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City and identity – Cultural map of Nikšić

City and identity – Cultural map of Nikšić is a paper which deals with the cultural history of the city which has, from Anderva, Anagastum and Onogošt settlements to its contemporary form now, went through different phases. Interestingly, Nikšić represents the biggest municipality in Montenegro but it also used to be the biggest municipality in ex Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as well. The focus of the paper is Montenegro in the period from historically significant Congress of Berlin (1878) until the modern times.

The paper is divided in two large sections. The first section deals with the city's concept, role and development in regard to European map as well as the problem of urbanization. The second one is about a local framework in which a modern city development is recognized. Several phases could be singled out. Josip Slade's city plan (1883), which was requested from this engineer from Trogir by the king Nikola, has a significant role in developing the city's urban matrix. What follows are the two world wars which stop cultural rise of the city. Just after the First World War, crafts and culture flourish in Nikšić. The Second World War has marked Nikšić with several important symbols and events. This historically significant chapter was witnessed by 4000 citizens. They had an important role in the first nationwide uprising which took place on July 13th 1941 in Montenegro. Photography of a smiling national hero Ljubo Čupić just before his execution, which was often compared with Ernesto Che Guevara's photography, and ballet dancer and musician of Jewish ancestor Lui Davičo's act of diversion, whose name was dedicated to the ballet school in Belgrade, represent the two symbols of resistance. Just before Nikšić was liberated on September 18th 1944, it was bombarded and destroyed twice by the Allies, in April and in August. However, Nikšić rises up from such condition and experiences economic boom. Consequently, Nikšić faces a population influx which has not been seen in other places in the world until then. The number of citizens which Nikšić has now is 75 000, thanks to the peak of industrialization.

That is the moment of new city's history which was marked by cultural climb in every sense. A few persons who were important for the city's look and spirit lived in this period. When it comes to construction, modernistic architects Đorđe Minjević and Slobodan Vukajlović stand out. Director Veljko Bulajić, famous in European cinematography, was born in Nikšić. Živko

Nikolić as a movie director was inspired by Italian neorealism. Poet Vitomir Vito Nikolić is still the most representative poetic symbol of the, as he liked to call it, the city N. Author Mirko Kovač's works seem like a mirror image of the city.

Alternative musical expression was also born. Singing societies, which later grew into rock bands, started forming during the 60s. Singer and songwriter Miladin Šobić and, later, a punk band DST became the synonym for the music scene in Nikšić.

The evidence of multiculturalism can be found in the presence of sacral buildings from different provenances. The Cathedral Church of St Basil of Ostrog, Hadži Ismail Mosque and Catholic church are all located near the city centre. A great number of bridges shows the city's destiny as a crossroads where 4 roads met. Numerous monuments and memorials hide a story about rich history of Nikšić.

Methodologically, the paper will be based on history of culture, urbanism and sociological discourse research. Comparison with other cities with similar phenomena is made. Scientific point of view was used when approaching this topic and it is based on relevant figures such as Mumford, Weber and Harvey.