cultural and political regimes that construct it; it is a field of interaction and negotiation of the interests of different social groups. In this perspective, some authors prefer to speak of “heritage regime” (Bendix & all 2012).

As a transnational discourse with related practices, heritage is supported and imposed by a network of strong institutions, among which the most influential is UNESCO. One of the important features of heritage as a totality of ideas and practices is that while it is deeply transnational, this discourse is intertwined with the history and logic of the nation state. The mode of thinking in the terms of the

regime – national and transnational – makes this tension palpable and visible (De Cesari 2012: 400).

Defining an object or a site as a cultural heritage is the result of a process of categorization, recording in a register, receiving a special status and it has a certain legal meaning. The entry into the list of World Heritage is the highest estimation of the value of a heritage and recognizes its belonging to all mankind. This creates moral, but also legal obligations for storage, protection, restoration, management (commitments described in the manual for the management of monuments, adopted by UNESCO). Honored with the recognition of the world cultural value, the world heritage in some way is separated from the everyday and local.

The nomination of a cultural value of national significance for the World List is a strategic action. As many studies show, the transformation of an object into heritage is never motivated simply and only by the desire for its preservation (Bendix & all 2012: 18). Behind this act there are various reasons – a desire for economic development of the region, for national consolidation, for advertising the state, etc. In the case of Nessebar the nomination for including the Old Town in the UNESCO list is a result of a state managerial decision that, besides international prestige, aims at exploiting the strategic potential of the site for the development of tourism in the region and possibly transforming the symbolic capital of the world heritage into economic capital. This motive legitimizes even today the actions of the municipality and the national institutions in terms of the cultural value.

Following the approach of the multilateral ethnography (Brumann 2012), the research fits into the trend of the critical heritage studies. It will demonstrate how the different parties in the case of Nessebar evaluate, understand and treat the status of the Old Town of Nessebar as a world heritage and will focus on the question how living in the town, placed under a peculiar regime as a world value, is perceived and negotiated with the private interest of its residents. The observations are compatible with the so called public interest anthropology which examines the opposite social meanings of the heritage sites to describe the power regimes, related to these sites (see Adams 2005; Porter, Salazar 2005; Porter 2008).

The beginning

The Old Town of Nessebar was nominated for the UNESCO List of World Heritage in 1981 and incorporated at the Seventh session of the World Heritage Committee in 1983. Almost three decades earlier – in 1956 by a Decree of the Council of Ministers (hereinafter: MC) of the People's Republic of Bulgaria Nessebar and its coastline were declared “a museum, tourist and resort complex of national and international importance”¹. According to this Decree the territory of the complex was divided into three areas: “1. The Old Town on the peninsula of museum-tourist importance; 2. The new urban area of residential-commercial nature; and 3. The coastal resort area in which holiday homes, hotels, villas and more will be

¹ A Decree of the CM № 243/18.07.1956.

built” (ibid.). The area of the Old Town was declared an “architectural, urban and archaeological reserve of national importance” and placed “under a special regime of urban and architectural development”. With the same Decree the ministries assigned tasks for building the complex. It is remarkable that this first public document that defined the territory of the Old Town as an “architectural, urban and archaeological reserve” placed it in the context of the modern city of Nessebar – “a museum and tourist resort of national and international importance”. The Decree of the CM from 1956 clearly shows that the announcement and the transformation of the Old Town into a reserve had a strategic goal - its use as a cultural resource for the planned international resort Sunny Beach (its design began at the same time - in 1957 and in 1958 by a Decree №120 / June 30, 1958 of the Council of Ministers of the PRB its construction began). From the outset, the process of registration, protection, restoration and exhibition of the cultural-historical heritage of the peninsula was linked to the development of tourism in the region. It also testified to the intention and the power of the government to mobilize and require the involvement of all state and local institutions involved in the implementation of the large-scale task.

Although in the socialist period it seemed that the institutions responsible for the protection and management of the cultural heritage worked in the same direction because of the strict centralization, even back then the differences in the interests of the central government and the local authorities in terms of the cultural value became visible. The minutes from the meeting of the Council for protection of cultural monuments (CPCM) shows that the local and central authorities were in conflict over the conservation and exploitation of the Old Town. In June 1986 at a meeting of the CPCM, the architect T. Krastev was concerned about the damage the tourism industry caused to the Old Town. He pointed out that a number of events in the urban plan of Nessebar were not approved by the National Institute for Monuments of Culture (NIMC), e.g. the creation of a parking zone in the Old Town, the expansion of the isthmus, the construction of fish facilities and service facilities. Experts assessed the situation as pessimistic because of “the acute reaction to the actions of the Institute by the heads of Nessebar (chief architect and Mayor) who are convinced that there are doing a great job and there is no need for change”.

“The Old Town of Nessebar – eternal, but alive”²

The Ancient town of Nessebar received the status of outstanding universal value in 1983, when it was recognized that it had met the criteria of authenticity, integrity, protection and management of heritage. At the same time it is a living historical town, with active life functions. This situation, according to experts’ opinion, makes its conservation, use and management an extremely complex task³. The preservation of the authenticity and integrity of the value collides with the interests of the people who live and own property within its borders. The institutions control-

² A slogan raised by the local residents during the protests in 2010.

³ <http://pou-nesebar.org/bg/>, last visit on 11.11.2013

ling the preservation of the heritage, and with which the residents should negotiate the changes in the appearance of their houses are the municipality and the National Institute for Monuments of Culture (shortly “Monuments of culture”, NIMC). While in our conversations, they rarely mentioned the municipality, the NIMC was in the center of their stories about their housing problems.

Each resident of Nesseber had an opinion about the National Institute for Monuments of Culture – resulting from direct experience – whether in relation to repairs and construction on private property, whether in relation to changes in public spaces. As revealed by the cited regulations, it is impossible to have anything built in the Old Town without the coordination and approval of the NIMC. The owners of the houses, having the status of monuments, are the most dependent on the decisions of experts in Sofia. In most cases they were dissatisfied with the way in which the restoration work on their houses was carried out. Many locals did not approve of the restoration work and the new construction of public buildings done with the sanction of the National Institute before 1989. Others noted that back then there was tighter control (*“During socialism they took care of everything, everything!”*). A woman, whose family house is located on the north coast, had made a restaurant in her yard, taking advantage of the appropriate location. She believed to have been lucky, because in the years of socialism the coastline was fortified by the state - something that today could hardly be expected. The owners could talk for hours about the problems in the maintenance of houses – monuments of culture. To have such a house, they said, is associated with many burdens and inconveniences: *“Monuments of culture do not care that the house is cracked by the excavators, and it is a cultural monument - a voice in the wilderness!”*. More than one and two are the ones who exclaimed: *The statute of the monument of culture gives nothing but restrictions!*

Not only have the owners of houses, having the status of monuments of culture, faced the problems with construction permits, which must be approved by the National Institute for Monuments of Culture. There was an especially strong feeling of discontent among the residents of Nessebar regarding the practices of the NIMC after 1990. At that time private investors developed a strong interest in the Old Town. Moreover, many families received the financial chance to improve their houses after the liberation of the land market. As a result of the restitution they had sold plots of land in the vicinity of the city and in Sunny Beach. The wave of the construction boom that swept across the New town and Sunny Beach did not miss the peninsula as well. Here, the status of the Old Town was an obstacle to the faster realization of investments. Construction documents passed through a more complex and expensive procedure. However, the obligatory consultation and approval by the National Institute was not an insurmountable barrier for entrepreneurs and homeowners in the Old Town.

One who wants to work with the “Monuments of culture”, pulls money out of pocket, pays, or nothing will happen. They are so cumbersome. They do not move a finger...everything is terribly difficult (man, 50 years old).

Each project must pass with the approval of the National Institute. There it is a power given to some people and they exercise it as they see fit. The cost of designing there is up to five times greater than the market price. The Bulgarian is used to pay, to find a man who can arrange things. If you want to expand – you order to the right person or his relatives (man, 53 years old).

The National Institute for Monuments of Culture became synonymous with corrupt officials who signed permits in exchange for bribery. In the Old Town persisted the practice of homeowners to extent or upgrade their houses without having the approval and the building permit from the National Institute and with the tacit consent of the municipal authorities. The impression is that the local and national authorities, empowered to control the construction in the Old Town, implicitly accepted the lawbreaking and this situation reinforces the attitude of the locals that what have been constructed by them will be legalized. Furthermore, some people made a comparison with others rumoured to have received permits for a large construction (house or hotel) because they had established links with “the right people in Sofia” and had paid a lot of money for bribery. In this light those who had erected a floor for own needs, considered lawbreaking legitimate. Such was the deep conviction of their fellow residents - almost all of them believed that there was nothing wrong to upgrade (without a building permit) for subsistence needs and unanimously agreed that “they” (this refers to the state and the NIMC) were guilty of the massive illegal construction because they had created the chaos with corrupt practices, victimizing “ordinary people”.

And people began to do as they see fit. Cause first they wanted a lot of money from them, cannot go the normal way, there are many restrictions and they decided to do it their own way... they did not believe that the state would intervene. Cause for twenty years this has been the case (man, 53 years old).

In November 2009, the new managerial team of the Ministry of Culture personified by the Deputy Minister Todor Chobanov announced to the media that the illegal construction in Nessebar posed a threat to the status of the city as a World Heritage Site. The newspaper headlines were resolute: “Illegal constructions may remove the city from the UNESCO List.” There were reported meetings between the Deputy Minister and a MP from GERB discussing measures “to keep the city in the big family of UNESCO”⁴. The threat of exclusion from the prestigious list of UNESCO was described as close and real. Specialists from the newly created Chief Inspection for Protection of Cultural Heritage were sent for a check in the city. The Mayor of Nessebar explained to journalists that control was difficult to maintain because “it is not easy to balance the commercial interests of the residents of Nessebar with the preservation of cultural heritage”. In his comments, the Deputy Minister stressed that “the cultural tourism is the great future of Bulgaria and thus, it is important Nessebar to be preserved and stored, and the state and the mu-

⁴ <http://www.monitor.bg/article?id=222572>, last visit on 2.02.2014

nicipality to work together”⁵. The three representatives of the authorities – the MP from GERB from the region of Burgas, the Deputy Minister and the Mayor gave statements in the media and talked about the cultural heritage of Nessebar as a resource for tourism and even as a refuge from the crisis (“many times I’ve said that what will lead us out of the crisis successfully is our unique historical and cultural heritage”, a quote from the Mayor, N. Dimitrov⁶).

A year later – in November 2010 the demolition of illegal buildings was carried out by the National Construction Control Directorate. The media replicated headlines such as “The residents of Nessebar are in shock and horror for having their houses pulled down”⁷, “All owners are in a panic. On Monday a brigade of prisoners began working on the demolition of their houses” and reported about the progress of the crisis: the residents opposed the demolition of five illegal houses and two shops, appealed acts in the court. Waiting for the decision of the court, they attempted to make a compromise - the destruction of the superstructures to be postponed for the warm season. The reports painted a catastrophic picture: the dispatched prisoners did not pull down the superstructures, but destroyed the houses⁸; the locals made a petition for getting out of UNESCO, they lit a fire near the fortress walls:

“The residents of Nessebar initiated yet another petition today. In it they appeal for excluding the city as a monument under the aegies of UNESCO. The protesters prefer burning the city rather than having their houses pulled down, and all they want is to keep their livelihood rather than delude themselves with cultural and historical tourism” (24 chasa)⁹.

The Minister of Culture commented on the petition opposing the locals against the nation, their private interests against the national interests, defended by his Ministry and the “state”: “completely irresponsible to the entire nation ... the

⁵ www.burgas.news, last visit on 11.11.2013

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ <http://www.trud.bg/Article.asp?ArticleId=672507>, last visit on 11.11. 2013.

⁸ Цит. ibid.

⁹ <http://news.burgas24.bg/topics/206695.html>, last visit on 17.11.2011. The site razkritia.com assumed a judgmental stance against the protesters. Under the title “Nessebar is getting destroyed! Churches and cultural monuments are set to fire” there is a report that says: “The residents of Nessebar have joined forces against the bulldozers, and if the demolition continues, they will probably reach out for the cultural monuments that are not even theirs. But the audacity of the locals has apparently no end and they do not stop to rebel and create problems. For years, they have amassed money through these illegal buildings which were turned into small hotels or guest houses. Now, in an effort to keep their business, no wonder if they reach out for the monuments of culture and destroy them once and for all. And while people around the world are united and keep their cultural heritage, here everyone looks at his own plate and wonders who to fuck or what to steal from where for gain.”

state makes an effort to avoid the exclusion, and they insist on the opposite”¹⁰. His remarks to the residents of the Old Town had undisguised paternalistic and edifying tone. He stated that the Ministry of Culture "has requested one year extension by UNESCO" to address the problem of illegal construction.

“At the moment we have received it, we promised that we will do everything possible for Nessebar to remain in UNESCO. Whoever has many children, should not make concrete plates and construct illegal floors, but should buy their children homes in the new areas, because the Old Town provides for the entire Nessebar”.¹¹

The media cited the affected people – the owners of the five houses whose superstructures were destroyed (some of them did it themselves):

I am sure I will not pull down. I got permission for the second floor and the third floor I have built it because I saw everyone around me doing so (man, 51 years old).

*All my life we have gathered to build a home for our children, we did not commit any crime. Nobody paid attention – neither to me nor to my fellow residents all these years. We have made an attempt to legalize, but there is no one to help us.*¹²

Others said that the penalties should be for all offenders: “*If we are to be a reserve on two floors – this should apply for all!*” Reporters were content to suggest that the affected people “grumble that when they built it, all were illegal, and finally it turned out that for the owners of hotels and restaurants there were loopholes”. T. Tchobanov commented that “the seemingly lawful legalization of buildings is not double standards, but corruption. And that corruption leads to illegal, harmful outcome with legal means”¹³. When asked by a reporter whether the corruption is at a local or a national level, he replied that it was found on several levels and it was a matter of finding evidence, “but we consider that there were processes that went on at all levels”. The architect Kandulkova even stated that the NIMC had seized the municipality and the SNBC about the illegal construction related to upgrades, additions and changes to the façade each year, and only in late 2009 - early 2010 there were 132 cases¹⁴.

In the crisis situations, the Mayor of Nessebar demonstrated his solidarity with the protesters: “I understand there are orders, but from a human point of view,

¹⁰ http://btvnews.bg/article/84964936-Shte_izvadyat_li_Nesebar_ot_spisaka_na_YuNESKO.html, last visit on 11.11.2013.

http://www.ekipnews.com/news/bulgaria/vytreshna_politika/vezhdi_rashidov_turistite_ne_hodqt_v_nesebyr_za_da_snimat_hladilnicite_na_kvartirite_koito_se_davat_pod_naem/92439/?page=14,

¹¹ <http://www.ekipnews.com/news/>, last visit on 19.11.2013.

¹² <http://news.burgas24.bg/208024.html?poll=pollresults>, last visit on 2.02.2014.

¹³ http://dariknews.bg/view_article.php?article_id=624407, last visit on 10.11.2013

¹⁴ Ibid.

I support the people”, he said and threw stones in the garden of the National Institute: “the residents of Nessebar were fooled around over the years by the National Institute”, “some people were given approval of the construction plans, for others - nothing”.¹⁵ According to him, winter was not the time for demolition of illegal buildings. The Mayor and the city council wanted “renegotiation” of the demolition of the superstructures and explained that “the very inhabitants of the Old Town do not carry the blame alone for what has been done, although at the moment it is they who experience on their shoulders the failure of the state and the lack of strategy in protecting the cultural heritage in Bulgaria during their lifetimes”.¹⁶ The Mayor regarded the petition for getting out of UNESCO as “an unpleasant emotional response” and emphasized that the city must remain in this prestigious list because “UNESCO is a title, name, respect”.¹⁷ Throughout the crisis, the Mayor of Nessebar assumed an ambiguous position - on the one hand, he aimed at presenting his administration to the public authorities and the experts of UNESCO as responsible and concerned about the status of the Old Town, and on the other – he transferred all the responsibility for any illegal construction and necessary sanctions to the National Institute, not to lose the votes of the electorate (*he protects us, but he is pushed a lot from Sofia*).

The Minister of the regional development, Rosen Plevneliev, stated that the Ministry would abide by the law: “This time there will be no deviation. It is high time the Bulgarians to understand that the easiest construction is the legitimate”.¹⁸ The Minister called on the city council not to support the illegal construction, but think about the European perspective when “the regions will have a greater role than the state ... when a city such as Nessebar now comes out and says - we voted a decision not to respect the laws ... how they could expect to receive foreign investments” (ibid.).

At the height of the crisis, T. Tchobanov gave an interview in which he stated the position of the Ministry of Culture. He stressed that the problems of Nessebar were two: “the illegal construction and the inappropriate advertising and marketing activities”. According to him, one of the main factors for this was:

“the lack of a detailed urban plan which hinders any co-ordination activities and law enforcement for the construction of the city. The other thing, about which we have alarmed long time ago – there must be a devised plan for management. We have raised this issue to the local community and in twenty years no one even had a meeting with them. We conducted this meeting and explained to people how things are. Our position is very principled, we protect the world cultural heritage; we recognize the investment desires of the people

¹⁵ <http://www.sobstvenik.com/?p=746>, last visit on 10.11.2013

¹⁶ http://dariknews.bg/view_article.php?article_id=619191, lasti visit on 10.11.2013

¹⁷ <http://www.trud.bg/Article.asp?ArticleId=684623>, lasti visit on 10.11.2013

¹⁸ <http://tv7.bg/134892.html>, last visit on 10.11.2013.

who live there as much as possible and feel it is right to bear their responsibility, including the municipality, which should make the necessary urban planning documents regarding the territory the Old Town“.¹⁹

The thesis that there was no a detailed urban plan of Nessebar and therefore everything was done with permits for amendments to the current detailed urban plan and this created a prerequisite for “bad practices and double standards” was shared by all parties in the conflict. However, it does not fully comply with reality. Nessebar did not exist “in the last twenty years” in a legal vacuum. The city has a detailed urban plan, even though it was adopted back in 1981, there is a working ordinance №8 from 1986, which regulates the procedures for construction in the Old Town; in 1991 a Decree №174 was adopted which defines the boundaries of the reserve “Ancient Nessebar” – a world cultural heritage site. In this sense, the idea that “there is no plan” and therefore the constuction acitivites are out of control is incorrect and justifies the offenses, while the responsible institutions – the Ministry of Culture and the municipal administration – blame each other for it.

In the days of the crisis, the forums were filled with comments that the sanctions are for ordinary people only and the big offenders had legalized their hotels and run their businesses undisturbed. The locals, I have spoken with two years later, believed that the campaign for demolishing the illegal buildings was an ugly, meaningless, demonstrative action without special effects and the manifestation of institutionalized injustice. (*People built a room above their heads and they were banned. They do not allow rising much higher. Some can do it; others cannot ... some can go with a plan, for others – they do not have a plan.*)

The campaign for pulling down the illegal upgrades did not solve the problem of illegal construction in Nessebar. It was rather a warning to the remaining over a hundred owners of illegal construcitons that the problem was on the agenda and it was a signal addressed to the representatives of UNESCO that the Bulgarian government was strongly determined to tackle the problem of illegal construction within the world cultural value. In relation to the visits of experts from UNESCO a series of meetings with the residents of Nessebar took place at which the stakeholders made clear their ideas – the UNESCO observers, the representatives of national institutions (Ministry of Culture and National Institute), the municipal administration and the citizens. In the course of the crisis the civic organizations “Citizens for Nessebar” and “Mesembria Pontica” were established and they got involved in the dialogue between the residents of the Old Town and the representatives of institutions. The residents of the Old Town have tried to negotiate with the authorities the future conditions and the regime of management and use of the heritage in their city through the civic organizations and on personal basis at the subsequently organized meetings for discussing the plan for conservation and management.

The slogan expressing the position of the locals was: “Nessebar eternal, but alive”. This formulation quite well expressed the tension between the two modes in

¹⁹ <http://www.focus-news.net/scandal/0000/00/00/3244/>, last visit on 10.11.2013.

which the city, recognized as a World Heritage Site, exists. The “eternity” mode, which the locals expressed with the words “monument” and “museum town” and the experts from the National Institute and UNESCO - with “heritage”, “value” and the binding “authenticity and integrity” - was hard to maintain in a living city. The provisions of the municipality towards restoring the authenticity of the Old Nessebar (made by specialists from the UACG as a result of assigned task) involved removing the advertising signs, neon ads and umbrellas that violated the authentic atmosphere, integrity and the way the monuments were perceived.

The public meetings, at which the terms of reconciling the interests of the residents of the Old Town and the regime of protection of the cultural heritage were negotiated, have contributed to raising civic awareness of the local residents and have increased their pressure on municipal authorities to clarify the rules. Thus the crisis, caused by the established illegal but seen as a legitimate order, has led to the appearance of a possibility for “recovery” through a new public understanding of the need for “the rules to be respected by all”.

Conclusion

The half century existence of the Old Town of Nessebar as a national cultural heritage and the three decades – as a world heritage provide an opportunity to study the regimes of cultural heritage management in two different political and economic contexts. The pressure of tourism industry on the value, that showed its negative influences even in the years of socialism, has been unsustainable after 1989 in the conditions of a liberalized land market, the economic interests of private investors and corruption practices (accepted as part of the “normal” market order) of the institutions which have to preserve the heritage - the municipal administration and the central government institutions. A new element in the negotiation of the regime of cultural heritage management is the activation of the civil society in Nessebar, which sought the support of UNESCO to protect their city in the next (and last for now) episode of the conflict that broked out in relation to the use of the resources of the Old Town.²⁰ The more general problem – the conflicting coexistence of heritage with tourism industry has not been resolved yet, but the culture of habitation of the city-world cultural heritage changes, the citizens of the Old Town are aware and fight for “the rules to be respected by all”.

²⁰http://www.dnevnik.bg/bulgaria/2013/02/07/1998636_v_nesebur_se_vdigat_na_bunt_sreshtu_koncesiia_na/, last visit on 11.11.2013; http://www.webcafe.bg/id_566975668, last visit 20.01.2015

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Ана Лулева

Живети са светским наслеђем. Етнографско истраживање Старог града Несебара (Бугарска)

Од половине 50-их година XX века Стари град Несебар има статус националног културног наслеђа („музејски, туристички и одмаралишни комплекс националног и међународног значаја“). Године 1983. град је уписан на УНЕСКО-ву листу светског наслеђа. Овај рад представља покушај да се истражи режим живљења и коришћења наслеђа у два различита економска и политичка контекста.

Key words:

Несебар, Стари град, Бугарска, град, светско културно наслеђе, туризам

Статус изузетне универзалне вредности означава да Стари град испуњава критеријуме аутентичности и интегритета, што подразумева заштиту и управљање наслеђем. У исто време, он представља историјски град у коме се живи, тј. који има активне животне функције. Оваква ситуација чини његову конзервацију, употребу и управљање изузетно сложеним. Заштита аутентичности и интегритета вредности је у колизији са интересима људи који живе и имају имовину унутар његових граница. Притисак туристичке индустрије на некретнине испољио је негативне утицаје још у периоду социјализма, али је постао неподношљив након 1989. године, у условима либералног земљишног тржишта; економски интереси приватних инвеститора и корупцијска пракса институција које би требало да заштите наслеђе – општинске администрације и главних државних институција – прихваћени су као део „нормалног“ тржишног поретка.

У овом чланку се разматрају међусобни односи различитих социјалних актера чији су интереси повезани са заштитом и употребом културног наслеђа – централне државне управе (Министарство културе, Национални

институт за споменике културе), општинске власти и локалног становништва (које се такође састоји од групâ различитих интереса).

Основни проблем житеља Старог града Несебара је што морају да се придржавају многих забрана и ограничења када је о њиховој имовини реч, док они у исто време покушавају да извуку профит од чињенице да живе у граду који представља део светског културног наслеђа и привлачи туристе. Заобилажење рестриктивних правила је постала уобичајена пракса која је довела до кризе током 2010–2012. године. Нови моменат у преговорима о начинима управљања наслеђем је активирање цивилног друштва у Несебару, које је затражило подршку УНЕСКО-а у циљу заштите свог града у следећој (и, за сада, последњој) епизоди конфликта, који је избио у вези са коришћењем ресурса Старог града. Шири проблем – конфликтна коегзистенција наслеђа и туристичке индустрије – још увек није решен, али се култура живљења у граду који представља светско културно наслеђе променила. Житељи Старог града се боре за то да се „правила поштују од стране свих“.