

Summary of Article

**“The magic Mirror of Sustainability: Glittering Ideas, gloomy Reality”**

by Dr Aleksandra Stupar, Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade, Serbia

The idea of sustainability has become a controversial issue with different and very broad interpretations and definitions during the last two decades. Placed in the limelight by the contemporary global community, the concept of sustainability turned out to be one of the basic postulates for further development and an opportunity for competitiveness in the global network. Consequently, this 'magic' term was deliberately (mis)used whenever it was necessary to justify the hasty decisions and 'progressive' strategies - jumping over its real importance and adopting its ready-made globalized aura for the short-term advertising. Nowadays, the sustainability could be interpreted as one of the globalisation myths, a necessity for successful survival at the global scene, but, simultaneously, it could be perceived as a tool for political manipulation with (un)expected results.

The mile-stone summits, declarations, promises and agreements about sustainable development are still far from in-depth implementation, trying to bridge the gap between political statements and terrestrial reality. Their significance lies in the symbolical message transmitted all around the world, although its original meaning is often altered - according to local conditions and (un)predictable political and financial winds. Therefore, sustainability remains a 'trendy' term incorporated into the blurred global/local strategies while, ironically, the ambiguity of the globalisation process still represents the only truly sustainable category.

Exploiting the term 'sustainability', the forces *pro* and *contra* globalisation have been trying to justify their positions, strategy and objectives which often collide and annul each other. The degraded living environment, as a consequence of increased production with decreased production costs, acts like a boomerang. Consequently, a great number of initiatives have been launched on international as well as governmental and non-governmental organisations' level. Establishing new networks, creating a set of new principles, regulations and standards for different worldwide activities and problems, they have directly or indirectly moulded a new global order, but the social, ecological and economic equilibrium is yet to be achieved.

The role of sustainability has obviously been multiple and ambivalent and often unsynchronized with real conditions and expectations. The complexity and comprehensiveness of this term allowed numerous explanations, opened a waste field for polemics and became a certain kind of wishful fulcrum for the future development. Acting as a publicly announced guarantee for urban efficiency, environmental protection, real and virtual connectivity, social integration and global initiation, the story of sustainability has reflected the weaknesses and paradoxes of the globalized world. Simultaneously, the contemporary city and its media-focused society have become an experimental polygon where the rules and guidelines of sustainability could be tested and confirmed. However, the numerous problems and conflicts remain and multiply, while the flamboyant picture of globalized landscape obviously distracts our attention from the everyday bitterness and emptiness.

The mirror of sustainability frequently shows the picture of double standards, leaving the numerous questions unsolved and covered by the vague priorities. 'The road to Hell is paved with good intentions?'- hopefully the sustainability will not become just one of them.