

Perception of ownership of Most na Adi in Belgrade

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Abstract

Belgrade is Serbia's capital and home to 1.7 million people, nearly 20 percent of the country's population. The city is located at the confluence of the Sava and Danube Rivers and has expanded geographically throughout its history, with recent growth to the north of the Sava River in an area known as New Belgrade. In response to the population growth, city leaders initiated a program to construct a new crossing over the Sava River in the vicinity of Ada Ciganlija.

The Most na Adi (Bridge on the Ada) is a unique, asymmetrical single-pylon cable-stay bridge, and the first new bridge built in Belgrade in 40 years. The 376-meter long main span carries six lanes of traffic and is supported by cables connecting to a 200-meter-tall pylon. This main pylon is open in the center, to accommodate two light rail tracks. The Ada Bridge is now seen as a symbol of revitalization and dynamism in Belgrade, in addition to serving as an important transportation link in the growing city. However, this was not always the case. Public opinion was divided in the early stages of the project, with many criticizing the cost, the scale and the appearance of the bridge.

This paper examines the themes of ownership of the bridge and how the perceptions of both the project team building the bridge and the general population changed over time, from skepticism through wonder to general acceptance. It will examine the social forces that led to the bridge being recognised by the residents of Belgrade as an integral part of the city skyline, to the extent that the image of the bridge has been adopted in popular culture as a new symbol of the city, representing a modern European identity.