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Planning Capital Cities

Belgrade
Bucharest
Sofia

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Hannes Swoboda

Foreword

The subject of this very timely and interesting publication is the development and urbanism of the three capital cities Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia. These capitals are located in a region, which is often neglected and rarely in the focus of the European scientific and political attention. Interestingly, they are the capitals of two EU member countries, Bulgaria and Romania, and of a candidate country, Serbia. This fact shows the artificial and spiritual boundaries we are still confronted with in Europe.

The regional neighborhood and the approximately comparable historic background make the three cities a unite object of research. Their development is closely connected to the delayed nation building process and the nomination for capitals. This is especially true for the unification and transition of different regions into the new state of Romania. But it is also true for the other two countries in their fight for sovereignty. It is not by chance, that often in the past, but sometimes even today, the name of the capital is used when reference is made to the state. Therefore today's capitals are synonymous for their respective nations and the state as a whole. They represent and symbolize the successful formation of the nation by bringing together different people and cultures into one state and a capital where the government and the important institutions are located.

One of the big questions for the future of all capital cities is their role in a common Europe without borders on the one hand and the ongoing globalization on the other. Cities in general and capital cities in specific will have to find new roles and tasks. With a growing urbanization worldwide they will be more and more defining our living conditions, irrespective of national boundaries and historic identities. They must be able to bring together people of different cultural origins and different lifestyles and to create a future, out of their diverse past, which is accepting and promoting diversity

in unity. It is the inherited heterogeneity of Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia which characterizes them, but which could be seen as a potential to master the future.

Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia have their own characteristics and phases of development. The Ottoman political and cultural influence is one of the most interesting commonalities in the urban history and is still visible today. It makes the three capitals comparable and distinguishes them from the art of organizing the western European cities. There are many common issues of development after the achieving of the national sovereignty in the 19th century: the speed of urban growth, the prompt change of the cultural paradigm and the implementation of the western European urbanism and urban models. Romania's connection to France and also to other countries from the Roman language family is well known. Sofia and Belgrade have had special relations to Central Europe, especially to Austria and Vienna. Many Austrian architects practiced for example in Bulgaria establishing the academic architecture and urbanism. The relations between Belgrade and Vienna were not always easy, but Vienna was often the place to give asylum to Serbs, from Vuk Karadic to Bogdan Bogdanovic. All three capitals examine an analogue shift to the modernistic ideas in the period between the world wars. They have a valuable stock of historic buildings from this period which needs to be renovated and integrated into the modern city, capable to master the future.

The post-war period is characterized by ambivalences caused by the differentiation of the socialist political systems. However, the traces of the socialist modernity are omnipresent in the cityscapes of Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, forming a specific heritage. The cityscapes are also affected by some buildings from this period, mostly for housing, but also by buildings of political representation, especially in the case of Bucharest. Today these buildings create a lot of problems for the integrated urban planning and development. An additional issue concerning all the three capitals is the underdeveloped public transportation system.

In spite of many links to Central and Western Europe all the three countries and their capitals still have to fight today for recognition and acceptance. Their urban images are connected in the mind and perception of many "westerners" with poverty, backwardness and corruption. But instead of arrogance we would need to exchange ideas and visions about the future and offer understanding, support and help. A special task is for example the integration of the Roma population we have to solve in Bucharest, Sofia and Belgrade. I have seen horrible situations, but also extraordinary successful pilot projects. I have met a lot of engaged citizens, but I have also seen a lack of courage of some city officials to improve the situation of poverty and discrimination. In a united Europe with more or less open borders this is a European issue and not only one of the three countries and their capitals.

Each of these capitals has its peculiarities and its own atmospheres. My first visits to all three cities took place after the political changes 1989. Perhaps in their “chaotic”, contradictory and sometimes neglected ambiance they were and maybe they still are expressing a special amalgam of backwardness and modernity, bourgeois and proletarian forms of life and housing. These characteristics and structures are closer situated to each other than in any other cities of Western Europe. It will be an enormous task to transfer and to link the inherited backwardness to the present and to promote modern structures without destruction of valuable ingredients of the past. A high degree of sensitivity will be necessary to manage this transformation. Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia could be a different kind of “smart cities”, where modern technologies should not substitute, but complement the long historic development with all its benefits but also wounds and scars.

I want to thank all the authors and editors, in particular Grigor Doytchinov, for their engagement. They present in their contributions an overview of the historical development as a basis for reflections about the past and the future, which each one of the capital cities must define and implement as a sophisticated and innovative continuation of the past.

Harald Heppner

Capital city as national vision at the Serbs, Bulgarians and Romanians

Introduction

When tackling the issue of capital cities in the national vision of the Serbs, Bulgarians and Romanians, it is necessary at the outset to reflect on how far and in which way a particular area eventually comes to constitute that vision of a nation state comprehensible to the respective population. Should one not wish to fall into the trap of nationalism, according to which the nation has always existed and exerts a right to a particular territory, one must be aware that there is a complex process in which components sometimes together, sometimes separate, define the nation-state model and attribute a normative power to it.¹

Serbian, Bulgarian and Romanian 'lands' are like all lands with national characteristics fictional, because 1. The geographical area under consideration gives no indication as to its 'owner'; 2. Countless systems and regimes of rule have overlapped and claimed these territories throughout history leaving behind no discernible national characteristics; 3. in pre-modern times, regional organization and structures of consciousness possessed no national character, directly contradicting notions of an inherent nationalism. The continuity of settlements throughout history does likewise not legitimize any claim to those areas in question because, 1. Within each settlement, large tracts of territory were not occupied (mountain, forests, wetlands), 2. The people inhabiting these areas mixed continuously, 3. The inhabitants could not possibly be aware of their belonging to a particular nation (the concept of which was not invented until much later), and 4. Language, one of the most important criterion in distinguishing national identity was, in the case of settlements not codified or reformed until much later and therefore cannot be interpreted as endemic of any national language in the strict sense of our understanding of the concept.

The need for a national space arose with the idea of a nation itself. Supporters of this concept (scholars, officials, revolutionaries) made every effort to bring this new idea “to the people” whose identity, except along confessional lines, was essentially based around certain (small) habitats. In the 18th and 19th century, when the idea of the nation in Southeastern Europe began to take hold, the vast majority of the population lived in the countryside and were poor; therefore to spread the ideology of Nationalism, farmers needed to be promised economically attractive improvements, such as more land which would belong to them. This argument was all the more gripping among the rural population as the soil was stylized as part of a “home” for which a larger space was needed. A “home” on the national level also required protection against oppositional trans-national forces. In order to inspire confidence, historical references were embellished, the content of which had to stress the grandeur and cohesion which once existed; therefore Serbian, Bulgarian and Romanian intellectuals investigated only those areas of the past ripe for propagation to the end-goal of creating a national epic. This permitted the newly constructed national “home” to assert itself via a historical foundation or to legitimize means of historicity. The extent to which this construction was built on questionable logic is evident for example from the fact that in the first phase of the construction of the Nation State the question was not clear yet as to who could be counted among the nation: All in the targeted area should be allowed to belong, even those of different ethnic groups or religions. It was only after the establishment of the nation state, when concrete organizational measures and cultural policy overlapped with definitional and political problems that the issue of minorities and how to contend with them, was raised.

The Capital city structure in pre-national time

Those capital cities which existed prior to the advent of nationalism and were of importance to South-eastern Europe presented multiple problems, particularly from a national perspective: First, they existed beyond that region’s horizons, second, they were not capitals of nations per se but rather of ethnic conglomerates and third, they lacked adequate modern infrastructure themselves and therefore could offer no guidance to cities of comparable size, let alone newly established or founded ones.

The most consistent example was Constantinople or “Tsarigrad”.² This metropolis, the centre of an empire which straddled three continents, located on the Bosphorus, possessed (and indeed possesses) apart from its prevalent Islamic identity, many “Western” and “Eastern” (European) cultural components as well. The history of this city is bound in two ways to the history of the Serbs, Bulgarians and Romanians: First, Constantinople was the centre of the Orthodox world and as such bore witness to confessional conflicts and wrangling between the Serbs and Bulgarians vis-a-vis their shared belief system in the Middle Ages while at the same time functioning as (political) focal point for the Romanian principalities outside of their borders; Second,

it emphasized the connection between the Serbs, Romanians and Bulgarians (outside of the Carpathian basin) and served as a rallying point vis-a-vis the Ottoman Empire, a phenomenon which only at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century ended (with statehood, territorial expansion, and independence). During the subsequent era of nation building, Constantinople lost all importance, not only for political reasons, but also for intellectual and infrastructural ones as well, leading the new national capitals to be unable to find (regional) precedents.

The next urban focus for South Eastern European countries was Venice, not only as a city but for its maritime and legal systems and accompanying civic organization which were long prevalent in the region.³ However, Venice was of little relevance to the Romanians and Bulgarians and even for the Serbs only nominally owing to the Serbian Orthodox minority in southern Dalmatia. Apart from the diaspora of Serbs, Bulgarians and Romanians, some of which came into contact or lived under Venetian rule, Venice could not function as an orienting force for the three ethnic groups. This was because it was a Mediterranean power, had internalized seafaring and trade, and was at the time of national development either already in advanced decline or no longer in existence (in 1797 it was dissolved by Napoleon I).

That capital, which did assume a sort of role-model status in the pre-national period for the Serbs, Bulgarians and Romanians, was Vienna, the residence of the Habsburgs.⁴ The Habsburgs dominated the zone between Central and South Eastern Europe while at the same time wore the imperial mantle of the Holy Roman Empire until its dissolution in 1806, effectively dividing themselves between Eastern and Western Europe. This function can be traced back to the commitment assumed by the Habsburgs, beginning in the 16th century against the Ottomans which included not only periodic collaboration with the Serbs but also (much less frequently) the Bulgarians. Further, the geographical proximity of "Austria" to the settlement areas of the Serbs, Bulgarians and Romanians in the early 18th century played a role not to be underestimated. For segments of the Serbs and Romanians (those living within the Carpathian Mountains) Vienna was of even more importance, since it was where the seat of the highest state agencies was located (the Court, central authorities for Hungary, the Banat and Transylvania, later for Bukovina as well). However, the relationship of members of these two ethnic groups to Vienna was not only based on or reliant upon anonymous organizational structures and platforms, but also on the integration of the Serbian elite into the political and intellectual system of the Habsburg Empire as scholars, soldiers (officers), civil servants, and teachers. Vienna was a hub of cultural exchange and education in the age of national development, which explains why students from outside the Habsburg Monarchy (Serbs and Bulgarians) received their academic education there. However, Vienna was also the centre of a multi-ethnic state, which wanted to preserve the status quo and therefore was representative of a foreign policy which stood in conflict with national goals of the various southeast European peoples.

Finally one should also consider the pre-national “twin” capitals of Bucharest and Iași, the residence(s) of the Valachian and Moldavian princes.⁵ These two cities offered the Romanians a basis on which to construct capitals, but were unable to compete with Constantinople, Venice and Vienna for several reasons. First, both cities were at their absolute height, little more than regional centres. Additionally, they were much younger and smaller than Venice, Vienna or Constantinople. Next, they were geographically distant from major European transit or trade routes. Finally, they did not, even well into the 19th century represent the focal point for all Romanians, since a not insignificant segment of Romanians lived in the Kingdom of Hungary as part of the Habsburg Monarchy and shared only the faith of the remainder of Romanians. That is not to say that the two cities were culturally irrelevant; Greeks from Constantinople who resided in the two capitals from 1711-1821 (so called Fanariots) helped strengthen the relationship between Constantinople and Iasi and Bucharest; ultimately Moldavia and Valachia merged in 1861, forming Romania.

Nation building of the Romanians, Serbs and Bulgarians

Nation-building among the Serbs, Bulgarians and Romanians reveals some parallels, but also distinct differences. The national development among the Romanians began in the early 18th century, as Greek-catholic clergy, influenced by the Habsburg system of rule and the spirit of the Enlightenment began to research the origin of the Romanian people.⁶ Although there did not exist any fixed plan for implementing a Romanian nation state at the end of the 18th century, at least there was a desire for emancipation from the dominant political and social environment in Transylvania (National petition “Supplex Libellus Valachorum”, 1791). Only after the diplomatic and military intervention of Russia in the 1820’s and 1830’s to the benefit of Moldavia and Valachia did the Romanian national movement outside of the Carpathians gain momentum. This was further exacerbated by France’s role during the negotiations at the Paris Congress (1856). The fusion of the Principalities of Moldavia and Valachia and the establishment of a foreign dynasty (1866) coupled with the acquisition of independence as a result of the Berlin Congress (1878) represent further turning points. The zenith of the development of the Romanian Nation State came during the restructuring in Central and South Eastern Europe after the First World War (1919/20). This period saw the attachment of parts of the Romanian Dobrudja, the Banat, Transylvania, Bucovina and Bessarabia to the state of Romania. However, despite various efforts to unify those peoples inhabiting the territory of the Romanian nation, different regional and ethnic traditions persist to this day.

The national development of the Serbians likewise began in the 18th century and was subject to similar impulses as the Romanian development, inasmuch as a part of the Serbian people fled from the Ottomans to the Habsburg Empire and there built a new life.⁷ The subsequent integration into “Austria” and the impact of many organizational and intellectual reforms led to a reorientation

of group consciousness, since now belonging to the Orthodox community was of little importance compared to belonging to a Western-oriented political and cultural system. The Serbian people initially were composed almost entirely of peasants however it was not long before the first signs of Civil Society (traders, scholars, officers, civil servants) emerged, along with new challenges and opportunities for development. That part of the Serbian nation which remained within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire participated in the late 18th and early 19th century in the process of nation building in the form of armed resistance against Ottoman rule, giving birth to a military leadership which sought to establish an autonomous region within the Ottoman Empire, which would form the nucleus of the Serbian nation-state. This region, which was established in 1817 and became a principality, finally gained its independence in 1878. However, the true territorial breakthrough came in 1912/13, during the Balkan Wars, a series of conflicts which had enlarged the Serbian Kingdom (since 1881) to include the ancient-Serbian Macedonian territories. However, 1918 and the end of the First World War was of ambivalent meaning to the Serbian national idea: on the one hand, all Serbs were brought together under (Serb) leadership, on the other hand, the supranational concept of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from the outset presented numerous challenges, including ethnic pluralism and achieving political unity and equilibrium.

The development of a nation among the Bulgarians started from a more advanced position vis-a-vis their Serbian and Rumanian neighbors inasmuch as those espousing Bulgarian ethnicity were not dispersed across Southeast Europe but rather concentrated within the Ottoman Empire.⁸ However, they did not possess any unique institutions which could be claimed as Bulgarian, in stark contrast to the Rumanians, who were by and large settled outside of the Ottoman Empire or the Serbians, who had for several generations their own Orthodox Patriarch (1557–1766). Only as a result of social oppression by the Ottomans between the 18th and 19th century (analogous to the Serbs), which was itself in response to the intensification of Russia's commitment in the Balkans were new perspectives sought. These efforts focused on the Middle Ages and were led by the monk Otec Paisij amongst others. The thrust of this research was the (ancient) Bulgarian Empire and the construction of a new Bulgarian identity out of the historical precedents. Neither the fact that a new Bulgarian state would require a class which could assume political responsibility (cultivated via education of the populace) nor the attempt in collaboration with the Ottoman government to construct an autonomous Bulgarian Orthodox Church (Bulgarian Exarchate, 1870) were successful in bringing about a Bulgarian state. Only repeated Russian military campaigns created the necessary conditions. One of the results of the Berlin Congress (1878) was a provisional, although not autonomous Bulgarian state (Principality) and the creation of an autonomous region with Bulgarian majority (Eastern Rumelia) on Ottoman soil. This compromise fulfilled neither the criteria for independence nor signified any return to past glory for Bulgarians. Therefore, it was only logical that soon afterwards (1885) the two territories were merged,

and for the next 30 years, Bulgaria would continuously enlarge itself at the cost of its neighbours ultimately seeking access to the Aegean Sea. In the aftermath of the First World War (of which Bulgaria ended a loser) support for a “Great Bulgaria” diminished, not least since a sizable part of the population embraced the tenants of Bolshevism, which directly opposed Nationalism. The following decades revealed that the framework for the Bulgarian national state remained, which helps explain the continuation of ideas of “Great Bulgaria” even during the decades of Communism following the Second World War.

National capital city as an experiment

The development of capital cities among the Serbs, Romanians and Bulgarians was not without problems, which is why it appears justified to compare this process to a scientific experiment; experiments represent operations in which the result is not known in advance and in which different solutions are required to reach a desired goal. Further, it is not predictable whether the goal is achievable or when it will be reached. Although Belgrade, Sofia and Bucharest existed as settlements for generations, it was not known during the introduction of the ideas of national development whether these cities would themselves become capitals, and further, what role they would play as such and how they would adapt to such a status if it were prescribed.

In the case of the Serbs, the autonomous Principality of Serbia represented only a rump territory, as critical parts of ‘Serbia’ were excluded - either those in the Ottoman Empire (Old Serbia, South Serbia until 1912, Bosnia and Herzegovina until 1878) or in the Habsburg Monarchy (Southern Hungary, parts of Croatia and southern Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina until 1918).⁹ In the case of the Romanians, the situation was similar: When the two principalities of Moldavia and Valachia joined forming Romania and with them the core of the Romanian national state they were not united with Romanians either from within the Habsburg Monarchy (Banat, Transylvania, Bukovina) or Russia (Bessarabia from 1812).¹⁰ For Bulgaria, the problem in 1878 was that Eastern Rumelia was not considered from the outset by the Great Powers to be an integral part of Bulgaria, leading to many, from a Bulgarian point of view, “Bulgarians” remaining within the Ottoman Empire (these included quite controversially Slavic Macedonians until 1912).¹¹ The territorial gains of the three nation states in several stages increased not only their respective sizes, ‘uniting’ them, but in all cases occurred at the cost of other nation states (Serbs against Bulgarians, Bulgarians against Romanians, Romanians against Hungary and Russia).

The second obstacle was the lack of clarity from the outset concerning which settlements would play host to the capitals. Belgrade as a settlement had existed since the early Middle Ages, founded by Bulgarians. Thereafter, the city at the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers was Byzantine, Serbian and Hungarian, before she became an Ottoman fort, interrupted only by three episodic affiliations with the Habsburg Monarchy (1688–1690, 1718–1739,

1788–1791). In the first years of the autonomous Principality, the palatial residence was in Kragujevac, and only with the removal of the Ottoman from Belgrade in 1860 could that city become unchallenged as the capital of Serbia (see the articles of Nikola Samardžić, Mirjana Roter Blagoječić). Bucharest became the residence of the Wallachian prince until the 16th century; before Cîmpulung, Curtea de Argeş and Tîrgovişte were in succession, the centres of political life. Also, the Romanian “twin country” (Moldavia) between the eastern Carpathians and the Black Sea did not always have its capital in Iaşi, but first from the early 16th century; before the cities of Baia, Siret and Suceava were the residences of the princes. The location of Bucharest compared to the one of Iasi was from the geographical point of view more central (see the articles of Monica Sebestyen, Maria Duda). The Bulgarian state of 1878 did not initially have a definite idea of where the capital was to be located; after a short transition period (1878/79), the decision was made in favour of Sofia, to the disadvantage of Veliko Tărnovo, the medieval residence of the Bulgarian emperors (see the articles of Hristo Ganchev, Grigor Doytchinov). Plovdiv, which in 1879 had a larger population than Sofia was also suggested, however was not favoured owing to its location (Eastern Rumelia) and strong Greek heritage.

A third obstacle, which presented itself not only at the beginning of the development of capital cities, was the strategic position of all three capitals: all three are located near to their national borders, and are easy to reach and occupy in the event of military conflict. Had security concerns been stressed, the three capitals would have been established in remote, mountainous terrain, of which all three nations possess a bounty of.

A fourth, but only temporarily problem was the character of the three cities at the beginning of their functions as capitals. Bucharest, Sofia and Belgrade were relatively small (population wise) and characterized by what would today be termed as historic buildings. There was a chronic lack of modern city planning, streets and (street)lighting, running water and sanitation in larger buildings, transport connections to the outside world etc. The obstructive elements from the past had therefore to be fixed first, to make room for modern necessities.

A central and long-standing obstacle in development in the case of Bucharest, Sofia and Belgrade was the question of the what role these cities would have for the national minorities in the countries they were capitals to and further whether centralized organization should be implemented in these cities.¹² Until 1918, as Bucharest was only the centre of the so-called Old Kingdom this question was of no consequence however from the 1920s, as a third of the population of Romania was non-Romanian (Hungarians, Germans, Russians, Ukrainians, etc.) this question became of critical importance. In the case of Sofia, the problem was less stressed, since, in contrast to the Turkish-Greek minority, the majority of non-Bulgarians in Bulgaria had migrated or been assimilated. Belgrade was more similar to Bucharest following the various

peace treaties in Paris in 1919/20, however here the situation was even more pronounced. Belgrade, the centre of 'Serbian-dom' was the new capital not just of Serbia but of a supranational (Muslims, Germans, Hungarians, Albanians, Italians) and a south Slavic (Croats and Slovenes being the most pronounced along with Serbs) state.

Acceptance of the capital as a symbol of the state faltered not only on the reservations of national minorities, but also – at least during the first two generations – even on the cultural and social homogeneity of the nation itself. The vast majority of Romanians, Bulgarians and Serbs were until the middle of the 20th century by and large agrarian and rural and had difficulty identifying with the modern capitals, characterized at the base level by an unusual/foreign lifestyle. Only in the socialist period did this imbalance begin to dissipate, helped along by industrialization, although still persists even to this day.¹³

As Bucharest, Belgrade and Sofia assumed the roles of capitals of their respective nations, the quandary relating to orientation vis-a-vis other capitals was quickly resolved (see the article of Grigor Doytchinov). This question was not only reflective of the external relations localized in the capitals of their governments, but also represented a conscious effort to stylistically mould the national headquarters to fit a national ideal. Urban development of the three cities shows that until 1945 Western models (Paris, Berlin, Vienna) were followed, while in the first decades after 1945, this role was assumed by Moscow (see the articles of Miruna Stroe, Grigor Doytchinov, Aleksandra Đukić). In this respect, Belgrade is not comparable to Bucharest and Sofia, because of the fact that following the Tito-Stalin split, Yugoslavia was not part of the Eastern Bloc. This ultimately afforded Belgrade more room for manoeuvring, at least stylistically. However, it is not surprising that in the post-Socialist period, from 1989 onwards, Western models for urban-planning are again being followed, not least owing to the financing of these efforts by foreign (western European) investors (see the articles of Eva Vaništa Lazarević, Milena Vukmirović, Angelica Stan, Mihai Alexandru, Yani Valkanov) without which they would be and large be impossible.

Closing remarks

The comparison of the developments of capitals in Europe shows that examples such as London, Paris or Rome are indeed very representative but ultimately atypical, because in most other cases, the situations were quite different: the process of development lasted both long and short and was to a large extent determined by the stability of the states they represented and later, the need of those states for a central place of power and organization. The European capitals only received a decidedly national character – in theory or reality – rather late, i.e. in the 19th century. While most Western capitals only gradually assumed national symbolism, those new and emerging capitals in eastern and South Eastern Europe entered this process almost immediately.

All European (and not only European) capitals have been and are faced with two fundamental problems: every generation identifies itself differently, along new parameters which must be reflected in the capital city of that nation, however these changes are often only implemented piecemeal and thereby reflective not of wholesale change, but rather compromise.

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- 1 Selected from the whole of studies concerning nation idea, nation building etc. the fundamental work of Benedict Anderson (German translation): *Die Erfindung der Nation. Zur Karriere eines erfolgreichen Konzepts.* Frankfurt/M. - New York 1988.
 - 2 Harald Heppner: *Konstantinopel, eine untypische Hauptstadt in Südosteuropa.* In: Harald Heppner (Hg.): *Hauptstädte zwischen Save, Bosphorus und Dnjepr. Geschichte – Funktion – Nationale Symbolkraft.* Wien-Köln-Weimar 1998, 85-100.
 - 3 Gerhard Rösch: *Venedig. Geschichte einer Seerepublik.* Stuttgart 2000.
 - 4 Jean-Paul Bled: *Wien. Residenz, Metropole, Hauptstadt.* Wien-Köln-Weimar 2002.
 - 5 Dan Berindei: *Bukarest – Hauptstadt der rumänischen Nation.* In: Harald Heppner (Hg.), *Hauptstädte in Südosteuropa. Geschichte – Funktion – Nationale Symbolkraft.* Wien-Köln-Weimar 1994, p. 37-54; Vasile Neamțu, *Das Werden der Hauptstadt im Fürstentum Moldau.* Ibid. 69-86.
 - 6 As overview see Ionuț Costea: *Tărilor Române în secolul al XVIII-lea.* In: Ioan Aurel Pop, Ioan Bolovan (Coord.), *Istoria României. Compendiu.* Cluj-Napoca 2004, 399-456.
 - 7 Holm Sundhussen: *Geschichte Serbiens 19.-21. Jahrhundert.* Wien-Köln-Weimar 2007, 50-52.
 - 8 Hans-Joachim Härtel, Roland Schönfeld: *Bulgarien vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart.* Regensburg-München 1998.
 - 9 Dejan Medaković, *Der Aufstieg Belgrads zur Haupt- und Residenzstadt.* In: Harald Heppner (Hg.), *Hauptstädte in Südosteuropa. Geschichte – Funktion – Nationale Symbolkraft.* Wien-Köln-Weimar 1994, 185-194.
 - 10 Dan Berindei: *Bukarest – Hauptstadt der rumänischen Nation.* In: Harald Heppner (Hg.), *Hauptstädte in Südosteuropa. Geschichte – Funktion – Nationale Symbolkraft.* Wien-Köln-Weimar 1994.
 - 11 Vasil Gjuzelev: *Die Hauptstadt-Entwicklung in Bulgarien.* In: Harald (Hg.): *Hauptstädte zwischen Save, Bosphorus und Dnjepr. Geschichte – Funktion – Nationale Symbolkraft.* Wien-Köln-Weimar 1998., 145-170.
 - 12 Gerhard Seewann: *Minderheiten und Nationalitätenpolitik.* In: Magarditsch Hatschikjan und Stefan Troebst (Hg.) *Südosteuropa. Gesellschaft, Politik, Wirtschaft, Kultur.* Ein Handbuch. München 1999, 169-198.
 - 13 Alexandru Zub, *Europa in der rumänischen Kultur – ein Essay.* In: Harald Heppner (Hg.): *Die Rumänen und Europa vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart.* Wien-Köln-Weimar 1999, 273-291; Aleksandar Kjosev: *Bulgarische Speile mit „Europa“ ein Essay.* In: Harald Heppner/Rumjana Preshlenova (Hg.): *Die Bulgaren und Europa von der Nationalen Wiedergeburt bis zur Gegenwart.* Sofia 1999, 263-276.

Mirjana Roter Blagoječić

The modernization and urban transformation of Belgrade in the 19th and early 20th century¹

Introduction

For understanding the modern urban development of Belgrade in the 20th century, it is necessary to consider its specific geo-strategic and geo-political position. The site of the city is at the confluence of Sava and Danube Rivers, between the East and the West, which leads to a crucial impact on its urban and architectural development throughout history. The political and cultural Eastern and Western influences, which are alternating after the restoration of the state of Serbia, represent the basic elements of its modern identity. This is also largely expressed in a constant struggle between the traditionalism and modernism, the conservative and the progressive.

The influences of the European culture and academic architecture result when the Principality of Serbia is established in the early 19th century – a period of time, when the Ottoman way of life is still quite obvious. In spite of all the significant changes that take place after 1867, when the Ottomans leave Serbia, no political, social or economic conditions necessary for the radical urban and architectural transformation of Belgrade are present at the beginning of the 19th century. However, the process of social and cultural changes has already started, focusing on the emancipation of the oriental influences and the adaptation of the European social and cultural values. The Austrian Monarchy and many Serbs, who were born and/or graduated there, appreciate and support these new changes.

At the beginning of the 19th century Belgrade is a small ruined and negligent Ottoman fortification consisting of a civilian settlement with earthen ramparts with palisades and a moat. It is constructed during the Austrian rule in the 18th century and reconstructed later by the Ottomans. Due to the permanent war threats, the internal clashes in the Ottoman Empire and the frequent fires

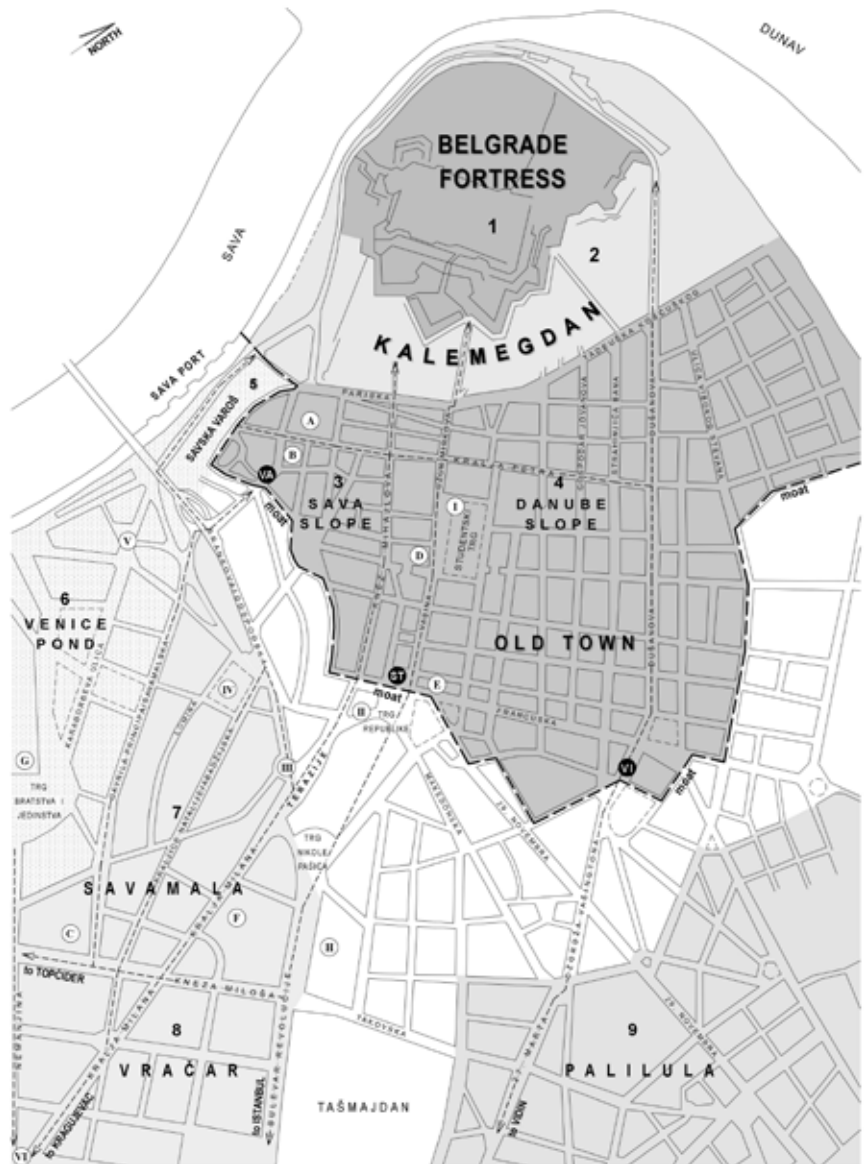


Fig. 1
The main urban areas and
communication of the
Old Belgrade in 19th and early
20th century.
(M.Roter Blagojević/S.Rajić)

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|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 Belgrade fortress - Tvrđava | Ⓐ Serbian Church - Saborna crkva | Ⓜ Great Market Square - Velika Pijaca | Ⓜ Vroć Gate |
| 2 City Field - Kalemegdan | Ⓑ Old Court - Konak | Ⓝ Theatre Square | Ⓜ Stambol Gate |
| 3 Sava Slope | Ⓒ New Court - Dvorac | Ⓝ Terazije Square | Ⓜ Vidin Gate |
| 4 Danube Slope | Ⓓ University - Captain Mila's building | Ⓝ Zeleni Venac | |
| 5 Sava Port Area - Savska Vrata | Ⓔ Theatre - Pozorište | Ⓝ Small Market Square - Mali Pijac | |
| 6 Venice Pond - Bara Venecija | Ⓕ Royal Court - Kraljev dvor | Ⓝ Slavija Square | |
| 7 Savamala Area | Ⓖ Railway Station - Železnička stanica | | |
| 8 Vračar Area | Ⓗ National Assembly - Narodna skupština | | |
| 9 Palilula Area | | | |

and plague epidemics, the number of its inhabitants decreases. The trade and the commerce as well as the construction of new buildings are experiencing stagnation.² From the many preserved memories and books, left behind by some traveling writers in that time, we can get the impression that the Old Town is devastated.³ Brush's map from 1789 presents an urban pattern combining the narrow and curved Levantine streets and the Austrian straight streets, with the Great Market located square in the city center.⁴

After the First Uprising in 1804, a great number of Serbians return to the Old Town inside the moat and settle predominantly around their church on the Kosančićev venac, above the Sava riverbank. Belgrade is a capital of the new Serbian state until 1806 and the collapse of the Uprising in Serbia, which initiates the establishment of the administrative, legislative and social institutions.⁵ The Old Town keeps its Levantine image within the moat. The trade and commerce is re-established on the Sava slope and on the main street alongside of the Serbian church. As the political circumstances do not provide the conditions for new construction works, the newly formed public institutions and the inhabitants settle into adapted old buildings. One of these buildings is an old Muslim house on the Danube slope, where the first High School, the *Lyceum*, is established.⁶



Fig. 2
The Brush's Plan of Belgrade from 1789.
(Museum of Belgrade)

After the Second Uprising in 1815 and during the 1820s, when the Serbian population experiences certain political liberties, no significant changes are made in Belgrade by the Ottoman administration. The Ottoman army is concentrated in the fortress and guards the four town gates. The Muslim inhabitants return to their homes, predominantly on the Danube slope.⁷ Only 60 Christians are living in the Old Town by that time.⁸

In 1829 the traveling writer O.D. Pirh mentions that the Old Town of Belgrade is so heavily demolished that only the remnants of the old stone mosques, caravanserais, hamams and etc. can be discerned.⁹ As the Moslems cannot revive their previous economic strength, the Danube side deteriorates, the trade in the old Long Market Street stagnates and the town center moves to the Serbian part of the city on the Sava River's side.¹⁰

A small number of Serbian inhabitants begin the construction of new houses in the area surrounding the Serbian church. A Serbian administrative and spiritual center is also establishes there, despite of the disapproval of the Ottomans who do not allow new building construction inside the Old Town. The first Court Building and the residence of the Serbian sovereign Prince Miloš Obrenović are constructed in 1818. They are located in front of the Old church and of some new houses of wealthy Serbian citizens.¹¹ The spatial concept, the construction and the design of the new houses follows the vernacular Ottoman traditions.¹² Due to the prevention of building activities in the Old Town and the high land prices the newly arriving population settles outside the moat, in Savamala and Palilula- inherited Austrian suburbs from 18th century.

The development of Belgrade after achieving political independence and the proclamation for a capital in the middle of the 19th century

After 1830 Belgrade witnesses a great prosperity. While the Sultans are signing the agreements known as *Hatti-I-şerif*³, the new Serbian principality obtains political independence and is able to develop its administrative and social functions. The changed political circumstances attract a great number of new inhabitants, arriving from the other Serbian territories, which are still under the Ottoman rule. There is a great influence of better educated Serbians, originally coming from Vojvodina - part of the Habsburg monarchy. They come to Serbia and work in the administration. In 1834 the number of people, predominantly Serbs and Jews, is 7033. They are living in 769 houses, located in the Old Town. The first data of Belgrade's population is from 1838. There are 8483 Christians, 2700 Muslims, 1500 Jews and 250 foreigners, in total - 2963 people.¹⁴

The political circumstances in the city are specific. The Ottoman administration and the military garrison are still settled in the Belgrade's fortress and guard the town gates. The fortress is separated from the Old Town civilian settlement and by the City Field - the glacis, established by the Austrians in the end of 17th century. The Old Town is still surrounded by old earthen ramparts with palisades and a moat, which prevent the organic and functional merging with the surrounding areas. Little by little, the suburbs are growing, populated by the new inhabitants. A new mercantile district develops on the Sava riverbank, around the port. That is the only connection of Belgrade with the city of Zemun and the European neighbors. The suburb Savamala develops fast, rising above the marshy terrain called the Venice Pond. The suburb Palilula spreads along the main connection to Istanbul. The remaining space is mostly marshy and unpopulated, except of the area around the Stambol-Gate, where a Roma settlement is growing up.¹⁵

Judging by the memories written by foreign travelers who had visited Belgrade in the beginning of the 1830s, there is a clearly strict separation between the Serbian and the Moslem parts of the Old Town. According to Boa-le-Conte, while the Muslims-populated area on the Danube slope, with its small densely grouped and ruined timber houses and damaged mosques, is neglected, the Serbian-populated area at the Sava slope expands every day to form an Orthodox Christian town.¹⁶ A panoramic view on the Belgrade Old Town pictured by Anastas Jovanović¹⁷ shows the Sava riverbank with the commercial area of the Sava port and the Customs Office Building, which is one of the first European classicistic style-buildings.¹⁸ On the upper plateau, the Kosančićev venac, one can see the new spiritual center of the Serbian Principality: the new Serbian Cathedral Church, with its high bell-tower¹⁹ and the monumental Prince Miloš New Court.²⁰ The architecture of the church breaks up with the Eastern tradition and represent a gradual adaption of the European styles of the period of late Baroque and Classicism. It is built between 1837 and 1840, following the design of the Austrian builder Adam Friedrich Querfelder from Pančevo, and under the

supervision of the first government engineer, the Slovak Franc Janke, invited to come from Vienna.²¹ Janke arrives in 1835 in order to manage the state works on the new public buildings and the town regulation. The Court, on the other hand, is built by the traditional builder Hajji-Nikola Živković,²² 1829-1830, and is a mixture of a representative Oriental residence and the town houses of the small settlements of Zemun and Pančevo across the Sava and Danube Rivers. The Levantine construction and the spatial pattern of the residence contrasts to the façade with its modest European classical forms. The first residential building with pure classical architecture in the Old Town, probably designed by Janke, is the house of the city governor-built in 1836-1837.²³

Due to the uncertainty which inevitably affects the life in the Old Town and due to the permanent threat by the Ottoman bombardments from the fortress, Prince Miloš commences, in the beginning of the 1830s, the construction of a new Court complex in Topčider, far away from the city and the canyons. The political situation and the fact that the final eviction of the Moslem inhabitants is not achieved, force the prince to take a radical decision. In 1834 he starts planning the establishment of the new Serbian Belgrade, situated on the sunny slopes of the West Vračar area, where the prince intends to settle all the Serbians. The new administrative center of the Serbian state consisting of the National Assembly Building, the Court and the Great Barracks is raised in Savamala area.²⁴ The regulation of the new town is supervised by Janke and under the direct instructions of Prince Miloš.²⁵ The first straight streets with new houses are Savamalska and Abazijska, form the new city's commercial center, where all the Serbian merchants and craftsmen are supposed to be settled, after leaving the Old Town's Main Street. These streets are representing Princ Miloš's urban visions and they show for the first time the emergence of long, straight wide traffic corridors in Belgrade.²⁶ These days the streets have still an important traffic function for the city of Belgrade.

The rational Western matrix of the future Belgrade is established on this way. The rare preserved plan of Janke, dating from 1842,²⁷ shows the new streets and blocks with the governmental buildings as well as the orthogonal regulation of Western Vračar, with the two 38 m wide main streets to the Court in Topčider and to the city of Kragujevac. The Western Vračar is established as a prominent residential area for the emerging middle class, with ground floor houses and gardens.²⁸ Throughout the decades, in order to follow this matrix, it will be extended to the remaining area of East and Western Vračar. The pattern established in the middle of the 19th century is the basis of the urban regulation of the whole Vračar area. Today it represents the most significant urban planning heritage from the beginning of the Serbian urbanism.

One of the most important for the city's communications element is Gospodska Street. It runs from Sava port to Terazije-an emerging city center outside the moat, where the representative houses of many wealthy citizens are located. The fostering of the commercial relations with Austria enables a fast development

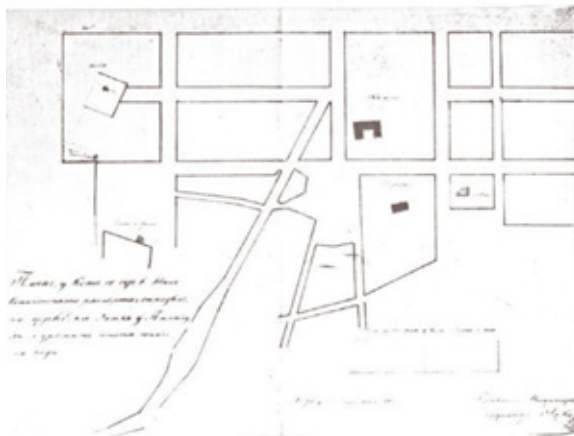


Fig. 3
The Plan of West Vračar area made
by engineer F. Janke, dating from 1842.
(Reproduction, Vukotić-Lazar/Lalošević)

of the area alongside the Sava port. The mercantile center, which is in charge of the export and import of goods is also formed there and flourishes after 1856, when the Danube free navigation is finally permitted.²⁹

After Prince Miloš descends from the throne in April 1841 and his son is proclaimed as the new ruler, Belgrade becomes again the capital of Serbia. A fast social and economic development fosters under the Karađorđević Dynasty and Prince Aleksandar I since 1842.³⁰ The main European countries, Austria, Great Britain, Russia and France, open consular offices as guarantors for the peace. The arriving of a great number of new inhabitants continues. In 1846 there are 14386 inhabitants (8651 of Serbian nationality) and 1714 houses.³¹

The traits of the oriental town gradually disappear. The travelers Roman Zmorski,³² Herbert Vivien and Felix Kanic³³ observe that the town is changing considerably and in only four years a lot of one-story houses in European manner have been built all around the city. The enriched Serbian inhabitants chase the Moslems away from the central parts of the town into the Danube slope. The Terazije area is partially regulated. The public works are commenced in the town to provide public services, stone-paving of the streets and the planting of rows of trees. The first park of Belgrade is established on the West Vračar area, around the first monument, devoted to the rebels who lost their life during the First Serbian Uprising.

The urban development until the middle of the century is presented correctly in the plan made by the Austrian Captain G. König in 1854.³⁴ There is an obvious contrast between the new orthogonal street network on the slopes of the Western Vračar area and the spontaneously formed winding streets in the old fortified town, on the Sava slope, on Terazije and on Palilula. The large area between the Sava riverbank and the settlement on the Savamala and Western Vračar is covered by marshy terrain.

Despite the considerable changes in the appearance of the town, the conflicted and tense political relations between the Muslim and the Serbian inhabitants prevent the faster transformation and regulation of the Old Town with its 1214 Serbian and 1118 Moslem houses. After a clash between the Ottoman soldiers and the Serbian inhabitants, which cause the Turkish bombardment in 1862, 400 houses are damaged and burned down, mostly around the Saborna Church.³⁵



Fig. 4
The Austrian plan of Belgrade from 1854, made by captain König. (Reproduction, Vukotić-Lazar/Lalošević)

A considerable data about the degree of construction and the owners of the plots in Belgrade can be obtained from the Turkish Plan of Belgrade made in 1863.³⁶ The Moslem inhabitants populate the area of the Danube slope. Beside them are only Jews living around the Old Synagogue. Serbian houses and shops are situated on the Sava slope and in the central area of the Old Town, around the Great Market. The Old Town still preserves the oriental pattern of streets, especially on the Danube side.

The foreign travelers, like G. Rasch, describe in 1866 the chaos of the Oriental town with its narrow and bumpy streets and dirty wooden houses clad with mud.³⁷ In the Serbian part of the city they observe white European style houses and the grandiose University building, built in 1963, situated on the main street in the city core, designed by the Czech architect Jan Nevole.³⁸ The building is initially planned as a monumental residence for the wealthiest Serbian citizen, Captain Miša Anastasijević. Located in front of the Great Market Square, it is the second three-story building in the town. After his owner makes a donation to the homeland by giving away the building for cultural and educational purposes, it becomes a shelter for all the main state institutions, the Gymnasium, the University and the National Museum and Library.

Nevole, who has studied at the Technical High Schools of Prague and Vienna as well as at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts becomes in 1845 the chief of the Government Building Construction Office and is the first educated architect in Serbia. Thanks to him and some German, Czech and Slovak states engineers as well as a number of Serbian architects, born in the Habsburg monarchy and

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graduated in Pest, Vienna, Munich and Karlsruhe³⁹, the architecture in Serbia reaches for the first time an European level. The Captain Miša's Building is representing the Romanesque architectural style in Serbia and is related to the idea of the national liberation and to the attention to the own medieval tradition between the 1850s and 1870s.⁴⁰

The first plan for the reconstruction of the Old Town

Favorable circumstances for the reconstruction of the Serbian capital come in the 1870s. After the return of the Obrenović dynasty on the throne in 1859 and the death of Princ Miloš in 1860, the new young sovereign Prince Mihailo manages to accomplish the final withdrawal of the Ottoman army and the Moslems from the Old Town.⁴¹ In 1867, there are 24612 inhabitants and 3478 houses.⁴² New inhabitants are constantly arriving from other Serbian settlements and region, is still under Ottoman rule. There are advantageous circumstances for the reconstruction of the fortified Old City and the removal of the old city ramparts in order to link the Old Town with the peripheral settlements. A great free area for new construction is obtained by cleaning out



Fig. 5
The Plan of Old Belgrade Town
in Moat, made by Emilijan
Josimović in 1867.
(Reproduction, Maksimović)

the strip surrounding the moat. The state buys up the majority of the Muslim estates, so that a great part of the urban area becomes in a possession of it and a more radical urban reconstruction is possible.

The situation and the existing number of houses in the Old Town are recorded for the first time in a land survey by the university professor Emilijan Josimović, in the period of 1864-1867.⁴³ The cadastral plan published in 1867 contains all the communications and the buildings of solid construction. Based on the land survey, Josimović makes and publishes his explanation of proposal for the urban regulation of the part of Belgrade, which lies within the moat as a lithographic plan in the scale of 1/3000.⁴⁴ He preserves the majority of the solidly built houses and the main communications, inherited from the Austrian reconstruction in the beginning of the 18th century. With minimal corrections

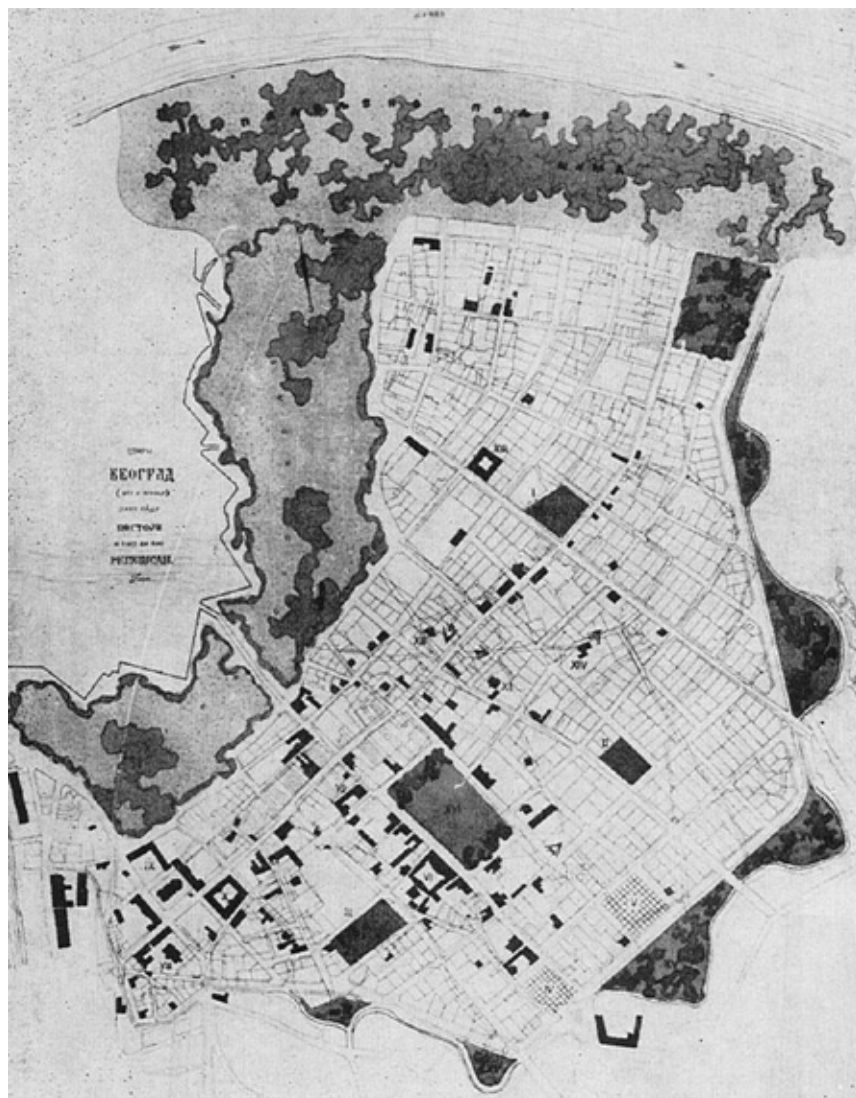


Fig. 6
The City Reconstruction
Plan of Old Belgrade Town
in Moat, made by Emilijan
Josimović, published in 1867.
(Reproduction, Maksimović)



Fig. 7
The J. Garašanin house, 43 Knez Mihailova St, 1867-70.

of the already formed routes, Josimović obtains an approximately orthogonal street network with regular blocks as basic elements of the urban structure. He proposes a new urban pattern with a rational urban scheme of wide streets, major squares, parks and monumental public buildings, which resemble the modern European capitals.⁴⁵ His proposal leads to the destruction of many mosques and Ottoman public buildings, which completely changes the previous Levantine identity and the traditional skyline of the city originating from the 16th. From then on, the de-Ottomanization and Europeanization is the political paradigm of the construction of Serbia's new national identity. The clearing-up of the architectural remnants of the Ottoman culture is an integral part of the 19th century national identity forming process.⁴⁶

A significant contribution of Josimović's plan is the rearrangement of the new Knez-Mihailova St. It becomes a main street, obtaining a direct link between the center of the Old Town and Terazije, as well as other urban parts outside of the ramparts. His proposals for the construction of a boulevard with tree rows and pedestrian alleys on the glacis, following the monumental Vienna's Ring, is also of significance.⁴⁷ Thus a good communication between all parts of the town is established, as well as a linkage of the inner and outer urban parts. He plans to arrange gardens, in order to solve the lack of green areas and to preserve the shape of the old ramparts in the new urban tissue in the area where the extended old earthen platforms for cannons still exist. He proposes to build-up monuments in each garden in memory of important national heroes and cultural enlightenments.⁴⁸ These ideas express the political, economic and cultural liberation from the Ottoman rule and the Europeanization of the society.

Josimović also proposes to reconstruct Belgrade's fortress and the town battle field Kalemegdan into a European style public park.⁴⁹ He also proposes to build up a quay with a boulevard and tree rows alongside the Sava and the Danube riverbanks. Since he is aware of the bad communication between the Sava and the Danube sides, he comes up with the idea of a tunnel under the town hill, which creates a direct connection between the Sava and the Danube ports and eliminates the traffic that would interrupt the planned public park. He also considers the re-location of some important public buildings and anticipates new locations for the main governmental ones.⁵⁰

It is obvious, that Josimović's intention is to follow the examples of Vienna and Budapest and to implement the European rational urbanism in Serbia. However, most of his visionary proposals, although essential for the new modern image of Belgrade, aren't realized, and the chance for a radical transformation of the city fails. The consequences are still visible today by the bad traffic function of the city. Some futuristic ideas, like the tunnel and the quay alongside the Sava and the Danube riverbanks are reestablished in recent time.

Even though it has never been accepted by the official institutions, Josimović's plan is the first one that comprehensively treats the reconstruction of the Old



Fig. 8
The Plan of Belgrade from 1878, made by the engineer Stevan Zarić. (Reproduction, Maksimović)

Town which influences greatly its further transformation. A draft for the Law on Regulation of the Town of Belgrade is proposed in 1867 too. Yet it is also rejected, so that the further regulation doesn't have an appropriate legal basis.⁵¹ The owners of the estates and buildings are strongly against any changes, while the Belgrade Municipality experiences a lack of technically skilled people to organize and accomplish the reconstruction. Due to that reason, the reconstruction is not running punctually and is not based on a consistent concept, as proposed by Josimović. The new Knez-Mihailova St is reconstructed and the old main Serbian shopping street is connected with the new business and commercial center on Terazije. A comprehensive regulation of the Danube slope begins, which results in the accomplishment of an orthogonal street matrix around the Great Market area.⁵²

One of the greatest results of Josimović's ideas and Prince Mihailo's wishes is the reconstruction of the area around the destroyed historic Main Town Gate. A main town square is established and a raise of a monument dedicated to Prince Mihailo, assassinated in May 1868, is foreseen.⁵³ The first theatre is built between 1868 and 1889 designed by the young architect Aleksandar Bugarski, who has studied at the Polytechnic School of Buda.⁵⁴ It is the first academic Neo-Renaissance building in Serbia, built in a modest scale and in accordance with the financial capabilities of the state.⁵⁵ The Knez Mihailova St is developed into a main street with many solidly built one-story terraced houses of wealthy merchants, with shops in the ground floor and representative academic style façades.⁵⁶

The results of the regulation can be seen in the first layout of the complete town territory made by the engineer Stevan Zarić in 1878.⁵⁷ Beside the names of the streets and squares, the layout also presents numerous data of basic town planning elements and existing buildings, since the building shapes are also entered in the plan. The town is spread to south-westwards and south-eastwards, over the West and East Vračar and Palilula. The main commercial and administrative urban axis is the new city spine that stretches from the fortress, across the main trade street, the Terazije and the Slavija squares, to the city periphery. The spiritual center of the town is, as previously defined by the Saborna Church, the Archbishop's seat and the Theological College. The educational center of the state is established on the Great Square in front of the University. The regulation of the Danube slope is accomplished in the upper parts, but the area alongside the Sava port preserves its old morphology and buildings. It has a great communicative and commercial significance for the state. Being a main terminal for passengers and goods, it represents the *Gate to Europe*. Some areas on the city's periphery, like the Palilula square, where the first public municipal hospital is built, and the Zeleni venac square, start being developed.⁵⁸ In the Western and Eastern Vračar area are erected predominantly ground-floor middle-class houses with modest academic architecture.⁵⁹

The fast development of Belgrade in the end of the 19th century

After a short period of stagnation caused by the Serbian-Turkish War, 1876-1878, the southern regions of Serbia are liberated and the political independence is achieved, which results in the proclamation of the Kingdom of Serbia in 1882. During the reign of King Milan Obrenović the ties with Europe and especially with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy are getting stronger.⁶⁰

The number of Belgrade's inhabitants is constantly arising. While in 1874 it has 27.605 inhabitants, in 1889 this number is doubled and in 1900 the town reaches a population of 69.769 people. The greatest influx comes from the liberated southern regions and from Austria, so that in 1900 only 60% of the town inhabitants are born on the territory of Serbia. In the period from 1874 to 1890 the number of the buildings increases, mostly in Palilula and Vračar around 80%. The houses are built with bad quality materials, mostly

of timber framed construction and mud. Most of them lack the minimum of hygienic requirements. In 1889 only 2098 of the listed 5448 building structures consist of solid material. In the same year there are 317 café-restaurants, 1989 workshops and 217 stores.⁶¹

The investment of foreign capital in Serbia funds the building of the first industrial manufactures. The state marks a constant economic growth. This is especially supported by the construction of the railway road, 1881-1884, and the Sava railway bridge.⁶² The railway has a crucial impact on Serbia's future development. A closer connection to Western Europe and a link to the eastern countries and their capitals-Sofia and Istanbul are achieved. The greatest changes are around the Venice Pound. After the area of the Sava embankment is dried out, a railway station is built according to the Viennese design in 1884.

The regulation of some urban parts is continued during the 1880s and the Old Town is almost completely reconstructed. A new city axis is connecting the railway station and the Slavija square. A new regulation with octagonal blocks is planned to cover the Savamala area and to expand the city towards the Sava riverbank. A representative landscape park is designed in front of the Ministry of Finance. The municipal administration plans to expand the town towards the Danube riverbank and to construct the riverbank road, as recorded in the Plan of Belgrade from 1886.⁶³ In addition, it is planned to expand the city southwards, so that new streets are drawn in the plan around the Slavija Square.⁶⁴

However, despite of the planned steps of regulation of the suburbia, the town is greatly expanded beyond control, due to the illegal construction of low quality houses around the town perimeters. In 1885 for the first time, the Belgrade municipality initiates a regulation plan and the determination of the administrative borders of the town district, i.e. of the territory which is to be equipped with public services. The territory is determined in 1890 and the Regulation plan of Belgrade is completed in 1891.

The illustrated map of Bešlić from 1893 shows the new recorded city border. One can see the already regulated area around the Saborna Church in the Sava slope, while the old street morphology around the Kosančićev venac stays untouched. The regulation of the Danube slope has been completed, too and a uniform orthogonal street network covers the area of Palilula. It is planned the same rational pattern to be applied on the Western Vračar area to the Soldiers' Field.⁶⁵

Numerous records written by foreign travelers, who have visited the town in the 1880s and 1890s, present the picture of an exceptionally fast transformation of the oriental settlement to a modern, almost Western town. The most detailed descriptions of Belgrade, including sketches of some ambient and of the most important buildings are made by Felix Kanic, who mentions a new network of regular stone-paved streets, provided with electricity lighting, with beautiful administrative public and private buildings.⁶⁶

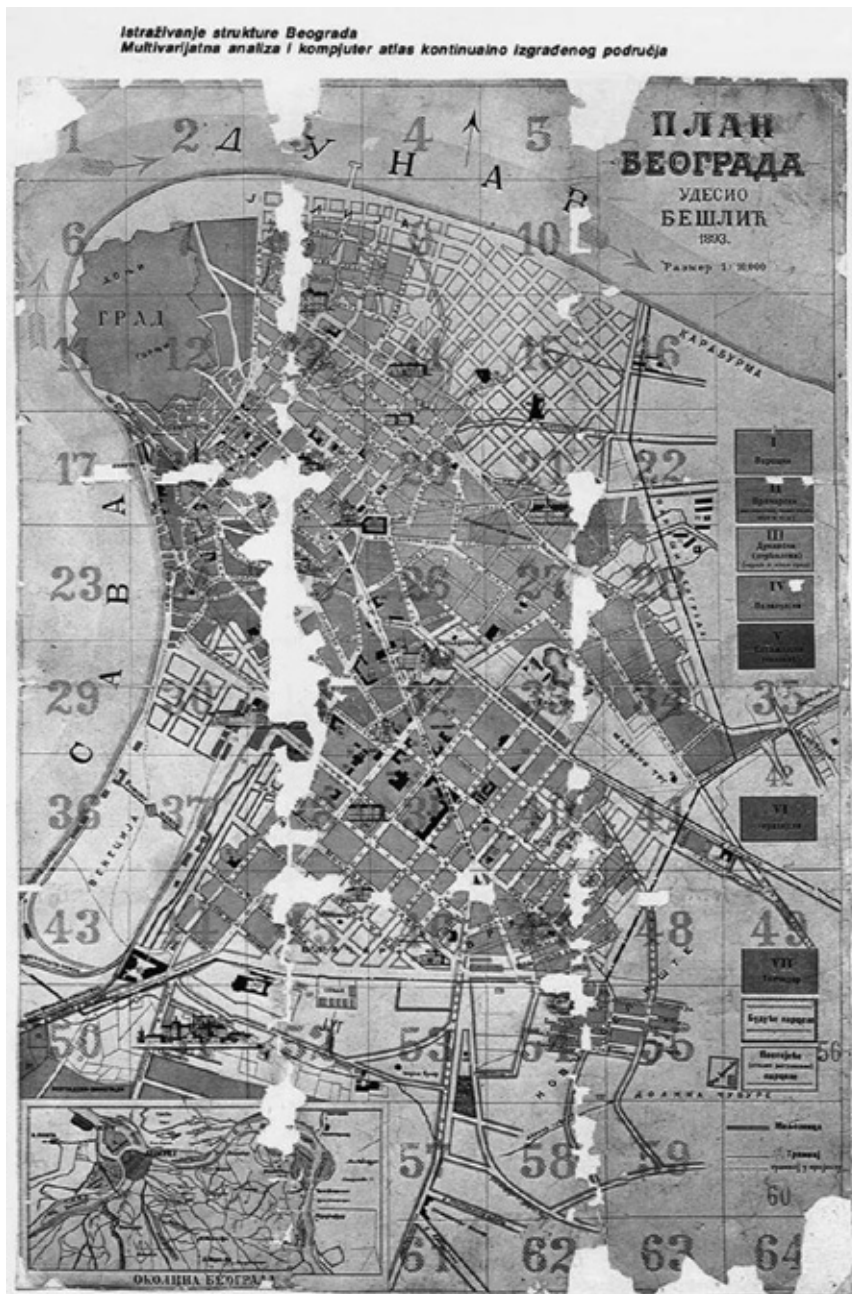


Fig. 9
The Plan of Belgrade from 1893,
made by Bešlić. (Reproduction,
Vukotić-Lazar/Lalošević)

It is obvious that the Belgrade municipality undertakes extensive works for the arrangement of the town and for the increasing of the level of its public services. By the end of the century, the public service facilities of Belgrade reach a level similar to the European capitals, like Budapest, for example.⁶⁷ The streets are still paved with the inherited stone-paving. However in 1886, the Dubrovačka Street, located next to the Saborna Church, is paved with granite cubes. Later, the Knez Mihailova St, and all other important streets are paved with granite cubes, too. The water supply for the town is provided from 20 town fountains,

connected with the water supply system constructed during the Ottoman rule in the 17th century and the Austrian rule in the first half of the 18th century, which are still in use. The plan for the new water supply system is completed in 1892, and the plan for the sewage system is adopted two years later. The town lighting is initially supplied by gas lamps. The electric lighting is introduced upon the construction of the first electrical power station in 1891. The first horse-draft tramway line is built between 1891 and 1892 towards the main city axes. Soon many additional tram lines are established, which altogether cover around 8 km. The electric-power tram appears in 1894 on the line from the Sava Port to the town center. The urban regulation is completed with the planting of tree rows and the construction of numerous parks. A landscape park is arranged around the area of the Greater Kalemegdan, according to the plan from 1884, while the Smaller Kalemegdan Park is arranged after the launch of a contest in 1898.⁶⁸

In 1896 the Belgrade Building Law is adopted (with amendments in 1898 and 1901) and from 1897 on, the Building Code for the Town of Belgrade⁶⁹ regulates all the issues related to the construction in the separate parts of the town. These documents define more specifically the street widths, the positioning of the buildings, the dimensions of the building lots, the building heights etc. After the adoption of the Belgrade Building Law, a Building Committee is founded, which is in charge with the construction of the town.

In the eve of the 20th century a considerable progress in the construction of all types of buildings in Belgrade is achieved. The architecture reaches a Western European level. The actual concepts of the historical style architecture are adopted, but adjusted to the economic and social conditions of Serbia. That is expressed by the new governmental buildings designed by the Ministry of Construction and established in 1863. These are works of a new generation of local and born in Austria Serbian architects, who have graduated in Vienna, Munich, Karlsruhe, Berlin, Aachen and Zurich.⁷⁰ A precise interpretation of the architecture of the historical styles is presented on most of the residential buildings, based on the academic principles of modeling and transmission of stylistic forms.⁷¹ The most beautiful governmental palaces are the New Royal Court on the Terazije designed by Bugarski, 1881-1884, with its large and well-nourished English style garden,⁷² and the National Bank Palace, 1888-1889,⁷³ designed by Konstantin Jovanović⁷⁴.

Belgrade's development in the 1890s is very fast. Numerous one-story residential houses of academic architecture, with very solid modeling are built in the main commercial street. Although there are not many, a certain number of two-story mansion houses for the upper class with representative large flats are constructed. These represent the result of the general progress of the country and the increase of citizens who are able to finance it. Although they aren't similar in size compared to some monumental residences in Vienna and Budapest, the stylistic concepts are very identical.⁷⁵

Epilogue: the first Master plan at the early 1920s

Some new political tensions and the vicious assassination of the young King Aleksandar I Obrenović and his wife Draga at the beginning of the 20th century set the country in a political isolation.⁷⁶ The Karađorđević dynasty returns declaring the new ruler King Petar I. They break the previously strong connections with the Habsburgs and orientate the political communication to France and Russia.⁷⁷ However, the tendency of Belgrade's fast expansion continues. The rapid development and the great demand for dwelling accommodations increases considerably the price of land and causes certain negative consequences like speculations with the land and constructions of high buildings in the central urban parts. This kind of buildings occupies almost the entire area of the plot, leaving very small courtyard spaces. The apartments in these buildings are dark and there is a lack of natural ventilation. Many of the rooms get light via the light-wells. Nevertheless, the number of such examples is insufficient and Belgrade is still a settlement with low rise buildings: the ground-floor houses are 83% and the one-story buildings are 16% of the building stock in 1906-1907, while the multi-storied buildings are only 60 or just 1%.⁷⁸

The Municipality is confronted with the permanent problem of the illegal and non-quality constructions in the suburbs as well as with the over-population of the existing housing fund. In 1910 there are 89876 inhabitants living in 6964 houses, most of them are small ground-floor buildings with 4 to 6 rooms.⁷⁹ The revision of the first Regulation Plan is commenced in 1902. However, it isn't done comprehensively for the complete urban territory, but with single plans for the individual parts of the town. The new town district is determined in 1906, so that the urban territory is expanded to the southern and eastern territories of the town. A new railway road with its embankment is constructed alongside the Sava and Danube riverbanks. It is well positioned, from the Sava Railway Bridge up to the Danube Railway Station area, where new industrial complexes, like the Slaughterhouse, are established. The railway road completely isolates the town from the two rivers and prevents its further expansion in that area. That is why the town expands to the south and south-east, where the poorest inhabitants settle because cannot afford to pay for the expensive buildings within the town district.⁸⁰

Finally in 1910, the Belgrade Municipality is able to establish a Technical Office by taking out a loan. The office is in charge of the urban development and the reconstruction plans of the town. The young Paris engineer Eduard Leger is appointed as a chief of the office.⁸¹ However, Leger's proposals are constantly criticized by the Belgrade's engineers and architects who aren't satisfied with his work due to his very partial solutions of the town reconstruction issues. They require an Urban Master Plan to be prepared and ask for the preservation of the inherited urban patterns, opposing to the "*Hausmannization*" of the town and the demolition of the heritage.

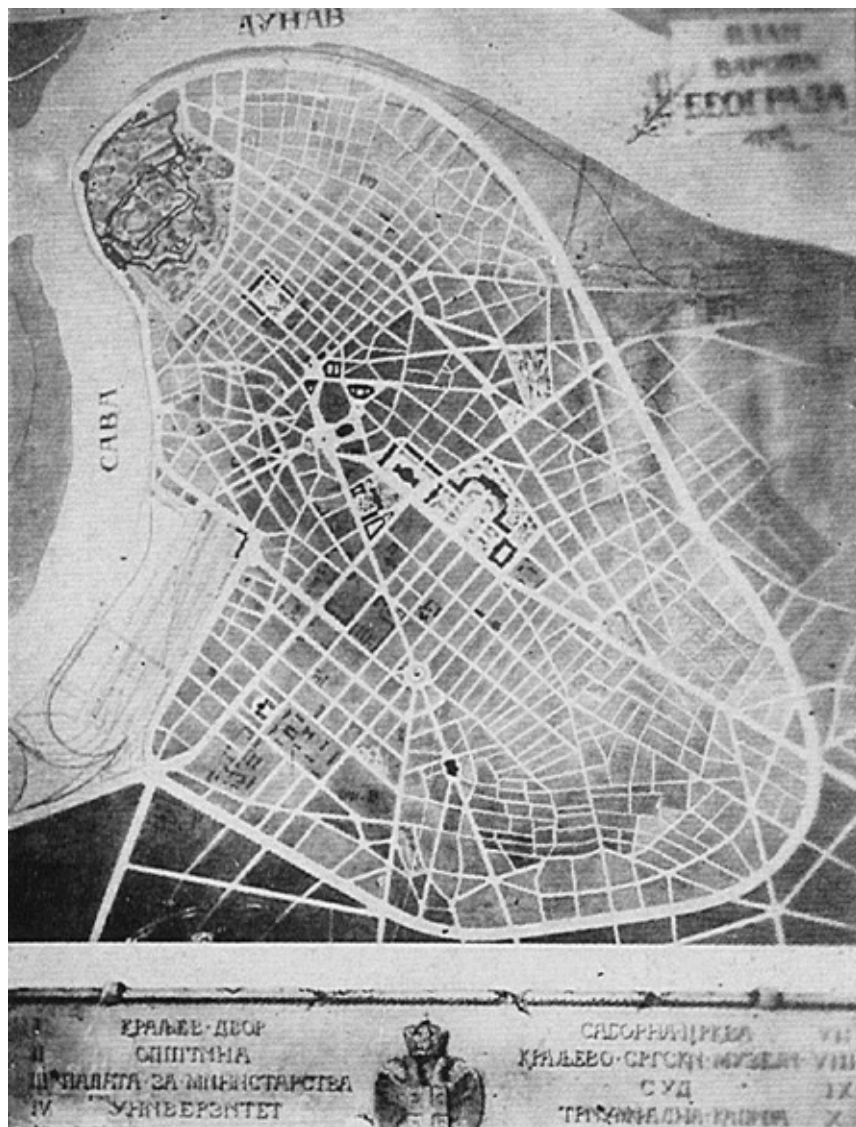


Fig. 10
The first Master Plan of Belgrade from 1912, made by Alban Chambond. (Reproduction, Vukotić-Lazar/Lalošević)

Finally the Master Plan of Belgrade is released by the French planner Alban Chambon in 1912⁸². It attempts to create a uniform town structure and to connect the old and the new urban parts. He introduces characteristic traits of the French urbanism to Belgrade. The Master Plan provides a valuable proposal of a circular boulevard thus clearly dividing the urbanized area from the rest of the city. The town is covered by a regular orthogonal network of communications and numerous diagonal directions, forming trident- and star-shaped squares. The planner also proposes the formation of eleven monumental ensembles with Beaux-Art style representative public edifices, inter-connected with wide boulevards.

The requirement for esthetic values and monumentality of the public spaces complies with the spirit of the French academic tradition. Haussmann's

reconstruction of Paris prevails in the Master Plan,⁸³ while the qualities of the inherited urban patterns and the realistic possibilities of the town are neglected. This is why the Belgrade engineers and architects criticize the city authorities for their inadequate approach to resolve the infrastructural problems of the city. They call for a new plan to solve the problems and they ask for a pan-Slavic contest which allows also experts from other countries to submit their proposals. This plan is used as a solid basis for the arrangement of some significant architectural units in the central part of the town. However, the beginning of WW I stops even the partial realization of the ambitious plan of Chambon.⁸⁴

Considerable changes happen in Belgrade's architecture in the first decades of the 20th century, bringing a great heterogeneity of types and forms. The eclecticism and a more unrestrained treatment and diversity of forms continue its development in the Serbian architecture under the influence of the European artistic tendencies around 1900. The new artistic and architectural ideas are very rapidly transferred to Serbia and occupy the attention of artists and architects.⁸⁵ The architects and civil engineers graduated in Belgrade or in the eminent European schools have different levels and type of education, so the aspirations seen in their works are rather heterogeneous. They enrich the historical styles of academic architecture with elements of Art-Nouveau and a desire for restoration of the national tradition by establishing a distinctive Serbian-Byzantine style.⁸⁶

The construction of the main public building-the National Assembly, begins in 1906, designed in classicistic style by Ilkić and finished after WW I.⁸⁷ Further on, many imposing banks⁸⁸ and military objects are built.⁸⁹ Some large blocks of flats, hotels and banks are built inspired by the Art Nouveau or the



Fig. 11
Project for National Assembly,
Alban Chambon, 1912.
(Reproduction, Milatović)

Austrian Secession combined with the monumental academician style.⁹⁰ Later, numerous new types of dwelling buildings of different size and complexity are developed. The large multistoried apartment complexes, usually of three stores, appear in the busiest streets of the town center and occupy great areas of the urban blocks or fully complete them.⁹¹ They consist of shops and offices in the ground-floor and the mezzanine, emerge as a new element in the architecture of the main streets, following the Vienna's model. The first social residential buildings for workers' dwellings are built by the Belgrade Municipality in the Danube area, near to the new industrial zone. A complex of buildings with a communal courtyard is designing in 1911 by the first female architect, the young city architect Jelisaveta Načić⁹² under the influence of the contemporary European ideas of undecorated architecture for the modern industrial man.

The political and cultural influences of the East and West alternating after the restoration of the Serbian state are the basic elements of the modern development and the creation of a new cultural identity of Belgrade during the 19th and the early 20th century. It is also largely expressed in a constant struggle between the traditionalism and the modernism, the conservative and the progressive. The process of implementation of the Central European urbanism and architecture in Serbia and its capital Belgrade is completed during the first decades of the 20th century, so that the architecture turns entirely towards the achievements of the contemporary European design. There is a clear attempt to express the traditions, distinctions and uniqueness, nevertheless in accordance with the universal principles. However, the establishing of modern public buildings and larger housing developments as well as the applying of the modern stylistic ideas is adapted to the local conditions and therefore presented to a smaller extent, because of the country's considerable lack of development. Only a few buildings reveal the basic implementation of modern constructions and modern principles of architectural design. A very important step towards the city's modern urban transformation is achieved



Fig. 12
Project for Royal Court, Alban Chambond, 1912.
(Reproduction, Milatović)

Fig. 13
The Vučo building, 61 Karađorđeva St, 1908.
(Blagojević)



Fig. 14
The M. Petrović-Alas house, 22
Kosančićev venac, 1910-12.
(Blagojević)

through the Urban Master Plan from 1912 which supports the faster development of Belgrade as a modern capital of the new Kingdom SHS after the WW I.⁹³

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The modernization and urban transformation of Belgrade in the 19th and early 20th century

Monica Sebestyen

Urban image and national representation: Bucharest in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century

Introduction

The period analysed in this paper covers a significant timespan in order to encompass the different stages that correspond to the modernization of the city. It is a period when the Eastern influences were left behind, in order to embrace and become part of the European modernity.

During this period, several momentous events took place, which shaped today's Romania. Such were the unification of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1859, the gain of the independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878, the proclamation of the Romanian Kingdom in 1881 (under the rule of King Carol Ist which marked a flourishing period of stability and rapid modernization) and the Great Union from 1918, when Romania's territory was significantly enlarged, by including the regions of Transylvania, Bessarabia and Bukovina. All these changes overlapped with the dominant ideology of the period – the nationalist one. Following this general European Zeitgeist, Romanians too were in search of their national identity, which started to be shaped into what Benedict Anderson calls "imagined communities"². This process was initiated at the beginning of the 19th century and was considered to reach its apex with the formation of Greater Romania in 1918.

Many aspects contribute to the nation's building process (such as history, language, culture, etc.), among which the built environment is a significant one. The space itself can be used to express certain political values. Thus, the forces in power organise the public space in order to communicate a particular meaning used in shaping the nation. This can be achieved in different ways, as Verdery affirms:

“among the most common ways in which political regimes mark space are by placing particular statues in particular places and

by renaming landmarks such as streets, public squares, and buildings. These provide contour to landscape, socializing them and saturating them with specific political values: they *signify* space in specific ways”³

Being the capital city, Bucharest was intended to represent the whole nation and for this reason it was at the centre of the urban planning preoccupations. The changes of Bucharest were shaped by these historical changes, but it was as well the synchronous preoccupation regarding the modernization which was present in most major European cities.

The present study is divided into two parts, corresponding to the main periods of the city’s evolution. The temporal framework of its development is given, in fact, by the important historical events which led to the founding of the Romanian nation and which, at the same time, accord to a great extent with the changes that occurred in the process of conceiving the public space and the different types of public monuments as well.

The period spanning from the union of the two principalities, Moldavia and Wallachia, in 1859, to the end of World War I, in 1918, corresponds to Bucharest’s coming to its modern age. During this time, the main boulevards and squares of the city were shaped by works that were synchronous to the ones happening in other European capitals. At the same time, this period concurs to the construction of a certain type of monument dedicated to the great men⁴ of the nation which, in most cases, expressed the national ideology. During this period, the basic urban structure is formed and the national unity is achieved.

The next period of time, spanning from 1918 to 1948, was an extremely turbulent one, both nationally and internationally, dominated by many political changes. From the city planning perspective, the projects of the previously conceived boulevards were concluded and the main structure of the city was already formed. This is a period of city planning maturity, during which the systematization plans were elaborated. Especially during the reign of Carol II, numerous ambitious projects were proposed as an expression of a desired monumentality of which, however, most remained unaccomplished. As for the public monuments, following the war trauma, a new type of monument appeared, namely the one dedicated to the heroes, which was to be built all over the country. Over this period, an even more evident connection between power, public space and monument can be traced.

Shaping the modern Bucharest, 1859-1918

At the beginning of the 19th century Bucharest was a Balkan city, lacking the ordered structure of an antique, geometric city, not following the classical/ baroque principles of urban composition either. Combined with the lack

of urban regulations, Bucharest was the result of a vernacular development adapted to the topography and the inhabitants' needs, the historical and natural disasters (such as invasions, earthquakes, floods, fires, etc.) having played an important role in this as well. The dominant spaces were not clearly delineated, the characteristic organizing principles being represented by the local typologies of the *mahala* and the *maidan*.⁵

Another characteristic of the 19th century Bucharest was the low built density, combined with the low rise buildings. The city was located on a plane without any geographical restrictions and, being under Ottoman rule for a long period, it was not allowed to have any fortifications. Thus, the spread out of the city was the result of the absence of any imposed limits – neither geographical, nor administrative – which also hindered the modernization process.

The first urban interventions, as well as the first urban regulations, which constituted the premises for the future development, appeared in this context. At the beginning, there were only punctual interventions, lacking a vision or a plan for the city as a whole; that would be developed in time.

The idea of the nation was expressed at different levels throughout the city: from the creation of representative urban spaces such as boulevards to the new national Romanian architectural style and the public monuments that were erected.

The first boulevards

After the unification of Moldavia and Wallachia, Bucharest became the capital of a territory almost doubled in size, and from that moment onwards the city witnessed a rapid growth of its population. As a consequence, the city started to have another scale and therefore a different image of the city was wished for, one that was more grandiose and more representative.

Starting with the Organic Regulations from 1831, which contained the first provisions regarding the city⁶, and especially in the second half of the 19th century, the controlled urbanistic development was driven by the laws governing the city. If in the beginning there was a complete lack of any regulation, gradually a set of laws were introduced⁷, similar and synchronous with the European ones. One of the administration's main targets was to "beautify" the city. This was seen as a will of modernizing the city at both a functional and an aesthetical level, in order to correspond to the status of a European capital. The modernization process consisted of increasing the urban comfort level through the public services (water supply, sewage system, electricity, etc.) and of other interventions that became visible and changed the appearance of the public space: the creation of boulevards and squares, their delimitation by the means of important buildings and the presence of other elements like vegetation, urban furniture and public monuments.

Fig. 1
Fragment from the Borroczyn
Plan, 1852. (Collection
Ion Mincu" University of
Architecture and Urbanism)



The model for these interventions was the one of the “civilised Europe”. The national identity which was being shaped was aiming at being associated with the European one, legitimized by the Latin roots of the Romanians. This transition from the Oriental tradition to the Occidental one happened gradually, through a period which was rather based on experiment and imitation of the French model which can be seen in architecture and urbanism, but also in all the aspects of everyday life. During this period of transition the contrasts were a major characteristic of the city, underlined by most travelers that visited the city in the 19th century. In this process of modernization, the Oriental heritage was denied and rejected and, even more, it was said that “in our capital everything has to be created from scratch”⁸.

In time, new regulations were adopted, which were aiming at a unified and coherent image of the city, by imposing restrictions for the minimum height of the buildings, the alignment, etc. For example, in 1897 a distinct regulation for the boulevards and quays was introduced (*Condiții pentru construcțiunile de pe bulevarde și splaiuri*) which aimed at differentiating the boulevards from the rest of the city. The regulation was establishing a minimum height for the buildings and minimal front lengths, in order to generate a continuous built landscape. This fact indicates that, for the first time, the buildings were considered as part of an ensemble, contributing to the creation of the image of the city.



Fig. 2
The University with the boulevard in front of it.
1869, photography by Franz Dushek.
(The Romanian Academy Library)

The interventions for the first boulevard began in 1857. At the time, given its short length, it was rather a square and was associated with the first public institution to be built – the Academy, which nowadays is the University.⁹ Later on, the boulevard was extended, becoming the east-west axis of the city, followed by the north-south one. Their intersections were envisioned to mark the new city centre, similar to the Parisian “grande croisée”¹⁰.

During this time, other main boulevards were created, justified by the creation of new urban facilities: the Queen Maria Boulevard, leading to the Filaret train station, the Boulevard of Mărășești, leading to the Gas Factory, the Ferdinand and Dinicu Golescu boulevards which were connecting the city centre with the east, respectively the north, train station, the Dacia Boulevard, etc. Another important trigger of the modernisation was the sanitation of the River Dâmbovița and the design of its quays. This intervention limited the periodical floods which were affecting a large part of its surroundings, and therefore permitted the development of the adjacent area.

The Romanian national style in architecture

Another aspect contributing to the changing of the public space’s image was the architectural style used and the erection of monumental buildings. They hosted the new state institutions, linked to the new function of Bucharest which became the political and administrative centre. After the Kingdom’s proclamation in 1882, a law was promulgated to establish new public constructions. This determined the erection of an important number of buildings, part of them remaining representative landmarks of the city to the present day. The architecture of these new institutions followed the French model¹¹, adopting the eclectic or neoclassical style. They were realized by

French architects who worked in the principalities or by Romanian architects who had studied in France.¹² Due to this fact, in the second half of the 19th century, Bucharest started to be called “The Little Paris”.

This influence was dominant until 1906, when the Romanian General Exhibition (*Expoziția Generală Română*) took place, which marked the official acknowledgement of the Romanian national style in architecture. The style was meant to be a symbol of the Romanian identity, using elements from the traditional architecture. From this moment on, due to its ideological content, which was inextricably connected to defining the national discourse, this style was preferred for the construction of the official institutions and of private buildings¹³ as well.

The monumentality of both buildings and urban spaces was desired, regardless of the adopted methods and styles. The intention of constructing monumental institutional buildings was present even before, but it was made possible at the end of the 19th century, when the required financial and technological resources became available. This intention was also enhanced by the political will of the new state.

The monuments to the great men

As shown above, the built environment was a way of expressing the national ideals. In the newly formed public spaces, monuments were erected, out of the preoccupation for the urban aesthetic and as the expression of the national identity.



Fig. 3
The Mihai Viteazul Monument
in the University Square.
(The Romanian Academy Library)

The public sculpture in Romania has a relatively short history; its first appearance dates from the middle of the 19th century. That period coincides with the rise of nationalism and the creation of the national-state. Following the Parisian example, the placing of statues of national heroes in the public squares was a common practice in those countries which gained their independence in the 19th century. The public space was transformed in what Eric Hobsbawm called “an open-air museum of national history as seen through great men”¹⁴. The role of these sculptures was to foster the national feeling in a century in which each new nation was struggling to affirm its new identity. At the same time, they were also having a visual function, that of dominating the newly created boulevards and squares of the city which was entering the modern age.



Fig. 4
The square and monument
of I. C. Brătianu, 1917. (The
Romanian Academy Library)

The first Romanian public monument was the equestrian statue of Mihai Viteazul (Michael the Brave). It was placed in front of the Academy, next to the newly created boulevard. Made out of bronze by the French sculptor Ernest Carrier-Belleuse, it was unveiled in 1874 and can be still seen today. Mihai Viteazul was seen as a national hero, the first one to unite the three Romanian principalities in the 17th century. The monument, built only a few years before the unification, expressed the will of unity mentioned during the inaugural discourse.

Besides this monument, the east-west axis is an interesting instance of a coherent urban project which included different squares with monuments that mostly represent personalities of the Liberal Party after whom these places were named (Pache Protopopescu, C.A. Rosetti, Ion C. Brătianu, Mihail Kogălniceanu). The Liberals dominated the political scene during the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century and played an important part in the country's modernisation, due to their more progressive views. Maybe that is the reason why their statues were placed along the first boulevard to have been built. At the same time, the boulevards, monuments and squares of the north-south axis bear the names of the personalities who belonged to Conservative Party (Lascăr Catargiu, Alexandru Lahovari, Take Ionescu).

Bucharest between 1918 and 1948

By the end of WW I most of the boulevards had already been traced and the major urban structure of the city already created. During this period, the urbanistic line of thought reached a remarkable level, critically synchronized with the international theories through the thinking of such personalities as Cincinat Sfințescu¹⁵, Duiliu Marcu, George Matei Cantacuzino, Alexandru Zamphiropol, etc.

The period corresponds to the maturation of the urbanism, witnessing a shift from the punctual intervention to a global view. Master plans were created, proposing an ensemble vision for the urban development, and many architectural and urbanistic competitions were organized. All these isolated

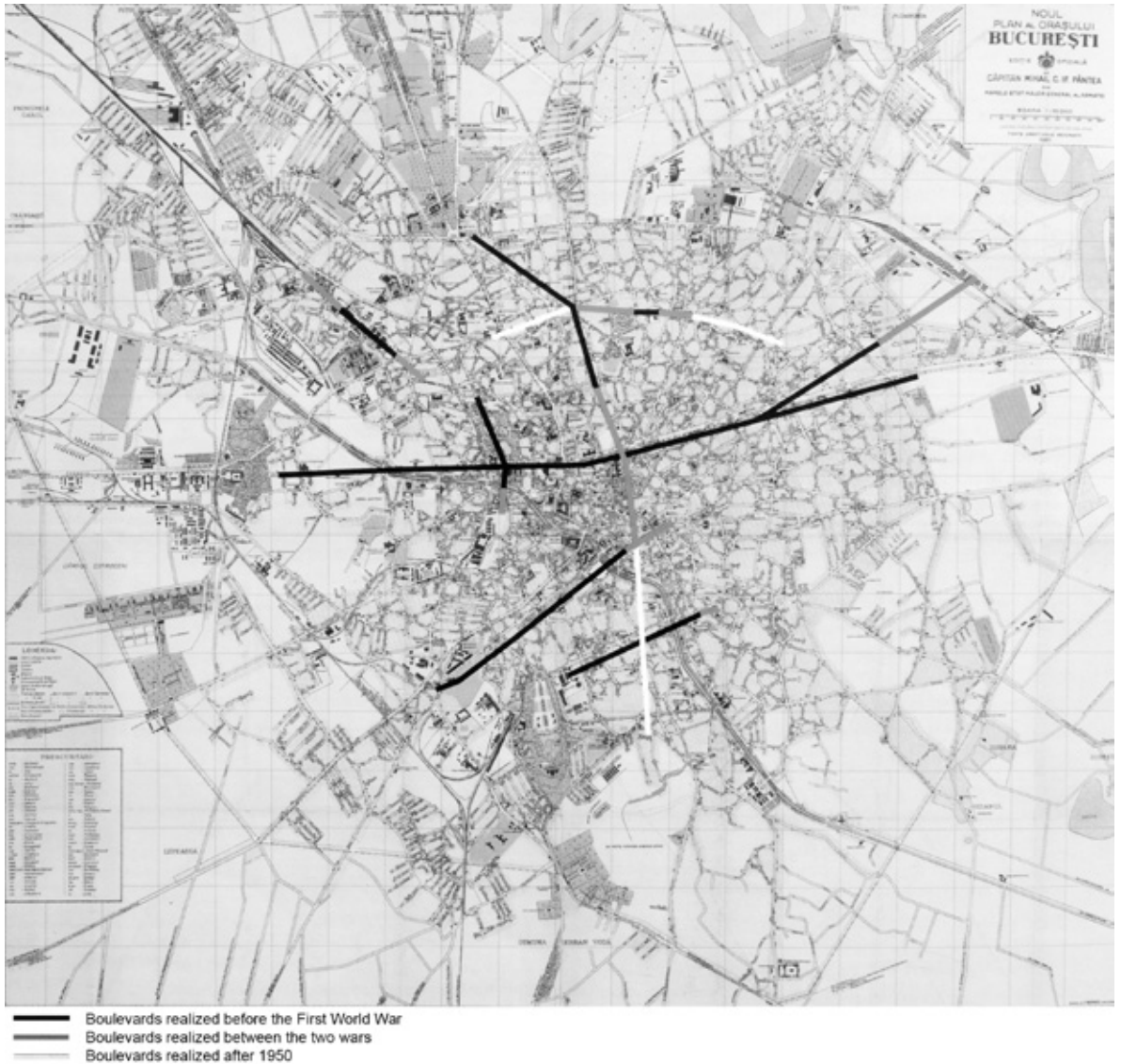


Fig. 5
The situations of the boulevards, represented on the plan “Pântea”, 1921. (according to Lascu, 2011)

projects reflected a more coherent and intense concern in this direction. Even though most of these projects were not achieved because of the outburst of WW II, they indicate a deeper understanding of the city planning.

The shaping of the urbanistic thought was reflected in the plans and regulations regarding the city. Even if the idea of creating a general plan dated back to the 1880s, the first general plan of the capital was approved in 1921. Two master plans were conceived in 1921 and 1935, each of them being linked to constructions and alignment regulations. These general plans were not put into practice, but some ideas are still recurrent in the master plans of nowadays.

Many aspects of the plans are worth being discussed in detail, but more relevant for the present paper is the interest for the urban aesthetics which was transposed in these regulations. A separate chapter dedicated to this issue appeared for the first time, considering that “aesthetics is not a luxury, but a necessity, such as hygiene”¹⁶. The aesthetic aspects were linked to the idea of function: “The city must be beautiful. It is an essential thing. But beauty cannot be achieved through finery and ornaments with the only role of beautifying, but through the judicious, rational, utilitarian design of all the elements that shape the city”¹⁷.

The image of the urban space was meant to represent the capital as head of the nation, but also the ruling power. Out of all the various projects of this period we will address only a few examples that we consider more relevant in this process of representing the nation through the urban space – namely the projects for the civic centre, the squares dedicated to the kings and the war monuments.¹⁸

In search of a centre

In time, Bucharest developed as a polycentric structure based on the former *mahalas* and *parochias*, and for a long period it lacked a single centre that would represent the prestige of a capital. In the past, the symbolic centres were the areas of the Mitropolia and the Royal Court which were the religious

Fig. 6
Project for the Municipal Palace,
architect Petre Antonescu, 1912.
(Lasca, 2011)



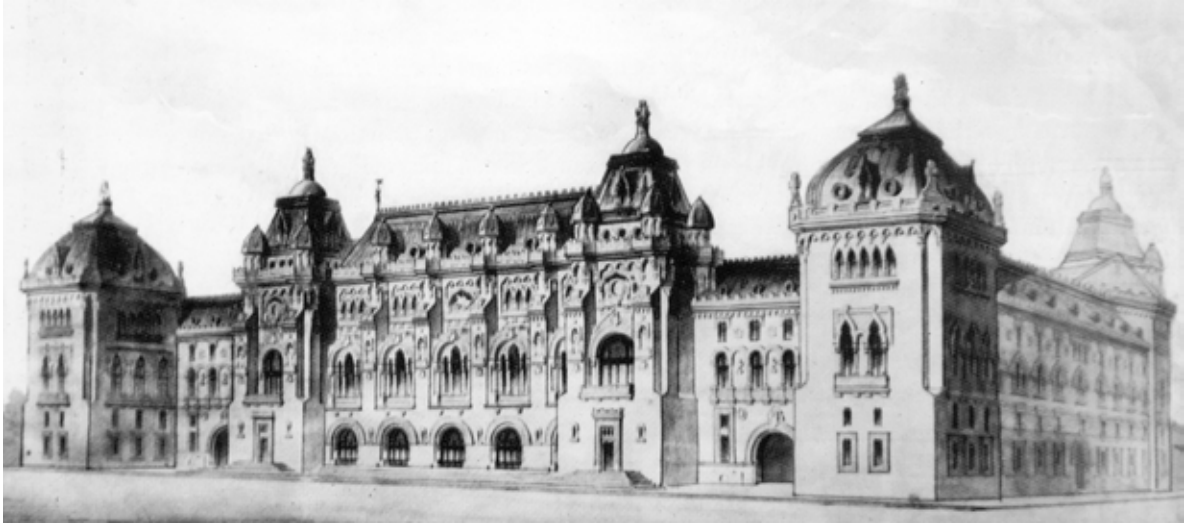


Fig. 7
Project for the Comunal Palace,
arhitect Ion Mincu. (Tzigara
Samurcaş archive, "Ion Mincu"
University of Architecture and
Urbanism)

and, respectively, the ruler's siege, as well as Sfântul Gheorghe-Lipscani, which used to be characterized by an intense commercial activity. As such, the centre was sprawled and not clearly defined, lacking a central representative square. The idea of creating a civic centre to correspond to the size and importance of Bucharest appeared in the interwar period.¹⁹ This idea was also correlated with the necessity of creating the headquarters for the new state institutions.

A few different places were proposed for becoming the city centre, such as the Royal Palace, the Arsenal Hill or the Brătianu Square (the current Universităţii Square). The last one was also included in the general plan from 1935. As mentioned above, this place was envisaged as a city centre since the creation of the main north-south and east-west axes.

Part of this civic centre was the city hall, for which a contest was organized. The theme of the contest promoted the idea that the building should represent not only the city of Bucharest, but the whole nation. This was expressed by a rather unusual demand, namely it was imposed that the building should have each facade designed in a different traditional style of the Romanian provinces.²⁰ This request was not taken into account, attracting various criticisms. However, all these projects remained unfulfilled.

Public squares and the monarchy

Besides the projects mentioned above as potential places to represent the city and to mark its centre, different squares had, or were supposed to have, a representative character and, in time, different projects were proposed for them. Particularly relevant examples are the projects from the end of the 1930s for the Victory's Square, the Palace's Square, and the 8th of June Square, all of them reflecting the will of shaping these symbolic squares so as to represent the monarchy, as part of the expression of the national identity. These projects

were proposed during the authoritarian reign of King Carol II (1930-1940), when the architectural and urbanistic decisions started to be more politically driven than before, thus becoming the expression of his reign.

None of these projects was finalized, but each of them was meant to be dedicated to a historical Romanian monarch. The reference to each monarch consisted in the building of his statue and of one or more representative buildings surrounding it. Even though these ideas of creating the three squares for the kings appeared in a relatively short period of time, based on the researched archive materials we could not trace if these squares were part of a more coherent project or if they were conceived separately. What can be mentioned is that the projects for the first two squares (the Royal Palace and the Victory squares) were similar to the “place



Fig. 8
Palace Square with the monument of Carol I, before 1940.
(The Romanian Academy Library)

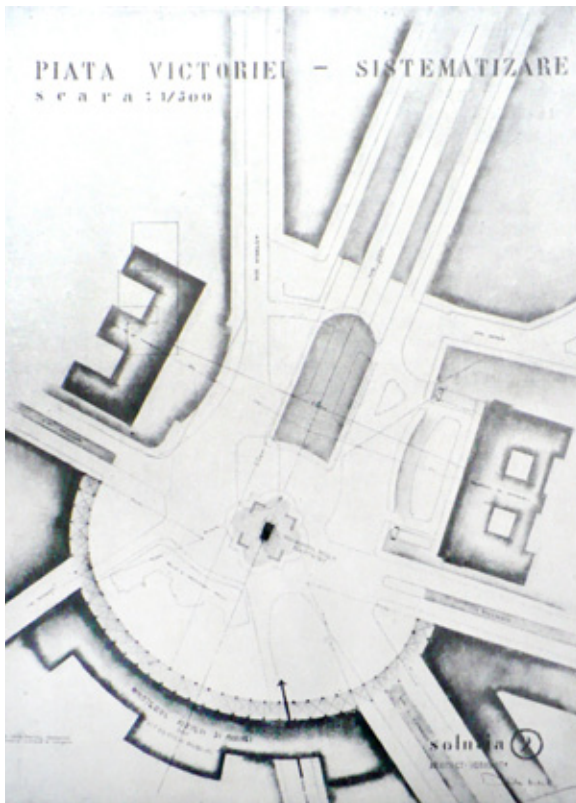


Fig. 9
Project for the Victory Square, by architect Duiliu Marcu.
(Duiliu Marcu: Architecture, București, 1946)

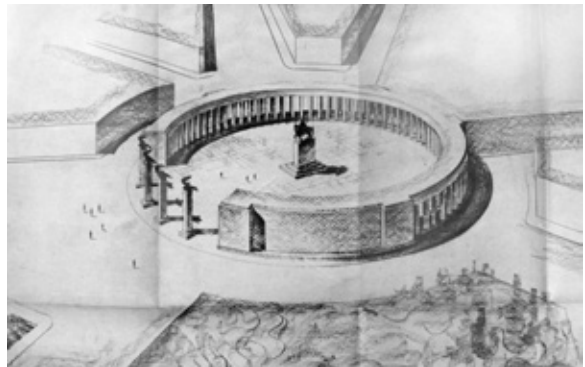


Fig. 10
Project for the Victory Square with the monument of
Ferdinand I, 1937 (National Archives - Bucharest)

Fig. 11
Victory Palace, 1956. (Agerpres Archive)

royales"²¹, forming a clearly delimited space with the King's statue at its centre. The two statues were commissioned and realized simultaneously, but the urbanistic projects were conceived independently. The Palace's Square was dominated by the statue of Carol I, having beside it the Royal Foundations and the Atheneum, both representative buildings dating from his reign.

The Victory's Square was supposed to be associated with King Ferdinand I. It was located on what used to be the main access to the city; also, it was an important place and the subject of many different projects. The chosen project to be realized dated from 1937 and envisaged a clear delimitation of the square through monumental buildings, which used an architectural style based on the classical principles. From this project only one building was built, the one designed by the architect Duiliu Marcu, which used to be the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and currently hosts the government. Its architecture is an expression of the dictatorial ruling of King Carol II, who adopted a new "official" architectural style. This language combines modern elements with the syntax of the classical architecture that uses the principles of symmetry: axes and rhythm. These principles are common to the architectural languages used by most of the totalitarian regimes in Europe, such as fascism²² in Italy.

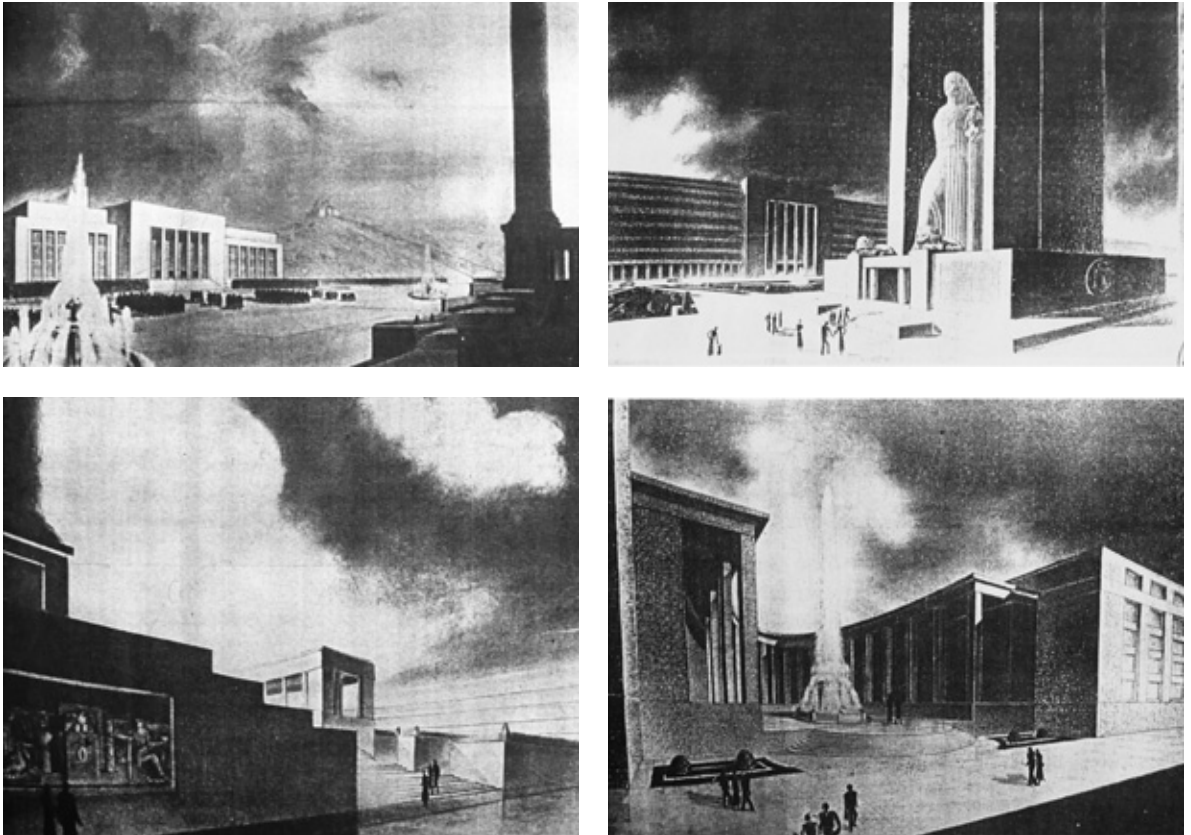


Fig. 12
Project for the 8th of June square, architect Zamfiropol. (Arhitectura 1936, nr.7, p. 341)

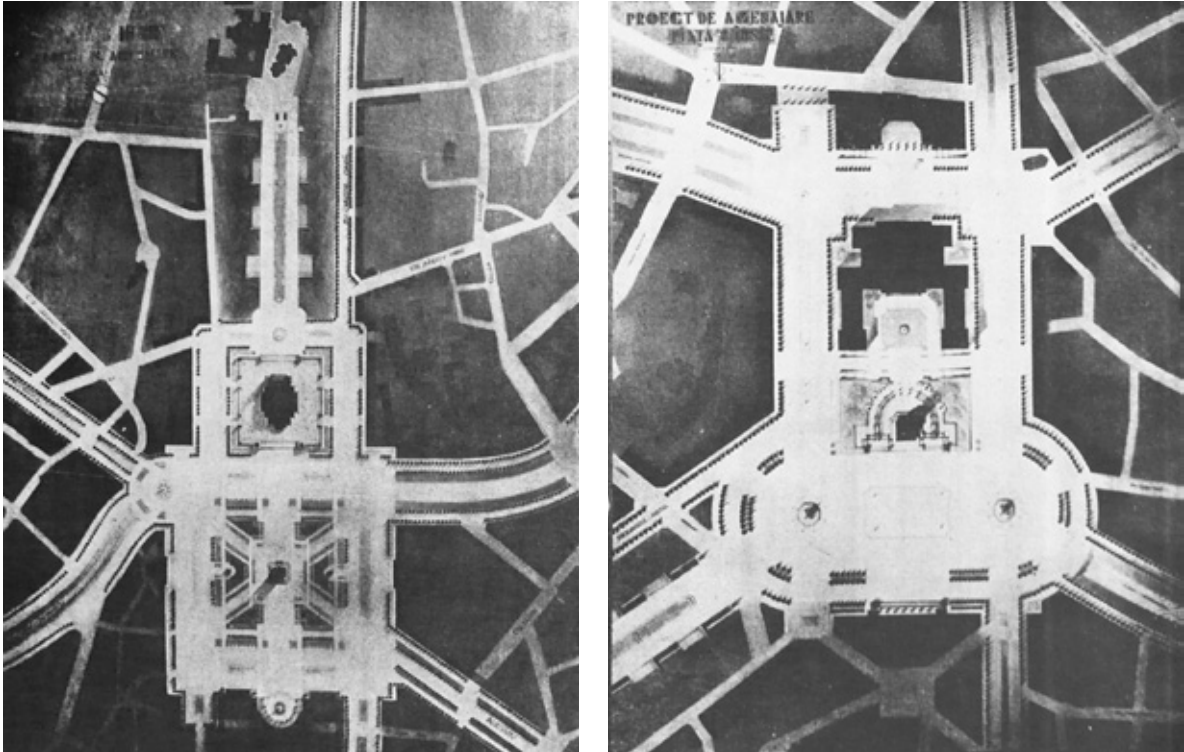


Fig. 13
Project for the 8th of June square, architect Zamfiropol.
(Arhitectura 1936, nr.7, p. 341)

The third square, the 8th of June Square²³ was conceived as the new capital's centre, representing King Carol II.²⁴ It reflected the grandomania of the king, who wished that the square would become "the biggest of our country, to surpass in its proportion all the squares of the other European centres"²⁵.

All these projects are clear examples of how urban space is meant to legitimize the ruler and to represent the nation.

The war monuments

After WW I, the idea of a nation also found other different expressions in the public space, namely through the war monuments. Statues of great men continued to be built until the WW I, when the belief in the traditional values and in the industrial progress was shattered by the great loss of human life, on a scale unseen before. If the monuments from the previous periods of time were celebrating the great men, their victories and power, after the war the monuments expressed the idea that sacrifice was necessary in order to defend freedom. Moreover, they became a tool for showing gratitude to those who



Fig. 14
The Monument to the Heroes of the Air.
(Furtună, Bogdan: *Monografia monumentului "Eroilor aerului"*,
București, 1939)

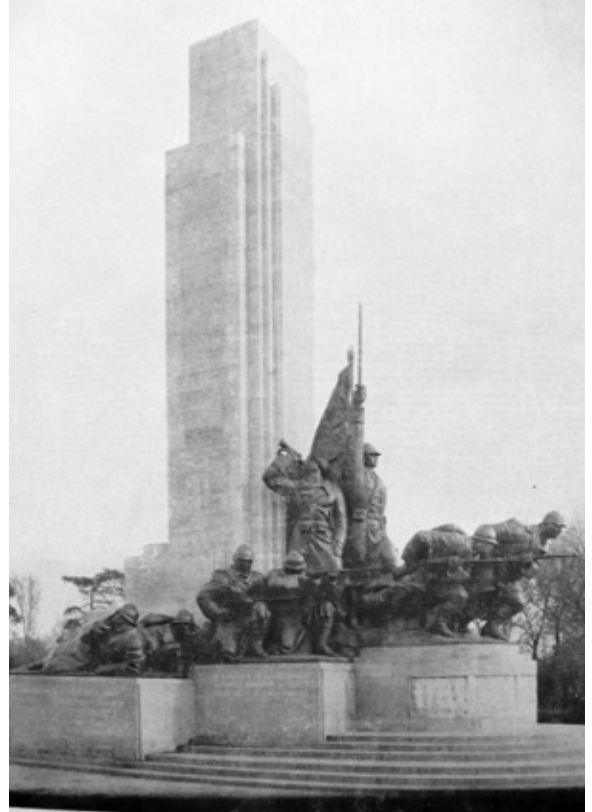


Fig. 15
Monument to the Infantry.
(*Istoricul înfăptuirii Monumentului infanteriei*, 1938, p. 5)

lost their lives and for finding a way to give meaning to their death and comfort the survivors.

This was a great change of attitude regarding the monuments, according to which not only rulers, saints or great men had the right to be depicted in the public space, but also the anonymous or ordinary men who became heroes.²⁶ War monuments from the capital city were dedicated to different professional categories (The Monument to the Heroes of the Teacher Corps, The CFR Heroes Monument, The Monument of the Sanitary Heroes, etc.) or to different combatant categories (The Monument to the Infantry, The Monument to the Heroes of the Air, etc.). Usually these monuments were located in existing public spaces, without extensive urban projects meant to integrate them.

Conclusions

During the period in question, Bucharest was gradually transformed, from the Ottoman medieval city to the modern capital. These interventions that shaped the city were linked to the broader context of the nation's building process.

We have analysed different isolated examples in order to reveal the relation between the urban space, the expression of power and the national idea.

We have shown how both the public monuments and the projects destined to the public space usually had a political stake. Even if the ideological impact is more evident in the case of the public monuments, it can also be found in the case of those decisions related to the setup of the public spaces, the public buildings and their architectural style.

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- *** *Memoriu justificativ*, Bucuresti 1935.

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- 1 Carol I of Romania (1839-1914) was Prince of Romania between 1866 and 1881 and King between 1881 and 1914.
- 2 Anderson, Benedict: *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London&New York 2006.
- 3 Verdery, Katherine: *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change*, Columbia University Press, New York 1999, 39.
- 4 The Statues to the Great Men ("statues des grands hommes"), as a typology which came to being in the 19th century, represented personalities from various fields of arts, progress, politics or military. The fact that a common man is worthy of being immortalized under the form of a public statue, due to his personal merits, which are not inherited neither canonized, is a consequence of the humanist, secular and liberal ideas, specific to that period of time. The cult of the great men can be found within the spirit of the Illuminism which entailed the improvement of man through education and in which the value of the individual is equal to his achievements (see June Hargrove, 1989; Maurice Agulhon, 1978; Ioana Beldiman, 2005).
- 5 Both words are of Turkish origin; in time, they changed their meanings. *Mahala* was associated with the idea of neighbourhood. The whole city was formed from the agglutination of these *mahalas*. Gradually, with the modernisation, the meaning of the term transformed from its meaning of neighbourhood to the present meaning of peripheral, marginal area, having a rather negative connotation. The modernisation that started from the centre was associated with the positive development, while the old structure, that remained more present at the periphery, was associated with a negative image (Majuru, Adrian: *Bucureștii mahalalelor sau periferia ca mod de existență*, ed. Compania, București 2003, 8). *Maidan* was the public space that usually resulted at the intersections of roads, by their enlargement. Like the whole urban structure, they did not have a regular form and had diverse functions, being owned privately or publicly (Lascu, Nicolae: *Bulevardele bucureștene până la primul război mondial*, ed. Simetria, București 2011, 14).
- 6 The Organic Regulations ("Regulamentele Organice"), adopted in Wallachia in 1831 and in Moldavia in 1832, were acts of a constitutional nature. They included different regulations regarding the administration, state institutions, economy, infrastructure, army, etc. The ones that were referring to the city's development imposed the establishment of the city's limits, decisions regarding the enlargement or closing of some roads and their pavement, introducing the title of "town architect", etc.
- 7 Lascu, Nicolae: *Legislație și dezvoltarea urbană. București 1831-1952*, doctoral thesis, Ed. Universitară „Ion Mincu”, București 1997, 108.
- 8 "în capitala noastră toate sunt de creat din nou" (*Buletinul Municipal*, II, 1860, nr. 18, 9 iulie, p. 71 *apud* Lascu, Nicolae: *Bulevardele bucureștene până la primul război mondial*, ed. Simetria, București 2011, 15).

- 9 The Academy is a neoclassical building, one of the first major public buildings to be constructed in the 19th century in Bucharest. It was built between 1856-1869 by the architects Alexandru Orăscu, Johann Schlatter and Carol Benisch.
- 10 The “grande croisée” in Paris refers to the intersection between rue de Rivoli and the boulevards Saint Michel and Sevastopol. The two axes keep the former structure of the roman city of Lutetia, with the *cardo maximus* and *decumanus maximus* (Pinon apud Lascu 2011, 176).
- 11 Some relevant examples were: The Palace of Deputies, the old Royal Palace, the National Bank (arch. Albert Galleron, arch. Cassien Bernard), The House of Economies (arch. Paul Gottereau), The Palace of Justice (arch. Albert Ballu), The Posts’s Palace (arch. Alexandru Săvulescu), The National Military Circle (arch. D. Maimarolu, V. Ștephănescu, E. Doneaud), The Stock Exchange and the Chamber of Commerce, The Atheneum (arch. Albert Galleron), The University Foundation Carol I (arch. Paul Gottereau).
- 12 Due to the lack of architectural education institutions, in the first half of the 19th century most architects working in the principalities were foreigners, who came mainly from the German speaking countries. By the end of the 19th century, mostly French architects worked in Romania, and more and more Romanian architects who had studied abroad built across the country, until the School of Architecture was founded in Bucharest (in 1892).
- 13 To name just a few: The School of Architecture (arch. Grigore Cerchez), The Ministry of Public Works (today, Bucharest’s city hall, by arch. Petre Antonescu), etc.
- 14 Hobsbawm, Eric “Inventing Traditions” in: Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger (ed.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press 1983, 13.
- 15 Cincinat Sfințescu was the first Romanian specialist in urban planning, who introduced this discipline in Romania and played a key role in its development.
- 16 “estetica nu este un lux pentru popor, ci un drept și o necesitate tot astfel ca și igiena” (*Memoriu justificativ*, 1935, p. 65).
- 17 “Orașul mai trebuie să fie frumos. Este un lucru esențial. Dar frumusețea aceea nu se obține prin podoabe și ornamente care să aibă numai rolul de înfrumusețare, ci prin amenajarea judicioasă, rațională, utilitară a tuturor elementelor care formează orașul” (*Memoriu...1935*, p. 11).
- 18 See Sebestyen, Monica: “Monumentul de for public și spațiul public. București 1831-1948”, doctoral thesis, București 2012.
- 19 The notion of “civic centre” is used for the first time in Romanian in 1927, being most likely brought from the United States, where it had its origins in the *City Beautiful* movement. The one who promoted this idea in Romania was Cincinat Sfințescu, who in the 1930s associated the term with “the idea of an intervention of stately prestige, meant to embody the idea of authority through an ensemble of administrative, cultural and community institutions” (Răuță, Radu-Alexandru: “ ‘Centrul civic’: origini și receptarea în cercurile profesionale românești înainte de al doilea război mondial”, in *ACUM. Spațiul public și reinserția socială a proiectului artistic și arhitectural*, vol 3, ed. Universitară Ion Mincu, București 2010, 92).
- 20 *Monitorul Comunal al Primăriei București*, nr.12, 18 june 1895, pp. 152-154.
- 21 These squares were similar to the “places royales” as their model was established by Place des Vosges (at the beginning of the 17th century) together with Plaza Mayor in Madrid (around 1600) (Hall, Thomas: *Planning Europe’s Capital cities. Aspects of Nineteenth Century Urban Development*, E&FN Spon, London [1997] 2010, 21-22). They are defined by their clear geometrical form, delimited by buildings with a unitarian architecture, monumental, having the ruler’s statue in the centre, as an expression of the absolute monarchy. The originality of these spaces resides in the combination of two elements that were also used before, in Italy, in order to form a unitary ensemble – the square with a “programme” and the statue.
- 22 We could not identify a direct influence of the Italian fascist architecture, but the Romanian and the Italian architecture of the period were rather independent approaches that lead to similar results.
- 23 The 8th of June 1930 was a significant one, being the day Carol II was crowned king.
- 24 Popescu, Carmen: *Le style national roumain. Construire une Nation à travers l’architecture 1881-1945*, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, ed. Simetria, 2004, 338.
- 25 “cea mai mare din țara noastră și va întrece în proporții toate piețele din centrele europene” (*Viitorul*, year XXIX, nr.8793, 2 april 1937, p. IX).
- 26 See Bucur, Maria: *Heroes and victims: remembering war in twentieth-century Romania*, Indiana University Press 2009.

Urban image and national representation: Bucharest in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century

Andreea Udrea

The first urban plans of Bucharest in the rise of the 20th century

Bucharest urban planning is seen as a sequence of stages in the concentrated effort towards the creation of the urban plans:

1. *the preparation stage* in the first decade of the 20th century - with the moment of 1906 public contest for Bucharest Urban Plan as the first attempt to set a common goal for city's development; marked by the activity of Eng. Al. Davidescu, the forerunner of Romanian urban planning whose great achievement was the success in defining the need for scientific urban planning
2. *the layout and start* in the 1910-1920s – with the General Urban Plan approved in 1921 (PGS|21) authored by Eng. C. Sfințescu; marked by Sfințescu's efforts that led to the settlement of Romanian urban planning: research, journals, laws, official associations, consistent international presence.
3. *early maturity* in the 1930s - the Guiding Urban Plan approved in 1935 (PDS|35) and the efforts of Eng. T. Rădulescu and Arch. I. Davidescu in all phases of the planning process following the plan's approval, and the excitement stirred by the first comprehensive planning laws to set the grounds for urban planning. PDS|35 was at the heart of the planning debate starting 1928 till long after its approval.

The following elements highlight a comprehensive overview of Bucharest urban planning at the beginning of the 20th century:

- the progress and acknowledgement of the fundamental differences between urban plans and street alignment plans
- the gradual transition of urban planning towards the social welfare
- uncontrolled territorial expansion acknowledged as the major problem of cities

- limited budgets for great urban projects
- hierarchy in the transportation system, leap from the network to the system
- the need for a certified specialist to author an urban plan, international if possible
- the urban plans contained an implementation strategy with juridical, financial and administrative actions
- the success of the plan depended on detailed laws and codes for construction
- the urban plan was the ultimate mission of urban planning and a desired opportunity for planners

The public context in 1906

The public contest for Bucharest Urban Plan in 1906 resulted from few previous decisions: *the discussions* on a plan for interventions in the city from 1884 to 1887 that led to the draft guide for such a plan, *the Law in 1893* - the first law dedicated exclusively to urban planning that established the *Casa Lucrărilor Publice* [Public Works House / Technical Works Department] whose main responsibility was “the general urban plan” as a guide for coordinated interventions for correcting the street line, the houses alignment and for new streets and public places¹, and *the general reorganization of the City Hall* with the appointment of engineer Al. Davidescu as the Director of an extended and improved Bucharest Public Works House in 1900².

The call for “Bucharest General Urban Plan” was published in March 1906, and offered a 9-month deadline for submitting the projects. The guidelines for the contest, realized by Al. Davidescu³, identified the existing problems in the “current plan of the city” and called the contestants to correct disadvantages, ease future development and strictly limit the existing city⁴.

Al. Davidescu’s “*Program for the urban plan of Bucharest*” was realized probably around 1910 and concluded the 1906 contest.

The Judging Committee appreciated especially the proposed mechanisms for territorial limitation, zoning and public parks distribution, structured system of roads - axis, rings and diagonals and routes for a possible metropolitan railway.⁵ They also appreciated the innovative and thoughtful proposals for Bucharest - a large green area along the valley of the northern river, axis to link the outskirt villages and new great parks on Bucharest hills.⁶

Five proposals were submitted and purchased by the Municipality but none of those was awarded with the first or second prize, although the projects were arranged hierarchically. Although the decision not to declare and pursue a winning project labelled it as a failed attempt to an urban plan for Bucharest, the competition and the jury work marks the beginning of the modern Romanian

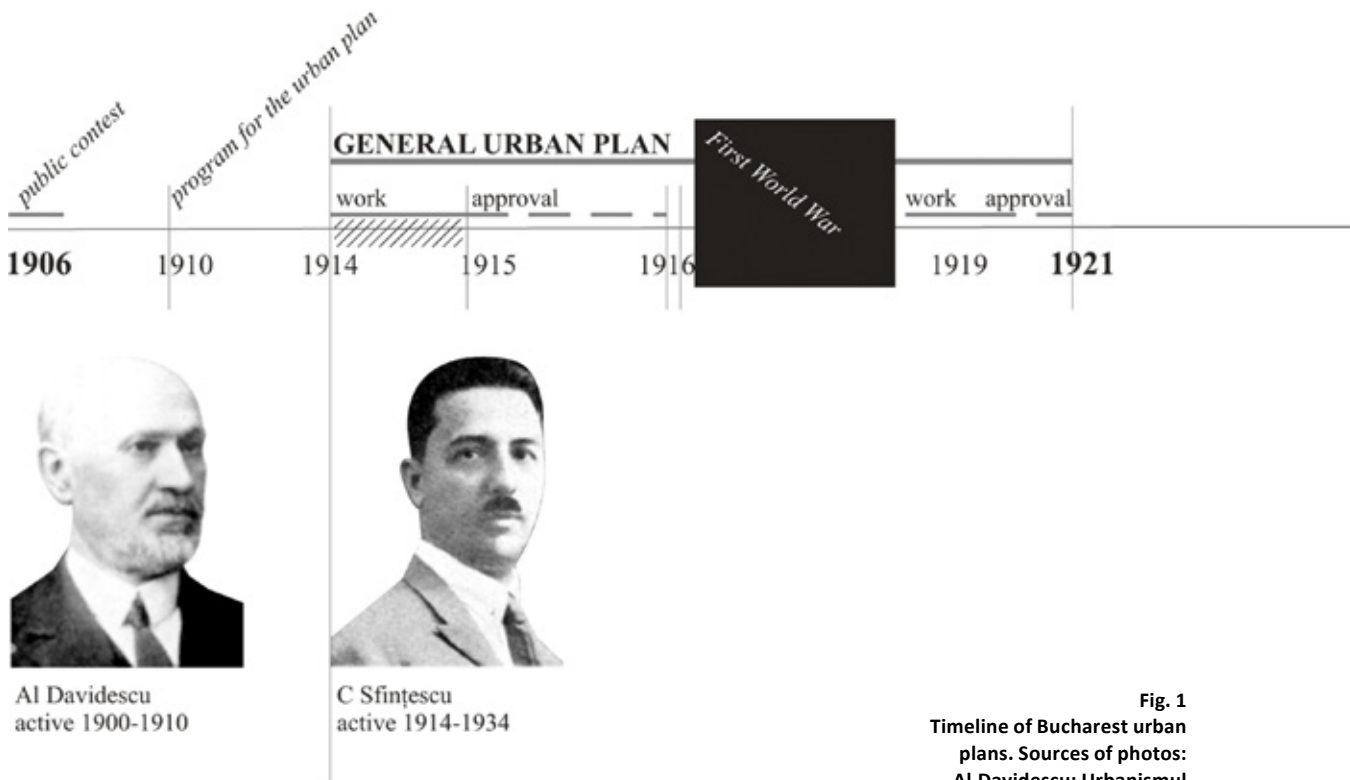


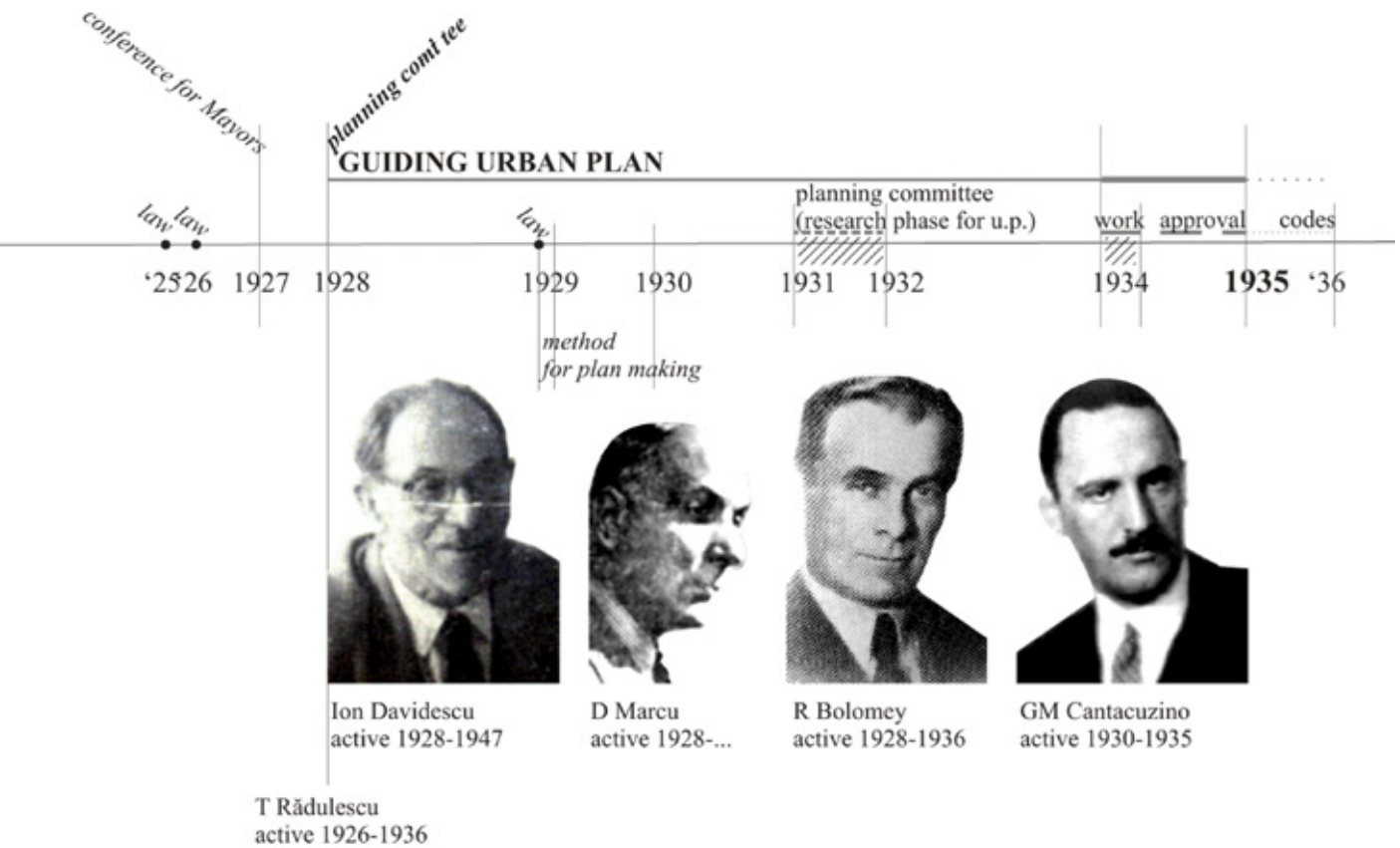
Fig. 1
Timeline of Bucharest urban plans. Sources of photos: Al.Davidescu: *Urbanismul* 1-2/1938:83, C. Sfințescu: *Urbanistica specială* 1934: cover, Ion Davidescu: *Arhitectura*/1981:29, D. Marcu: *Monografie* 1960: cover, R. Bolomey: *Arhitectura* 1/1982, G.M. Cantacuzino: *gazeta Municipală* October 14/1934.

urbanism. The 1906 Public Contest together with the Law, 1893, were the official recognition of the need for a Bucharest Urban Plan, the first willingly and deliberately initiated planning process. It is especially important in the light of the following planning preoccupations deeply rooted in that period.

Davidescu’s “*Program for the urban plan of Bucharest*” concluding the 1906 contest and completed probably around 1910, was the first prepositioning. It was the first and most important official document that clearly stated the position of the Municipality regarding the city’s development, and would come to support both of Bucharest plans in the following years. Along with more detailed principles, ideas and intentions clearly organized, Davidescu’s program extracted from the conclusions and visions in the submitted projects for the 1906 contest, and also formulated a theoretical statement on planning philosophy.

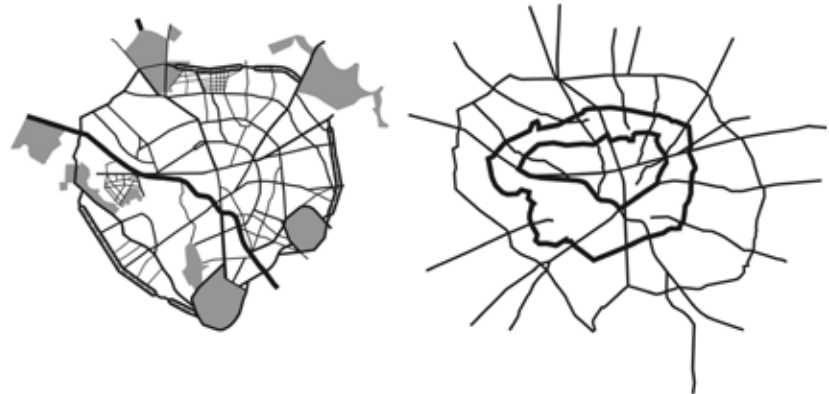
Subtle observations regarding the 1906 moment

Although Davidescu’s guidelines aimed solely the physical plan of the city, they referred the city as a dynamic mechanism. Without a doubt, the submitted projects were united in their understanding of the physical structure of the



city and conducted their approaches as interpretations of classical composition elements. It is also true that the guidelines were not very detailed in that matter, probably aiming to stir creativity and debate. The only strict condition was the idea of a system to enable the future flexibility and the only criteria for the composition was the causal relationship between thoroughfares, focal points, public spaces and zones, thus guiding the contestants to consider the physical structure somehow detached by the dynamism, flows and sources. The city was seen as a uniform mass crossed by thoroughfares linking streets and places. The execution of such visions involved the concentrated efforts in a few great infrastructure and beautification projects for the upgrading of the entire urban system, its territorial availability and attractiveness for economic development.

This approach was even more enforced by the Program, 1910, that brought a significant innovation in the way the city was perceived by stretching the thoroughfare system in the city's surrounding region, thus allowing the external territory to contribute to the developing city. Another great novelty was the proposed general zoning for Bucharest, an important step further than the submitted projects in 1906.⁷



1906
the project with the motto "Work continuously"
author Eng. N.G. Costinescu
1906 Public Contest for Bucharest Urban Plan

(Costinescu N.G., *Proiectul cu motto*, 1907:
annex, map III)

1921
proposed road system
drawing by A Udrea over the 1911 map,
according to PGS|21
(Sfințescu C., *PGS*, 1921: 26, ilustr. 5)

- proposed road system:
- boulevards
- thoroughfares
- radial along existing penetrating roads
- diametral + road along Dâmbovița River
- 4 new rings
- roads parallel with Dâmbovița River
- towards railway stations and public institutions
- local streets
- to support major sewage

- all on existing streets proposed to be widened

The most important and sustainable contents that remained in the future urban plans were formulated in this period: The city limit and the general urban structure were defined, incl. the street and public transportation systems, the zoning, the building specifications, the aesthetics and beautification as well as the post-plan actions for the plan realization. Further on the concept was set for new streets imposed by the entire road system, the zoning and building codes with the specifications for the building heights, the building typologies and the railway system. The major proposals of the projects in the contest, 1906, remained ardently debated for decades: the green belt and a green network as a solution to limit the territorial expansion of Bucharest, the railway axis cutting through the centre of the city along Dâmbovița river, the central ring road, metropolitan railways to relate Bucharest with its surroundings or the navigable link to the Danube.

Fig. 2
Evolution of the road system
plan for Bucharest, from 1906 to
1935. (Redrawings by A. Udrea
after de original plans)



1931
proposed road system
(Sfințescu C., *Pentru București. Noi studii ...* 1931: map 20)

proposed road system:
main thoroughfares
secondary thoroughfares
streets
new roads and streets



1935
proposed road system
(PDS]35: annex 17)

The General Urban Plan 1921 (Planul General de Sistemătizare - PGS|21)

In May 1914 young C. Sfințescu⁸ was appointed as the Head of the Urban Plan Office at the municipal Technical Works Department, charged with the duty to realize Bucharest's first urban plan. The approval phase was interrupted by WW I while Bucharest was under enemy occupation and restarted at the end of 1919. The General Urban Plan was approved by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and was decreed with a Royal Act in April 1921. It was never approved by the Higher Technical Committee in its entirety. The proposal for an urban planning law attached to the plan remained unapproved as well.

The PGS|21 was conceived on two distinct layers: the urban development plan and the detailed plan for the street regulation. The structure of the presentation was: territorial limits, principles for building code, zoning⁹, circulation, aesthetics and public hygiene, locations for public institutions, public places - intersections and architectural squares, public parks and gardens, wastewater treatment plant, supply centres and deposits, transportation. That part was completed with detailed maps and prescriptions for street regulation of approx. 45 areas in the city.

The main proposals of PGS|21 were:

- the long term (50 to 60 years) development concept based on a population of a million inhabitants (more than double of the actual population and density) and the city's connection with the surrounding territory;
- the ring road and the 300m wide green belt to stop the territorial expansion;
- the concentric urban structure consisting of a city centre with intensive land occupation surrounded by more relaxed areas and satellite towns outside the city, seven new public squares and a dense network of public parks;
- the building principles were: cheaper houses in the central area, support for industrial development, "work and home" production, compact buildings without visible blind walls, continuous facades in the central area and along the main roads;
- the principles for the major road system were those established by the Bucharest Technical Committee in 1914, three concentric roads developed on existing streets, telescopic 12-30m wide axis to penetrate the city centre and a system of 30m wide boulevards.

Subtle observations

The PGS|21 is the first urban plan of Bucharest and the first product of the modern urbanism in Romania. It gathered accurately all previous aspirations and efforts agreed by decision makers and specialists. Its major trait was the ability to disconnect the planning discipline from the aesthetics of a good drawing and a beautification scheme, and relate the city's activity with its physical layout and population.

The plan was actually a compendium of possibilities on each topic, presenting series of alternatives, some existing and others new, without deciding upon a certain vision for Bucharest. In fact, the plan is a thorough analyse of Bucharest and the possibilities for development without being an actual development plan. It appears as a dense and overwhelming material meant to convince about the necessity of urban planning.

The PGS|21 was a guiding program for further decisions and strict commitment to the continuous urban development. The only usable component was its supplement - the detailed street regulation plan that came to outshine the PGS|21 in its entirety and somehow stigmatized it as "Bucharest street plan" thus condemning to obliteration its main proposals - the green belt, the network of parks and public spaces, the railway system, etc.

The plan mirrored perfectly Sfințescu's ideology. Being conceptual and methodological it brought up amazing technical novelties in the urbanism. The first novelty was the adaptation of the garden cities theory and the step

towards the regional planning by approaching the city in a system with the surrounding towns. Secondly, the PGS established the general approach when drafting an urban plan: the need for a plan - the focus on certain urban parts or activities - regulations and details to implement the urban plan.

Preparation for a new urban plan, the 1920s

The next urban plan of Bucharest is deeply rooted in the aftermath of the WW I and the administrative efforts for the unification of Great Romania: the new Constitution and a burst of laws to unify and uniform the fundamental system of the newly created state. In that context, a new set of laws¹⁰ officially marked the urbanism as an essential discipline and an administrative tool instrument. The laws synthesized all the previous urban planning experiences and stirred new subjects for debate, research and theoretical reflections. They officially inaugurated the first call to all Romanian towns to elaborate urban plans for development according to a set of technical prescriptions, officially approved and enacted as “general urban plan”. Obviously, that triggered a general exuberance in search for a clear and comprehensive framework for an urban plan, seen exclusively as a public administration responsibility. The actual outcome of that turmoil was the launch of the second urban plan for Bucharest¹¹.

“The scientific method for plan making”

The intellectual debate raised around three ground-breaking lectures presented at the Urban Planning Conferences of the Romanian Mayors in June 1927: I. Davidescu’s “Planning the cities”, D. Marcu’s “Aesthetics and beautification of cities” and C. Sfințescu’s “Planning the cities in the actual structure: A practical guide for plan making” named by Sfințescu as “the scientific method for plan making”¹² was the starting point in establishing the basic phases of the planning process.

Scheme of the methods proposed by Al. Davidescu, T. Rădulescu¹³, D. Marcu¹⁴ and C. Sfințescu

The scheme of the methods proposed followed the three aspects of urbanism: the research and information, the plan and its approval, and the building regulations and detailed plans. According to the method of Al. Davidescu¹⁵ the aim of the plan was the development, the territorial expansion and the beautification following the sequence: research – pre-project – legal prescriptions for execution. The sequence of stakeholders and responsibilities was: the public technical services – the external author of the plan – the committee finding and facilitating the legal means for plan execution.

T. Rădulescu defined in 1929 the aim of the urban plan as urban development and city improvement, based on a detailed and precise research phase.

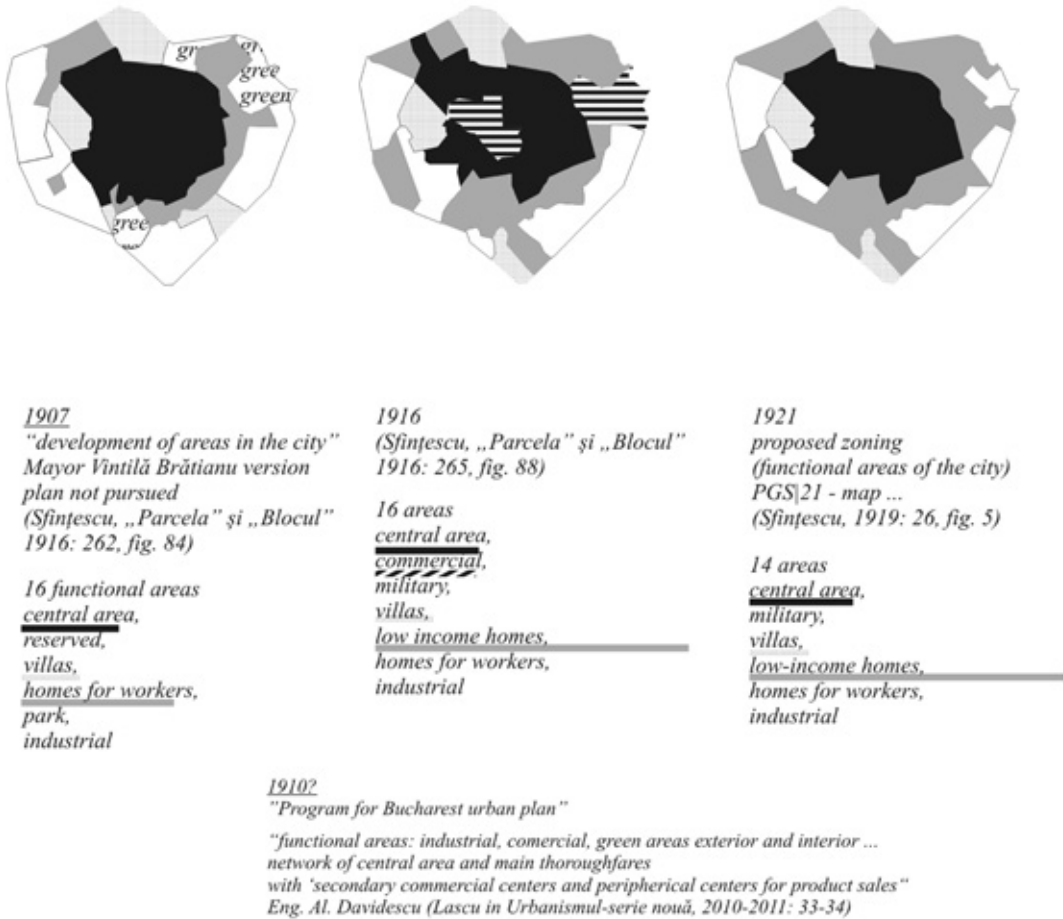
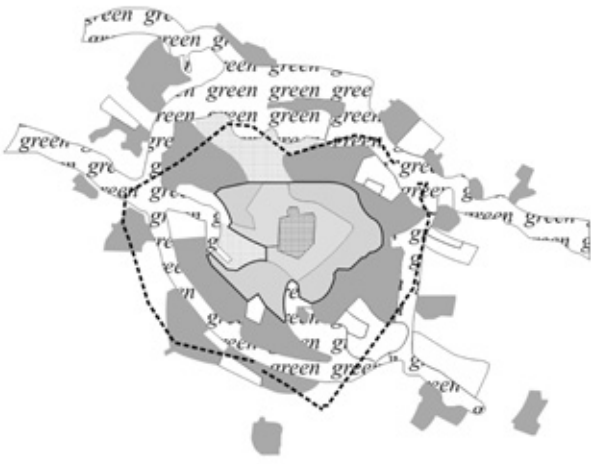


Fig. 3
 The evolution of the zoning plan
 for Bucharest, from 1907 to
 1935. (Redrawing by A. Udrea
 after the original plans)

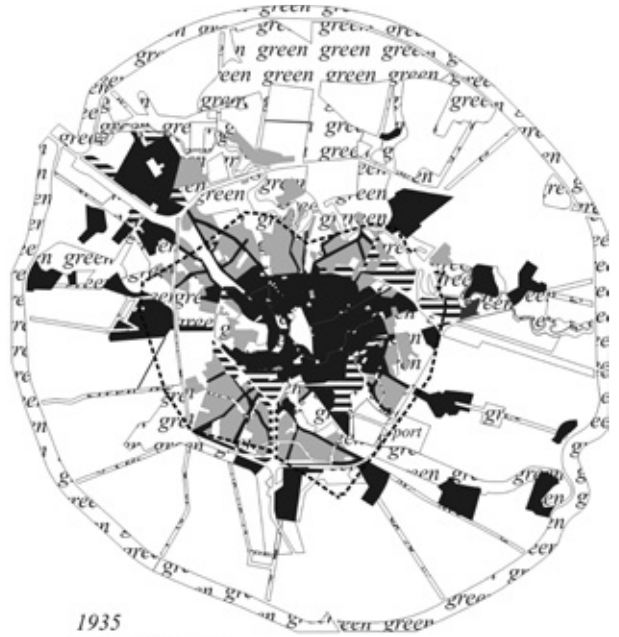
D. Marcu's method (the guidelines for the Higher Technical Committee, 1928): , formulated in 1928, defined the aim of the plan as to limit the built up urban area. The work steps he formulated: written technical guidelines (*caiet de sarcini-tip*) – pre-project, with a research phase and a plan draft – the consultations, presentations and approvals – the execution program. Marcu's method, known as the *Central Authority method* contented the idea that the plan is to be realized only by Ministry certified specialists supervised by a superior committee of the responsible ministries.

The method of Sfințescu's ("Cum să sistematizăm Bucureștiul"), 1929, contents four work steps: the initiative – the research – the program – the urban plan, named "urban file". He divided the responsibilities between the technical



*1931
proposed zoning
Sfințescu, C. „Pentru București.
Noi studii urbanistice. ...” map 33*

*commercial,
“ordinary” homes,
apartment homes,
villas,
military,
green areas,
industry*



*1935
proposed zoning
PDS|35, annex 11*

*rural,
residential,
protected area,
mixt area,
commercial,
industrial,
special?,
green spaces (unbuilt areas)*

committee and the technical director. The execution phase had to be carried out by the technical office, the committee and sub committees.¹⁶

The guidelines for the Bucharest new urban plan

A debate between the strongest at that moment planning team took place in the scientific journals in 1929 when C. Sfințescu and T. Rădulescu exposed their different views on a Bucharest urban plan. T. Rădulescu¹⁷ published two comprehensive articles that were to become the guiding path when realizing the Bucharest Guiding Urban Plan 1935. Those brought up a very clear and innovative approach, quite different from the general debate in that time. Some novelties comprised in T. Rădulescu’s early guidelines for a new urban plan were:

- the invitation to a certain caution when proposing great urban projects;
- the split of the zoning plan in a layer defining the building types and a different layer defining the functional areas of the city, thus enabling a more accurate view and allowing a certain flexibility in the city’s structure;

- the complex system of green spaces opposed to the green belt system, formulated as a rational and efficient territorial limit;
- the establishing of criteria for financial efficiency when deciding upon the road network and the developing of principles that later guided the debated around this subject.

C. Sfințescu¹⁸, on the other hand, remained faithful to his general development schemes and zoning with building principles for entire functional areas. However, he lifted up the stake and refereed only to Regional Bucharest as a subject for the new plan, thus establishing the first guidelines for Romanian regional planning.

The Bucharest Urban Plan Committee was established in 1928 with the sole purpose to start and supervise the new urban plan. But, after a weak start and a rough political turnover, the Committee really took off in 1930 under a new administrative law¹⁹ that enforced its responsibilities. In one and a half year of intensive work and 48 meetings, important decisions were made and a general program for a new plan was sketched. The subjects were discussed according to their importance: means to limit territorial expansion of the city (the most debated subject and the only one transformed in an approved plan), zoning, road network, a new port and a navigable channel to link Bucharest with Danube, the administrative status of the surrounding towns, and working groups as specialized committees to supervise the research phase of the planning process.

The outcomes, following period 1932-1934

The Urban Plan Committee discussed only upon the specialists' reports on various subjects. One of the most important products of those debates was Sfințescu's comprehensive work "For Bucharest New Urban Research: Limit, Green Spaces, Zoning, Roads, Aesthetics" (*Pentru București. Noi studii urbanistice. Delimitare, zonificare, circulație, estetică*).²⁰ It gathered his 10 reports presented in the Planning Committee in 1930 and 1931. That volume actually accomplished the first phase of the planning process for the new plan, thus enabling the passing to the urban plan and details. This work of Sfințescu is the first Romanian thesis on planning.²¹ The volume was awarded with the prize for Scientific Research by the Romanian Academy in 1932.

The Guiding Urban Plan in 1935 (Planul Director de Sistemizare - PDS[35])

After an exhausting period of political instability that disrupted the smooth continuity of the Urban Planning Committee and interfered with the process for the new urban plan, one of the greatest turning points in Romanian urban planning took place in February 1934: the expenditure of Sfințescu from public decision and the abruption of the discipline itself. The interim Mayor

decided to appoint a team for the new urban plan of Bucharest of six specialists from the Urban Plan Committee, with equal responsibilities and using all the Municipality's human and technical resources. He appointed the Working Group with the three architects: D. Marcu²², G.M. Cantacuzino²³, R. Bolomey²⁴, I. Davidescu²⁵ and two engineers: C. Sfințescu and T. Rădulescu²⁶.

The new Bucharest Guiding Urban Plan was elaborated behind closed doors till November 1934, and was analysed and debated in the Urban Planning Committee from January to the end of April 1935.²⁷ The Plan was approved in May 7, 1935.²⁸

Subtle observations on the plan

The PDS|35 appeared out of the criticism to the existing situation assessed as “an urban planning disaster” or “a catastrophic city”.²⁹ The plan had an obviously strong social character, aiming to change the living and building habits of Bucharest citizens and paid special attention to a general framework for new urban regulations and codes.

Some of the modern characteristics of PDS|35 were: the focus on the current needs of the inhabitants, the adjustment of the existing physical structure to accommodate a comfortable life, the controlled territorial expansion, the detachment of the zoning prescriptions from the building codes and a zoning scheme related to the road system and the possible future developments.

The PDS|35 aimed to prepare the city into a flexible structure for future great projects, especially in infrastructure and public spaces. As for its practicality, the plan comprised a broad but very clear and accessible building code and a handbook for social residential housing developments.

The vision, based on the existing assets, proposed a city as a closed system in need of fine retouches that overflowed the surroundings only through especially appointed directions along the main roads, and with new residential areas along those connecting roads, activities areas outside the city and a green continuum on the unbuilt land. That was to be realised through a coordination of:

- a strong building code to preserve the unbuilt land for (possible) future great projects: large strips along the main penetrating roads or wider roads with separated modes of transportation for the existing traffic, highways, metro (vicinal), metropolitan railway, and other major infrastructure great projects, and for new airports, waterways and ports;
- a land acquisition program pursued by the Municipality as to enable the continuous network of green spaces, guide territorial expansion and densify the central areas of Bucharest and its neighbouring towns;
- a special program to protect the city centre and its built landmarks.

The intervention plan was aiming to satisfy firstly the immediate manifested needs and to secure the proper daily comfort of living and working and thus, by a subtle adjustment of a certain behaviour, to move towards a modern urban life. The plan also brought some great novelties in the planning technique as follows:

- the distinction between kinds of city limits - the study limit versus the administrative limit that “did not interfere with the planning process and urban activity”³⁰;
- the zoning became a usable tool through a detailed table that organized all the regulation specifications needed on each type of buildings;
- the proposal of an elaborated system of green spaces, with a complex hierarchy and specified regulations for each type of green space;
- the division of the plan into parts easier to manoeuvre: a brief presentation, maps for each layer of the proposal and annexes with certain details:
- the used photography as a research method and
- the cooperation between the administration and the builders.

Comparative analysis

Any kind of comparative analysis should acknowledge the PDS|35 coming from the young maturity of the Romanian urban planning discipline, which was just some few decades old.

PGS|21 vs PDS|35:

- plan as a method – *plan as a handbook*
- for an active productive city – *for a protected city, for residence and leisure*
- urban system of the city and its surroundings, the satellite towns – *open city invading its territory, a planned invasion*
- central area – *protected area*
- city divided in areas separately regulated – *city regulated on functional layers, regulation toward a good building practice based on a certain urban behaviour*
- technical, specialized and dependent on public administration, implemented through a detailed streets plan as a code to be used by public servants – *general, easy to follow, implemented through a table for building regulations and maps published for the public use*
- urban planning science, a progress of understanding the city – *urban planning as a tool, a set of rules easy to use by anyone*

Eng. Cincinat Sfințescu vs The Working Group

Being public servants with long careers, C. Sfințescu and the Working Group members pursued the common goal of a successful plan that could have been

realized and properly used. The 1935 planning period was an opportunity for C. Sfințescu, a mature planner, to make up after the much contested General Urban Plan PGS|21 and to finally realize his old proposals for Bucharest. T. Rădulescu and I. Davidescu were the coordination core of the Working Group. They were with an experience of over 10 years within the Municipality and whose activity evolved around Bucharest urban plan. The PDS remained the highlight of their careers. T. Rădulescu shaped the vision and the general guidelines of the plan and while I. Davidescu worked on the details and proposed clear projects and tools - a new building type for low income homes, the ratios and specific locations for the green spaces system and the table with regulation specifications. I. Davidescu was the only member of the Working Group to remain in Bucharest Municipality and to work on the PDS until 1947.

There were some fundamental differences between C. Sfințescu and the Working Group regarding the result of the plan. C. Sfințescu was looking for a plan to decide how a city should function in every little detail: an extensively detailed scheme that should have covered every aspect of an intervention and would require a centralized decisional mechanism. The Working Group was looking in opposite for a global plan orientated towards the morphology of the city and the social needs that animates it, a general guideline for the city with typologies of interventions subject to adjustment and interpretation.

There were differences concerning the use of a plan. C. Sfințescu saw the plan as a global work that was continuously improving, never final, always explored and improved as it was used. The responsibility for urban planning belonged according to Sfințescu only to a public apparatus with highly specialized experts. The plan depended further on detailed procedures and a good work ethic. The Working Group saw in opposite the plan as a popular, accessible and public tool, to be useful to any builder.

With regard to the urban vision, Sfințescu understood the city only of major projects and as a place of building activities. The Working Group had itself the vision of and every-day city for every citizen, with a certain construction discipline and a pleasant and comfortable living.

Closing notes

In a time when the urban plan as a product was the only acceptable result of the modern urbanism, the PDS|35 appeared from the continuous belief that the urban plan could have been the engine and the warrant of national development. On that ground, being the first public attempt to create an urban plan based on an continuously supporting environment, the mythological image arouse around PDS|35 to be the first modern urban plan of Bucharest even before it was drafted. This image remained until nowadays. The experts created the need for a new plan throughout popular conferences in all related fields and throughout enthusiastic articles that announced “the new modern

plan". The politicians used their popularity to announce and present the plan to the public. The media was also involved during the professional debate that took place in the Urban Planning Committee of the Municipality. And, then, when the plan was released, it unleashed a fervent public debate around every chapter and proposal of the plan that lasted for years. The image as the only modern urban plan of the city was carefully, but artificially, maintained throughout the years.

The PDS|35 appeared victoriously as the great endeavour of Bucharest urban planning after years of explorations and searches, though it was not the first nor the most important plan of Bucharest or even the plan with the greatest impact in the development of the city. On the contrary, it was just one of a series of important plans. But as the experts and the public conscience retained the previous urban plans as failures, the PDS|35 captured the entire attention and thus became some sort of a Star-Plan from the era between the two wars. PDS|35 concluded the entire planning effort begun in 1906 and brought up significant innovations in the urban planning practice: changed the approach towards the city by bringing the public as the main stakeholder for urban planning thus changing the institutional culture and the practice of urban planning. It was the last stage of an effort aimed to shape the urbanism as a scientific discipline that looks so familiar to us today. In fact, this was the real success and this can become the true label of this plan in the history of Romanian urbanism.

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 - 3 Engineer Alexandru Davidescu (1858-1936) was educated at the *École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées* [National School of Bridges and Roads] in Paris; president of the *Asociația Generală a Inginerilor din România* (AGIR) Engineers Association in Romania and member of editorial board of engineering scientific publications; director of the *Planning Department* of Bucharest City Hall (1900-1910), general secretary in the Ministry of Public Works, president of the *Comitetul Tehnic Superior* [Higher Technical Committee, the highest approval organism for urban planning in Romania before 1926] till 1925; author of 5 urban plans throughout Romania, together with his son Arch. Ion Davidescu, between 1924 and 1931; organized *Constructia oraselor* [City development], the first urban planning course in Romania at the Bucharest Polytechnics in 1919 and taught it continuously until 1936.
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 - 5 Lascu, 2011, 84.
 - 6 Lascu, 2010-2011, 33.
 - 7 Referring to his own proposal for a new zoning plan for Bucharest, C. Sfințescu mentioned in his research report article "*Parcela*" și "*Blocul*" în *constituirea orașelor* in 1914-1916 a previous zoning plan developed by Bucharest Mayor V. Brătianu probably around 1907.
 - 8 Engineer Cincinat Sfințescu (1887-1955) is the founding father of Romanian urban planning with his prodigious activity spanning over 30 years; was educated at the *Școala Națională de Poduri și Șosele* [National School of Bridges and Roads] in Bucharest; 1910-1942 wrote at least 250 articles for 16 Romanian journals and 4 international journals; he authored 46 volumes; 1926-1934, 1938-1942 was the technical secretary of the *Uniunea Orașelor din România* - UOR [Union of Romanian Cities] and *Institutul Urbanistic Român* - IUR [Romanian Planning Institute] and administrator / coordinating editor of the UOR/ IUR official publication - the only Romanian urban planning scientific publications, issued continually from 1923 till 1942: *Monitorul Uniunii Orașelor din România* - MUOR [Monitor of Union of Romanian Cities], later became *Urbanismul* [Urban Planning], solely wrote 16 issues of the journals MUOR and *Urbanismul*; was the Chief of the Planning Service in Bucharest City Hall from 1914 to 1920, and the Director of the *Public Works Depart-*

- ment from 1920 till August 1934; professor of Urbanism and Public Works at the *Superior School/Faculty of Architecture* in Bucharest between 1920 and 1947, at the *Special School of Military Engineering* and at the *School of Administrative Sciences*; in the 1920s maintained an active contact with the *Union Internationale des Villes (UIV)* and the *International Federation of Housing and Town Planning (IFHTP)*: 1926 was elected member and then in 1931 vice-president of the IFHTP Council (those being merely honorary distinctions).
- 9 at that time was also named “specialization of neighbourhoods”.
- 10 *Legea pentru unificare administrativă* (The law for administrative unification), promoted with Royal Decree no. 1972 in June 13, 1925, published in *Monitorul Oficial* no. 128 in June 14, 1925, and *Legea pentru organizarea administrațiunii comunale a orașului București* (The law for the administrative organisation of Bucharest), published in *Monitorul Oficial* no. 31 in February 7, 1926.
- Lege pentru organizarea administrației municipiului București* [The law for Bucharest public services], July 27, 1929, published in the *Monitorul Comunal al Municipiului București* no. 3, September 15, 1929.
- 11 The laws synthesized all previous urban planning experience and stirred new subjects for debate, research and theoretical reflections and officially inaugurated the first call to all Romanian towns to elaborate urban plans for development according to a set of technical prescriptions officially approved and enacted the term “general urban plan”.
- 12 Sfințescu, C.: Bucureștii în lumina științei urbanistice. Conferință ținută la Societatea Politehnică în ziua de 21 martie 1935, în *Urbanismul*, year XV (VII), 5-6 1938, 182.
- 13 Engineer Teodor Rădulescu (1889-?) was educated at the Polytechnics in Berlin-Charlottenburg; public servant working together with C. Sfințescu in the Bucharest *Public Works Department*, held managing positions between 1926 and 1936.
- 14 Architect Duiliu Marcu (1885-1966) graduated *Școala Superioară de Arhitectură* [the Superior School of Architecture] in Bucharest and *École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts*; member of the Romanian Academy, he is among few architects to be awarded this distinction; the first president of *Romanian Union of Architects*; architect in the Public Works Ministry and preeminent member of the *Comitetul Tehnic Superior* (Higher Technical Committee) – the highest authority in Romanian urban planning; distinguished professor at the Architecture Faculty in Bucharest; conducted a very intense and long activity in urban planning consisting of numerous urban plans and design projects for great Romanian cities, with a 50-year long activity he is among the most prodigious Romanian architects and urban designers.
- 15 Davidescu, Al./M. I. Stroescu, 1907, 463-469.
- 16 Sfințescu, C.: *Pentru București. Noi studii urbanistice. Delimitare, zonificare, circulație, estetică*. Institutul de Arte Grafice Bucovina, 1932, 789.
- 17 Rădulescu, T. *Planul de sistematizare al Capitalei* in *Monitorul Uniunii Orașelor din România*, no. 1-2/1929; Rădulescu, T. *Planurile de amenajarea orașelor* in *Monitorul Uniunii Orașelor din România*, no. 3-6/1929.
- 18 Sfințescu, C. *Cum să sistematizăm Bucureștiul* in *Arhiva pentru știință și reformă socială*, no.1-3/1929.
- 19 *Lege pentru organizarea administrației municipiului București* [The law for Bucharest public services], July 27, 1929.
- 20 Sfințescu, C.: *Pentru București. Noi studii urbanistice. Delimitare, zonificare, circulație, estetică*. Institutul de Arte Grafice Bucovina 1932.
- 21 The work is comprising a rich database, careful analysis, brief history and development alternatives, and spanning over 400 pages, 157 illustrations, 46 maps and numerous tables and lists.
- 22 Architect Duiliu Marcu (1885-1966) graduated *Școala Superioară de Arhitectură* [the Superior School of Architecture] in Bucharest and *École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts*; member of the Romanian Academy, he is among few architects to be awarded this distinction; the first president of *Romanian Union of Architects*; architect in the Public Works Ministry and preeminent member of the *Comitetul Tehnic Superior* [Higher Technical Committee] – the highest authority in Romanian urban planning; distinguished professor at the Architecture Faculty in Bucharest; conducted a very intense and long activity in urban planning consisting of numerous urban plans and design projects for great Romanian cities; with a 50-year long activity he is among the most prodigious Romanian architects and urban designers.
- 23 Architect George Matei Cantacuzino (1899-1960) theoretician of beauty in arts and architecture; the work within the Working Group of the 1935 Bucharest Guiding Urban Plan was his only involvement in urban planning.

The first urban plans of Bucharest in the rise of the 20th century

- 24 Architect Roger Bolomey (1883-1947) was educated at the *École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts* in Paris; the Director of *Architecture Department* of Bucharest City Hall between 1923 and 1937; awarded second prize at the international competition for Belgrade and Split Urban Plan, together with Arch. Ion Davidescu; created several urban plans for small Romanian cities in 1924-1925.
- 25 Architect Ion Davidescu (1890-1980) was educated at the *École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts* [National Superior School of Arts in Paris]; held managing positions in Bucharest City Hall between 1923 and 1947; among winners at national and international planning competitions: urban plans for Paris, Tekirghiol, Belgrade and Split; authored, sometimes together with his father the Eng. Al. Davidescu, numerous urban plans for great Romanian cities; professor of urban planning at Bucharest *Polytechnics*, the course *Construcția orașelor* [City development] together with his father Eng. Al Davidescu, and from 1936 his own course *Noțiuni de urbanism* [Introduction in urban planning].
- 26 Engineer Teodor Rădulescu (1889-?) was educated at the *Polytechnics* in Berlin-Charlottenburg; public servant working together with C. Sfințescu in the Bucharest *Public Works Department*, held managing positions between 1926 and 1936.
- 27 All the discussions were registered in 68 written reports.
- 28 The plan consisted of a brief presentation of the preliminary phases, zoning chapter – territorial limits, housing, zoning and building codes, green spaces and playgrounds, circulation chapter - railways, airfare, navigation, roads, endowments chapter - monuments and public buildings, public hygiene, supply system, public sanitation, aesthetics and details chapter, historical landmarks chapter, law chapter. The plan also contained a rich supplement with 11 maps with the existing and proposed situation, 2 tables with regulation prescriptions and a detailed study for low income houses.
- 29 PDS, *Planul Director de Sistematizare al Municipiului București, Memoriu justificativ*. București, 1935 (PDS), introduction part, Editura Institutului Urbanistic al României
- 30 PDS, 1935: 13.

Maria Duda

Shifts. A brief history of public plazas in central Bucharest

Introduction

The study focuses on the central public spaces of Bucharest, recognised, both by city dwellers and professionals, as being of identity-giving importance to the city: Victoriei, Romana, Revolution, Unirii Plazas and University Square. The aim is to offer a historical overview of their evolution, as part of their affirming the status of a *capital* to Bucharest: what political and cultural ideological *shifts* translated into shape and altered significance for the central public spaces?

The covered time span stretches from 1846 to 2014, and the study is structured in four time bands, corresponding to important *shifts* in the political and cultural contexts, overlapped with the cartographic development of Bucharest. We start with Borroczyzn plan, in 1846, to 1919, continue with the inter-war period, followed by the communist regime period, 1947-1989, and end with the post-revolutionary period to the present, 1990-2014

Starting from the definitions of *shift*, the methodology of the paper constructs the analysis as a historical overview around the following features of public spaces: *morphology, function/role, dominant/representative buildings, accessibility, significance, art, nomenclature*. The analysis will thereafter attempt to determine the interdependence between the built, delimited framework and the degree of attractiveness, the type of usage that it determines and how the ramification of individual and official meanings lead to creating the character of such public spaces.

First Period, 1846-1911

The first time band marked the beginning of the planned urban development for Bucharest, triggered by a dense series of defining political events.



Fig. 1
The Large Market, set inside the
Dambovitza River neck, 1846. In
black, the market's buildings.
(Duda)

Bucharest's beginning as a capital of the Romanian province of Wallachia dates back precisely 355 years, in 1659. Romanian provinces were autonomous, but had rulers imposed and overseen by the Ottoman Empire. Their changing every five years or so, gave little chance of consistency with regards to city planning and strategy. Therefore, Bucharest grew quietly and organically as an oversized village up until the 1800s. The brief shift from the Ottoman to Russian Empire rule, as warranty to the latter's winning, brought about the setting of urban hygienic and beautifying regulations and committees, as well as the tracing of Bucharest's first boulevards and parks, and the marking of the edges of the inner city, its checkpoints and markets.

Bucharest's urbanized planning was first thoroughly documented in 1846, by the Borroczyn plan. According to it, by 1846 the only already established public plaza, among the five chosen to analyse, was the Large Market (current Unirii). Set in the centre of the inner town, it shaped along the neck of the Dambovitza River. Due to its commercial function, and position, it acted as joint between the two banks of the river, attracting and serving inhabitants all around.



Fig. 2
The Mogosoia checkpoint and the northern parks, 1846 (left). The current Romana Plaza as a minor crossroad, 1846 (right). (Duda)

1859 sees the unification of the Romanian provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia under one elected ruler of the Romanian descent, A.I. Cuza, as well as the setting of their joint capital in Bucharest. The city therefore has quickly to upgrade to its role: political and administrative infrastructure needs to be backed up by cultural and educational buildings, in order to affirm and set native values.

As Bucharest's territory was mostly of private ownership, the creation of public spaces was made possible by means of donation. Dinica Golescu, a nobleman and politician, donated his residence to the elected ruler. The manor turned Palace, conveniently set on the important Mogosoia Road, required a plaza and adjacent supporting functions, to enhance its significance as quarters of a long awaited, native, political rule: the crossroad in front of it was to be designed as Palace Plaza. The process of establishing representative public plazas was thus initiated: the Palace was extended and the St. Sava School and Monastery ensemble demolished to make way for the Academy, while its inner garden was preserved as public space¹.

In 1866 the German Hohenzollern dynasty was appointed by the Ottoman Empire to bring political stability to the new country. In 1878, Charles I gained Romania its independence, and was subsequently crowned king. With German rule and political independence, the opening towards the western culture was unobstructed, and all habits and fashion of Ottoman influence were abandoned. Both the political and cultural *shifts* of directions required concrete legitimacy in the eyes of the public, be it the city's inhabitants, the country's or visitors. Public spaces served to do just that, and their shaping evolved with the implanting of representative political, administrative and cultural buildings. Bucharest as the *capital of a new state of ancient origins* embraced its half western descent by commissioning French, Italian, as well as Romanian



Fig. 3
The Palace building, 1846 (left)
St. Sava School and Monastery
ensemble, 1846 (right).
(Duda)

architects educated abroad, for the design of its public plazas and buildings. Many, if all, proposals integrated symbols of Romania's Latin origins, while the architectural expression of the buildings and the spatiality of urban space followed neo-classical composition rules.

Decisions of implementation were taken by private entities, donating private space for public use and development, or by political and administrative committees. Nevertheless, the consequences of building representative buildings, such as institutions, or tracing connecting boulevards are only foreseen locally, and sometimes even ignored. Theoretical urban principles were imported, and urban legislation kept pace with their being implemented, by improvisation and adaptation.

The newly appointed Palace Plaza soon lived up to its name: the King requests Paul Gottereau to build him the quarters for a University Foundation facing his main balcony, in order to encourage local students to pursue further studies. As the Foundation facade mirrors the concave retreat of the Palace, the dynamics between the facing buildings is mediated by the Palace Plaza. Supporting the educational function of the Foundation, and contributing to the representative character of the plaza, the first public building of Bucharest gets built out of donated public funds, on a piece of land donated by the Church: the Romanian Athenaeum. The Plaza receives its last delimiting buildings during the early 1900s: the Commercial Academy and Nation's Bank, are both built to coherently follow the lead of the Foundation's expression and volume. All groundfloors were commercial and opened to public use.

The Academy was inaugurated in 1869, having been designed by A. Orascu on the footprint of the former St. Sava School. The former inner garden was preserved as



Fig. 4
The shaping of Victoriei Square (left) and Catargiu Plaza (Romana) (right) in 1899, as transit plazas linked by the newly traced L. Catargiu Boulevard. (Duda)

its public plaza, but the relationship between the two changed as the interposition of the Academy Boulevard disconnected them. The Academy Square became an alveolus of the Boulevard and its shape and function was the subject of several different proposals until the 1920s. The administration, and both politicians and intellectuals wanted the square to become the cultural and educational headquarter of Bucharest: an Academic library, study rooms, museums and porticos were envisioned to create a unitary, symbolic environment.

Meanwhile, the Large Market became Market Halls, as it extended on both banks of the river, whose course had been previously altered and channeled. Metallic structures modelled after French examples were assembled in order to better organize the merchandise.

Second Period, 1911-1946

The second time band witnessed the development of theoretical practice, which became prevalent to implementation. There was a strong desire for culturally aligning with contemporary currents, technological breakthroughs and theories. Professional organizations were being set up, and the period was generally characterized by an effervescent urban and architectural research: studies, proposals and competitions were held over the laying out of public spaces and their respective important buildings, critiques, debates and information were published and offered to both professional and the general public. The development of the *capital* within contemporary lines and needs was considered paramount, with, this time, a better connection between public spaces and buildings of representation.



Fig. 5
The transformation of the Palace: single edifice in 1846 (top), extended in 1899, with an inner open courtyard mirrored by the construction of the King's University Foundation. Above the Palace, the Romanian Athenaeum is highlighted as first public cultural building, constructed on donated land, with public donated funds (bottom).
(Duda)



Fig. 6
The transformation of St. Sava's
inner garden, 1846 (top) into
the Academy Square, 1899
(bottom).
(Duda)



Fig. 7
The Market Hall (Unirii), 1899.
In black, the market's halls.
(Duda)

Nonetheless, two discrepancies marked the period. Firstly, there was a severe mentality gap between architectural proposals embracing the contemporary currents of modernism, reinterpreted, and the neoclassical, time-stuck monumental approach when designing urban space. Secondly, most studies and proposals ended up implemented partially, or not at all, as either economical or decisive means lacked. Conclusively, there was a rich, local, theoretical basis, but a poor general coordination of administration and urban regulations.

Victoriei Plaza receives its first buildings: Natural History Museum and the Institute of Geology in northern part, aligned to the Kisselef Boulevard, the Palace of the Society of Civil Servants on the south side, and Sturdza Palace - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the east. All buildings were independent, both as volumes, and as functions, and, moreover, set in a non-relating position to the plaza. Functionally, Victoriei Plaza was diagonally cut into a cultural-leisure area and an administrative one, but its strongest feature, alike its connected Catargiu Plaza (Romana), remained that of a transit area.



Catargiu Plaza (Romana) finally received its own representative building in 1923, the Commercial Academy, relocated from Palace Plaza. The curved facade was a reaction to the shape of the plaza, and, in its further turn, determined the next delimiting constructions to follow the same principle.

Fig. 8
Victoriei Plaza, 1911. In black,
the representative buildings
(left), Catargiu Plaza (Romana),
1911 (right).
(Duda)

The Palace Plaza and University Square saw little interventions in the first years of this period, although they were the subjects of various studies and possibilities of development. Cincinat Sfantescu², Romanian civil engineer and urban planner, consistently elaborated and published thoroughly documented proposals for beautifying Bucharest and its central public spaces. A civic center, with administrative buildings, ministries, an Opera House, theatres, and quarters for the Municipality were absolutely necessary for a modern *capital*, and both Palace Plaza and University Square qualified as possible hosts. Moreover, a new, larger, underground and better distributed railway system also needed planning, and the Market Halls could have been the perfect position for a central and even coverage.

In 1936, the Academy Square lost the prospect of becoming the academic and cultural cluster of the *capital*, centre of Latin origin and continuity, as two administrative buildings defined its margins: Palace of Industrial Credits and Palace of Insurance Society.

Rotating political power did not allow for concrete implementations of any of the aforementioned studies. Systematizations of public spaces only occurred at the *shift* towards autarchical lead, in 1938, when Charles II dissolved the Parliament



Fig. 9
The Palace Plaza (Revolution),
1911 (top) and the University
Square, 1911 (bottom).
(Duda)



Fig. 10
The Market Halls in 1911.
The southern bank is re-
organized as closed grounds,
within commercial walls with
archways.
(Duda)

and absorbed all power. *As Bucharest should have become the capital to suit his political force*, extensive demolitions are carried out in Palace Square and Market Halls, in order to make way towards projected monumentality.

The Palace Plaza lost its northern and southern margins to the demolitions. The Park of the Romanian Athanaeum and the Palace Plaza become one large urban corridor along the Victoriei Road.³ The status was not to last too long though, a competition was set to re-organize the space in order to emphasize the Palace and at the same time offer enough room for celebrations and official manifestations. Unfortunately, the second world war and the political changes that ensues afterwards, never allowed for any plan to be fully carried out, and the intermediary status of the resulted urban corridor persists even today.

The planned intervention upon the Market Hall was also left unfinished, but in this case, the intermediary result seemed rather pleasing and was immediately appropriated by the public. Demolishing the Large Hall, 1935, made way for a large promenade linking the old city centre with the Metropolitan church and hill. The river was covered and all initial physical connection between it and

the plaza was lost, but a better accessibility ensured. The partial demolition was just a step away from the desired plan⁴ to turn this central area into a representative centre: all market halls and commercial functions were to be completely removed, and replaced by more respectable ones, such as the National Opera House, on the northern side, and the People's Cathedral, on the south bank. All existing urban fabric was to be shielded off with blocks.

Third Period, 1947-1989

The third investigated period lied under the political and cultural influence of soviet principles, thoroughly implanted over a very brief amount of time. Once more for Bucharest's history, the cut with the prior interval was precise, but also violent: both political and cultural *shifts* denied all validity of previous values and conducts, expanding to the use and shape of urban space and architectural expression.



Fig. 11
The Victoriei Square plan,
1974 – still a transit plaza,
geometrically organized to suit
traffic. The new ministerial
building is formally aligned to
the square but has no functional
or representative relationship
with it whatsoever.
(Duda)



Fig. 12
The new Palace Hall and the blocks unitarily shielding off the existing urban fabric, plan 1974. (Duda)

We may identify three distinct steps in the implementation of *shifts* during the communist period: first, changing functions and use for former representative buildings and their adjoining public places, in order to alter the public perception and use of them; second, physically obstructing existing urban fabric with shields of new buildings, and polarizing importance towards a new or formerly insignificant building; and, as third and final step, to obliterate significance, value and memory, demolishing (formerly) valued buildings and restructuring their site reinterpreting it on a monumental scale. The carried transformations held no actual theoretical basis, and their consequences were extended at the general larger scale of the whole city. Shaping the new society required shaping anew the capital.

There was a strong, even if reluctant, general coordination of administration and urban regulations, but the theoretical basis had been suppressed and removed by political will and personal vision of the political rule.

During the first years, all central public squares lost the artistic monuments and naming reminding of the royal regime: statues of political figures were destroyed, bombed buildings removed, and, even where any physical transformation was redundant, roundabouts were turned into crossroads. Re-order started with a clean-up.



Fig. 13
The Victoriei Plaza and the underpass built in 1986, crosscutting the plaza off its southern side. Moreover, bordering buildings also shielded off the southern limits of the plaza, with no functional contribution to the character of the public space. The underground passage disrupts pedestrian accessibility, and combined visual and physical perception of the whole plaza was no longer possible (left). Meanwhile, Romana Plaza remained set as transit plaza, its round shape considered sufficiently effective for directing traffic, 1974, (right).
(Duda)

As part of the first step of shifting, the Palace Plaza became Republic's Plaza. The Palace was transformed in ministerial quarters and partially closed off to the public, until a minor part of it opened as art museum. Meanwhile, the physicality of Carol II's demolitions was preserved. Out-scaling the Palace was a memory the regime decided to keep, but swiftly *shifted* the importance from the Palace to the newly finished building of the Central Committee, thus depolarizing the square. Moreover, former royal dependences surrounding the Palace were demolished and replaced with a proper public cultural building, that could switch the cultural balance versus the Athenaeum by its sheer dimensions: The Palace Hall, inaugurated in 1961.⁵

The 1970s stood trial to adapting to increasing mobility demands. Traffic adjustments forced modifications in shapes and accessibility of public plazas. On one hand, underground pedestrian passages were introduced in University Square in 1973⁶, and later in Victoriei Plaza, 1986. On the other hand, sidewalks were removed in Republic's Plaza



Fig. 14
University Square received the adjoining Theatre Square, determined by two new object-like buildings: the National Theatre and the Intercontinental Hotel (plan of 1974). (Duda)

in order to diminish pedestrian presence nearby administrative buildings. The result of both was to deprive the public of its space.

University square got its third level of *shift* implemented in 1973, with the construction of the neighbouring Intercontinental Hotel, the highest building at the time, and the National Theatre⁷. Both buildings were monumental in scale, self-referencing, and, confusingly enough, of almost equivalent force: the physical presence of the tower made up for the important and representative function of the theatre. The plaza they shared remained though stranded, claimed by none, since the buildings did not interact: they did not share the same public.

Condensing all three *shifts* into one, the major victim of the communist period was Unirii Plaza. Although its transformation started with Charles II, it managed to keep its main function active and attractive enough to generate its own public. Accessibility improved with the covering of the river banks, even if its close physical relationship with it disappeared. It is between 1976-1986 that major works were undertaken to completely reshape the plaza⁸. The commercial function was transferred to a general store, built on its eastern side, while the Market Hall and its neighbouring historical context was demolished as part of creating a new monumental axis leading to the Palace of the People. The remaining urban fabric was shielded with continuous lines of blocks, of

equal architectural expression, that did not manage to dominate or even inter-relate with the emptied central space. Its dimensions and lack of function made it easily written off as park, but, once more, pedestrian accessibility to it was scarce.

Fourth Period, 1990-2014

The fourth period still stands trial to the oscillation between reviving identity and catching up on the missed years. Even though the *shifts* in political and cultural context are ideologically significant, the breaking of the status-quo, as far as public spaces are concerned, seems inhibited by a reluctant resistance. The openness in information that the democratic regime brought along did not change old habits: re-establishing a contemporary role for public space is nevertheless under the thumb of politically driven administrative decisions.

Reclaiming public space for Bucharest has proved to be the major struggle of the past 25 years, not only for the administration, but also for the public itself. Minimal comfort and accessibility provided for pedestrians, disconnecting public space from functions, cutting off its relationship with adjacent ground floors, were habits deeply rooted in the collective mentality of Bucharest's inhabitants, strategically deprived of using public space and buildings. And as with limited use comes little to no responsibility, public spaces are yet to be re-metabolized, and appropriated.

Public spaces are places of continuous and present significance, and the only central public plaza to have generated and maintained a new, active identity for itself is currently University Square. University Square *shifted* into political significance in 1990⁹, as it was the central public space with no administrative or political quarters, and benefiting from the highest visibility. It became the space for free speeches, protests, and spontaneous manifestos, the place belonging to and expressing public opinion. Its significance did not falter even after a disastrous intervention in 2011, when the whole area of the Square was levelled and paved into a uniform but dysfunctional pedestrian area, cut by access lanes to an underground parking. Although subjected to an international design competition, the administration decided to take matters to own hands and disregard professional opinions. Public generated, active signification expanded and stretched outside the physical boundaries of the original University Square, making up for its "lost" space. It now encompasses the Theatre Square, the fountain behind the University itself, as well as the crossroad. Several public spaces, of different physical features, were thus unified under one common, strong identity.

At the opposite end lies Unirii Square, unsaved yet from its martyrdom¹⁰. Victoriei and Romana are still transit squares, while Revolution Square, former Palace and Republic's, received a new name, but its identity fails in being supported by a present significance or physical improvement.

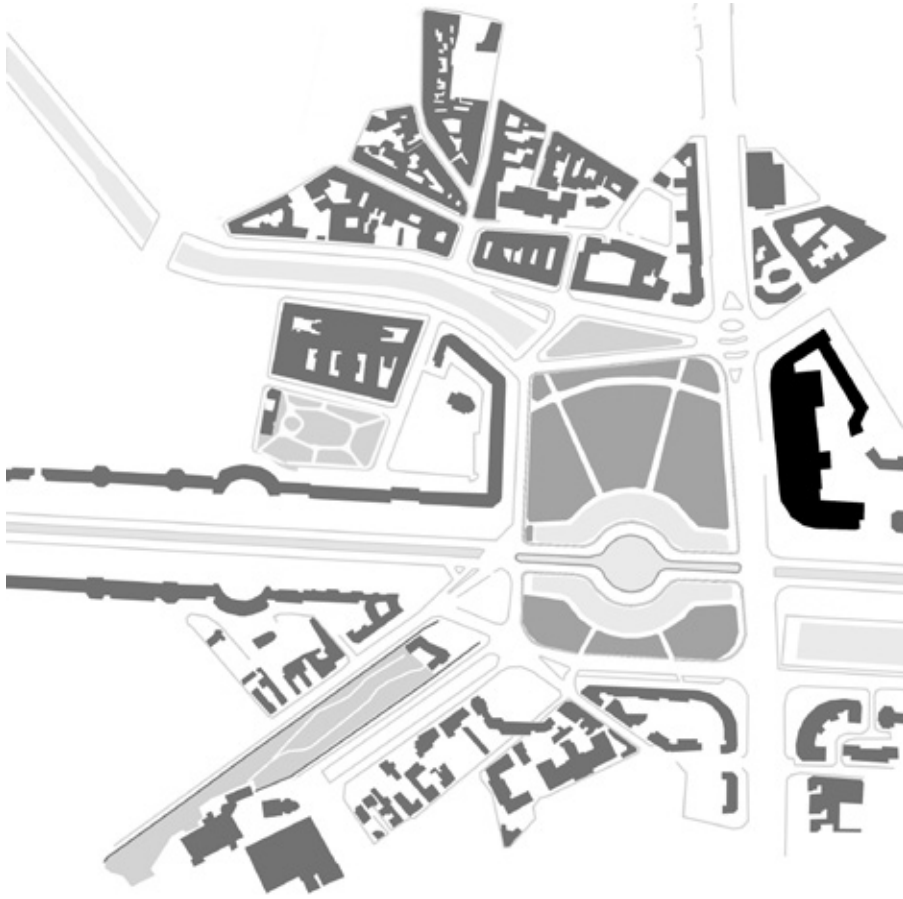


Fig. 15
The Unirii Square, 1974 (left),
and its severe restructuring,
1991 (right).
(Duda)

The Palace, closed for restoration works for 10 years, has regained its public function, as National Museum of Art, the University Foundation has been extended and reopened as well, while the Romanian Athenaeum faithfully keeps its original cultural function. And yet, the physical relationship between the three defining buildings is strained by the scarce pedestrian accessibility and poor functional interaction. Parking lots have occupied all available space, and, to make up for it, the municipality organizes temporary markets and feasts, that are just as inadequate in use, position, and architectural expression. Making up for lacking public space by offering public time¹¹ is an undignified *shift*.

Conclusions

The *shifts* in political and cultural influence have continuously determined physical and symbolic alterations to Bucharest's public space. Assigned to timespans, the *shifting* intervals succeed with sometimes sudden and complete severances. Both abstractedly and poetically, one cannot talk of simply *interrupted Bucharest*, but rather of a series of unmediated sequences, creating a *syncopated Bucharest*. Roots of one *shift* may be recycled from an interval several steps back, while others may be transplanted from outer experiences and theories, with equal chance of timing correspondence and delay.



As a personal interpretation, one may notice the development of Bucharest's public space under the empire of *should*. *Should* became the designated attitude accompanying political and cultural *shifts*, since *is* needed time to settle, be metabolized and practiced. Therefore, as a task to fellow critics, practicing professionals and public alike, while in the midst of *should be worth of an European capital*, what *is* Bucharest and what *is* its present, public space?

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- 1 See Lascu, N. *Bulevardele bucureștene până la primul război mondial*, Ed. Simetria 2011
 - 2 See Sfințescu, C., "Cum să sistematizăm Bucureștiul?" Arhiva pentru Știință și Reformă, 1929
 - 3 See Prager, W., 1943, *București orașul contrastelor*, Viking Verlag Berlin
 - 4 See Rădulescu, T., 1935, *Planul director de sistematizare decretat la 9 mai 1935, Memoriu justificativ și planuri*, Bucovina I.E. București
 - 5 See *Arhitectura Magazine*, 1960
 - 6 See *Informația Bucureștilor*, april 1971
 - 7 See Maicu, H., Belea, R., Proiectul Teatrului Național din București, Ansamblul Pieței Nicolae Bălcescu, *Arhitectura Magazine*, 2/1969
 - 8 See Leahu, Gh., *Bucureștiul dispărut*, ed. Arta Grafică 1995
 - 9 See Antonovici, V., "Piața Universității - loc memorial?", *Sfera Politicii*, nr 139, 2009, pg. 94
 - 10 See *Bucuresti 2000*, competition catalogue, 1996.
 - 11 See Mihăilescu, V., quoted by Buică, V., in "Spațiul public în orașele din România", *Igloo magazine* nr 50, 2006, <http://www.igloo.ro/articole/spatiul-public-in-orașele-din-romania>.

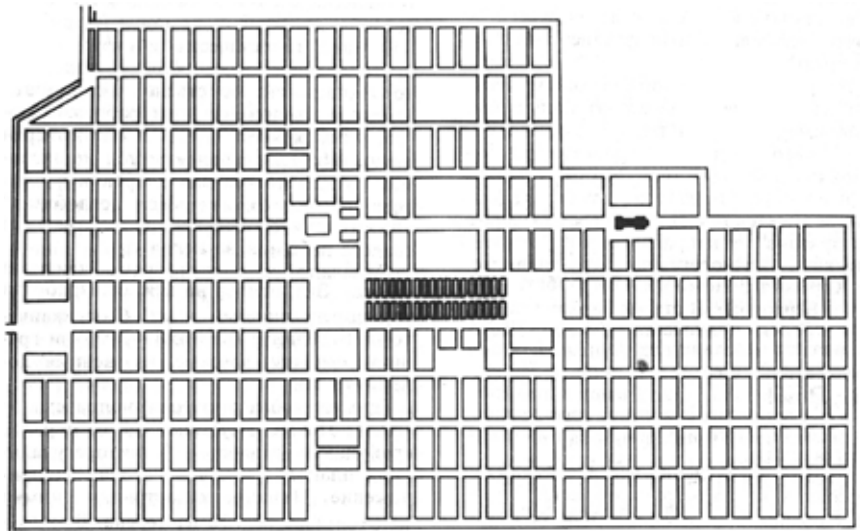
Hristo Ganchev, Grigor Doytchinov

Sofia before World War II: urban design as a cultural implication

The systematic research of Sofia's as well as Bulgaria's history of urbanism starts in the 1970s. Previous works are a rarity or just a part of overriding topics. The need of knowledge about the establishment and development of the urbanism in Bulgaria provokes the first relevant publications by Petar Tashev in 1972 and Ivan Avramov in 1987¹. The works are an attempt for a chronologic overview and offer information about background circumstances, relevant institutions, experts and topics. A research of the National Institute of Cultural Heritage Preservation² in the 1970s is the first trial to reconstruct and to compare the historic cadastral and regulation plans of Sofia. Studies of Grigor Doytchinov and Hristo Ganchev in the 1980s³ serve as starting points for a publication about the formation of Sofia's historic parts in 1989.⁴ The topic goes into deepness after 1989, when the new political constellation allows an approach not burdened with ideological ballast. A publication of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences offers for this approach new facts and findings too.⁵ Additional researches of Doytchinov and Ganchev complete the information pool, correct some initial formulations and clear away inaccuracies.⁶ The very soon published work of Hristo Ganchev on the pre-modern history of Sofia's urban pattern opens a new page to this topic and fills in a gap of knowledge.⁷

The topic demands a review on the pre-modern period of Sofia's urban shape formation. Bulgaria falls under the rule of the Ottoman Empire in the end of the fourteenth century, which causes a deep break in the continuous development of the local society. The incorporation in the Ottoman system paralyzes every creative initiative in the sense of local cultural traditions. A spiritual levelling is carried out as a result of the physical extermination of the Bulgarian aristocracy and of its main stream culture. The Bulgarian religious and folklore elements are pushed aside in the rural areas for centuries.⁸ The "ottomanizing" of the urban settlements is an important instrument in the systematic process of the Christian population's subjection. The settlements are integrated in the

Fig. 1
The rational regulation of
Stara Zagora is an initial step
and accepted model in the
modern Bulgarian Urbanism.
(Reproduction, Avramov)



Ottoman system and are declared to be a personal ownership of high-ranked Turk dignitaries or of the sultan. During the Ottoman rule, also the forms of the local monumental architecture are lost. It is only the tradition of the vernacular timber construction which stays alive.⁹

It would be, however, wrong to understand the reborn of the Bulgarian estate as a spontaneous act or as a consequence of the Russian-Turkish War, 1877-1878.¹⁰ It is the result of a long-term process, designated as the Bulgarian National Revival. It begins at the end of the eighteenth's century, when the Ottoman feudal order comes into an unstoppable decay and the positions of the centralized power are more and more repressed. On the background of these preconditions and the infiltration of the first forms of capitalist economy the future subjects of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie start to ripen. A point of reference in the revival process is the writing of the Slavic-Bulgarian History, 1762.¹¹ The awoken interest for the own history is thoroughly a presupposition for the cultural consciousness and the Revival.¹²

Some political preconditions are set already after the Russian-Turkish War in 1829, as well as the reformation acts of the Ottoman Empire in 1839 and 1856.¹³ The national revolutionary movement and the struggle for the restoration of the autocephaly of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, 1830-1856, mark the beginning of the nation building process. As a result of the upcoming trade connections with Europe, new expectations and trends of taste are arising in the young local bourgeoisie, which is no more content with the retarded life standard. The economic development leads to a private welfare and to a strengthening of the national self-confidence. In 1878 the choice is made in the political and cultural sense and the conditions for basic changes in the organisation of the territory and the settlements are created. The last phase of the nation building process comprises the establishing of the public institutions and the successful



achievement of the governmental sovereignty, marked by the Unification of the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia in 1885¹⁴ and the Independence Declaration in 1908,¹⁵ which establishes the unity of nation and state. The Bulgarian National Revival is in the European context a delayed transition from the Middle Ages to the modernity and combines the Renaissance, the Age of Enlightenment and the Bourgeois Revolution at once.¹⁶

Fig. 2
The cadastral map of the ottoman settlement made by Russian military engineers, 1878. (Museum of Sofia)



Fig. 3
An image of Sofia documented by Oberbauer around 1880.
(Museum of Sofia)

The European urbanism reaches Bulgaria not before after the Liberation in 1878. The inherited shape of the Ottoman settlements cannot be attributed to artistic or theoretic concepts. They are composed of the relatively autonomous units, the “mahalas”, formed to relationships. The amorphous shape of the primitive Ottoman settlement follows organically the topography. The dividing interstices between the mahalas are narrow lanes which branch out in short dead end ways. The lane fronts are formed by the irregular and broken plot limitations. The Ottoman system causes a peculiarity: the lack of public places. The one and only public space is the market or the accidental space extension on some street junctions. The urban shape is an anonymous work and the individual interests agree upon with the public once intuitively. The first vague changes start after 1800, when the social life, limited before to the mahalas starts searching for public expression and is enriched with new functions. Some regulation activities during the Ottoman rule dated to the 1860s¹⁷ result from practical needs and cannot be seen as a systematic urbanism.

The pent-up energy of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie causes after the Liberation a rapid spiritual and material impetus and is asking for a relevant urban model. The radical civilisation choice of the politics and the lack of domestic experts lead consequently to the implementation of foreign models. The political and intellectual elite are conscious of the necessity of their implementation, but it is often accompanied by a lack of understanding from the majority of the population. In this sense the implemented models have to be considered with a pre-modern genius loci, presented by the ethnically and religiously separated communities of the “mahalas”. As a result of this meeting of contradictions, a specifically composed urban heritage in the meaning of the Nara Document on Authenticity is formed.¹⁸

The first signs of a planned building up of the settlements are the works of foreign topographers, technicians and engineers.¹⁹ The establishing of the administration of the Principality of Bulgaria and the Province of Eastern Rumelia goes hand in hand with the assembling of the first municipal technical departments. The work begins with the triangular and polygon networking of the settlements, followed by cadastres. Just three years after the Liberation, the Decree for Regulation of the Private Buildings in the Towns becomes effective. It regularizes the position of the chief architect and the chief engineer.²⁰ The absence of educated domestic technical staff orders the Direction of Public Buildings, the later Ministry, to open a two-years-school for geodesy. Very soon

in 1893, the parliament establishes the Ministry for Public Buildings, Streets and Transportation. Parallel to it the Law for Building the Settlements comes in effect in 1892. It is indicative for the spirit of the time that in 1895 a building ban is imposed on settlements not having legal regulation plans at one's disposal. In 1909, the new Professional School for Building Engineering and Geodesy is opened and made two years later to a Polytechnic School. A new governmental Department of Planning and Development of the Settlements is established as part of at the Direction of Public Buildings as the first institution specialised in urbanism.

The short overview shows the speedy implementation of the urbanism discipline. The role of the foreign experts, predominantly from Central Europe, is hereby decisive.²¹ The striving after Europeanizing achieves a great success, despite of the turbulent political disturbances,²² but the speed of instituting of the urbanism overtakes the process of establishing a civil society.²³ Even if very thin, the educated elite are dominating in the public life and press towards a total rebuild of the oriental image of the settlements. The unripe normative base and the lack of experience lead to a free application of the European planning practice and to an intuitive proceeding. The rapid change of the urban shape serves the expectation of the elite, but is strange for the majority of the population.²⁴ Consequently, the urbanism starts in Bulgaria as an imported discipline and as a governmental top-down program.²⁵ The created urban plans are, of course, not just the result of a formal application of European design patterns, but also of a deep transformation of the society. The factors defining the attempts in urbanism are concerning three points: the application of foreign models, the persistent life tradition of the majority of the population and a dynamic socio-cultural and demographic change. These contradictive factors give rise to some more than one attempt in planning.

The attempt of the total transformation is presented significantly by the plan of Stara Zagora.²⁶ The plan is designed without regard to the inherited urban patterns applying the model of the "American regulation". It materialises the spirit of the rationalism and complies with the atmosphere of departure in Bulgaria. The phenomenon of the total change based on a singular personal idea is made possible because of the political motivations. Although the plan presents an isolated example of extreme innovation, it replaces the anonymous urban organisation of the past and positions the urbanism as an essential part of the public life.²⁷ The plan for Plovdiv, on the contrary marks the attempt of respecting the inherited urban pattern and its continuous extension.²⁸ The composition consists of historic and newly added blocks, organised by new tangential main streets. The plan responds to both the preservation of the pre-modern urban heritage and the prognosis of a speedy growth. Sofia's urbanism marks itself a third way of a planning model: It combines the consideration of the main street directions from the pre-modern time, the total transformation of the network of secondary streets, and finally, the continuous extension of the territory.

Fig. 4
The regulation plan of Amadier
and Roubal, related to the
urban structure of the Ottoman
settlement, 1879.
(Archive Ganchev)

КАДАСТРАЛЕН ПЛАН НА СОФИЯ ОТ 1879



The nomination of Sofia for capital city²⁹ is a decisive precondition for its speedy growth.³⁰ The role of the capital is realised and its redesign arises to a question of national prestige. The first regulation plan is elaborated by S. Amadier and Vladimir Roubal in 1879.³¹ The plan is based on the cadastre drawn by foreign experts in the same year and defines the city edges responding more or less to the defensive trench from the Ottoman period.³² The planners keep the main ancient directions to Thessaloniki, Pautalia (Kyustendil), Germanea (Separeva Banya), Trimontium (Plovdiv), Nansos (Nis) and the traces of the ancient *Cardo* and *Decumanus*, defining the middle of the settlement over the centuries. As a result of this adaptive attempt to the basic pre-modern patterns, the newly designed representative central place crowned by the Sv. Nedelya Church, corresponds with the location of the ancient Roman Forum and removes just a little bit southwards from the core of the Ottoman settlement. The added surrounding boulevard is a recurring element in the nineteenth century's European urbanism repeated in Sofia and is the precursor of the future ring road. The plan establishes the radial-ring-model of Sofia and its mono-centrism. The organic medieval quarters in between the main streets and the ring road are regardless transformed into an orthogonal grid. The change of the spatial and architectural character starts immediately after the Liberation and is accomplished more or less in four decades. The destroying of the Ottoman traces is a calculated spiritual act of power, demonstrating the cultural demarcation from the orient and the orientation to the west. For a short period the oriental images are wiped out and the accents of the modern way of life arise. The opening of the closed mahalas to the newly designed public spaces, until erasing fully from the city's shape, introduces the process of urban integration. The new regulation creates the spatial preconditions for the formation and functioning of a civil society and the protection of its interests.

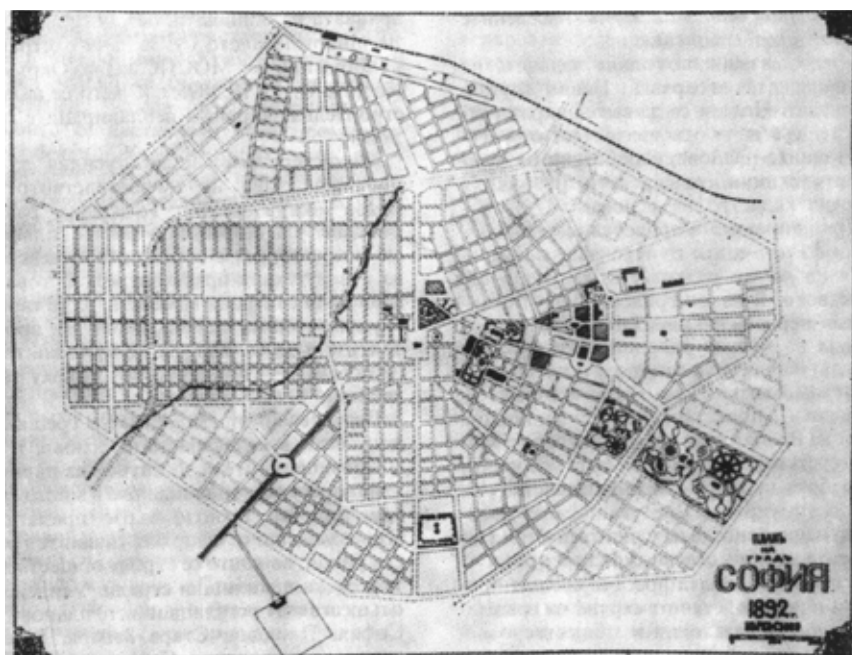


Fig. 5
The regulation plan, 1892.
(Museum of Sofia)

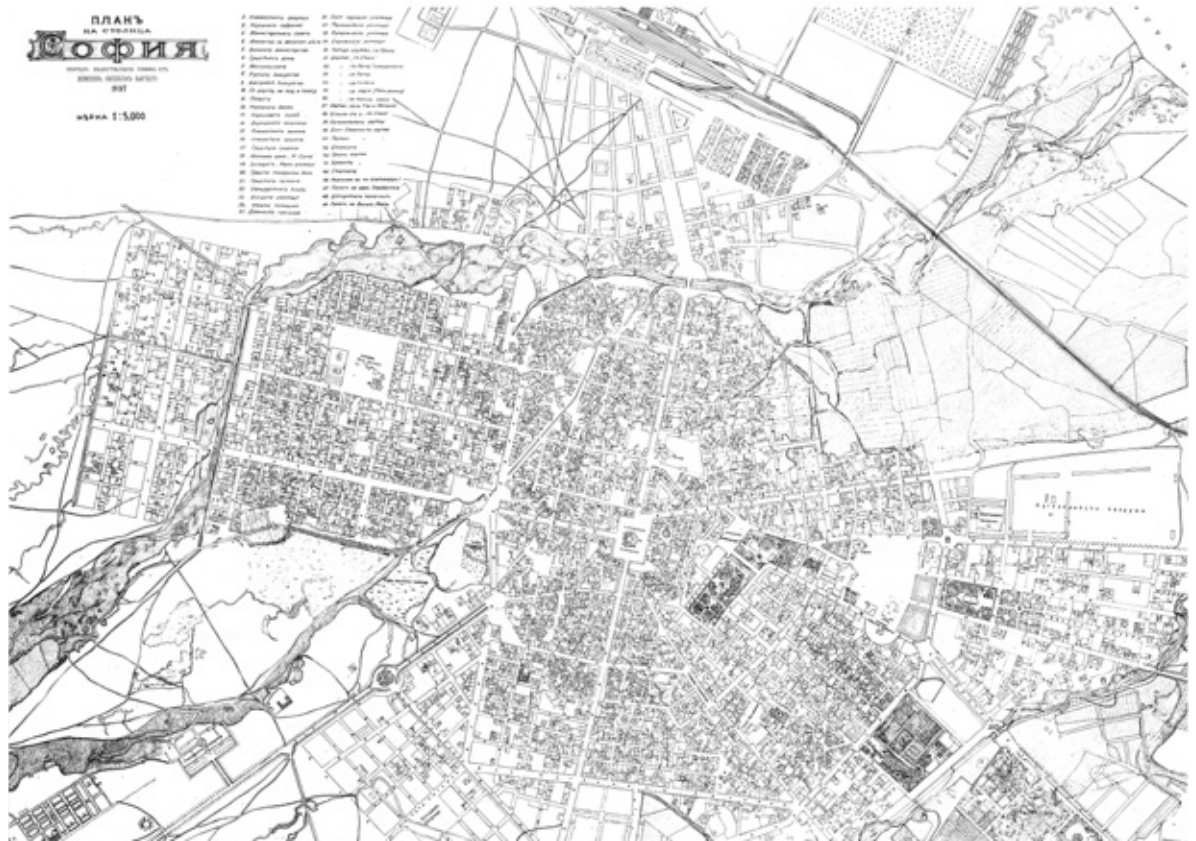


Fig. 6
The cadastral map of Bartel,
1897. (Museum of Sofia)

In the period until 1897, there is an ambiguity concerning the authors of the next cadastral and regulation plans for Sofia. This can be attributed to the pure archive documentations and the imprecise interpretations in the sources. The Department of Cadastre and Regulation at the Municipality appoints in 1888 Johann Bartel as chief topographer to elaborate a new cadastral map. He equips the team with a number of Austrian technicians.³³ It isn't clear if a result is reported in 1891, but a year later, in 1892, a new regulation plan is prepared, not coming into effect. The remark in some sources, that the author of the plan is unknown is questionable, because in this period the head of the department is Nikola Nachev and the department is occupied by the above mentioned Austrians. A lot of the ideas in the regulation plan are suggesting that it is a work of experts, who are familiar with the Central European urban design. The regulation plan from 1892 is an unfinished work that shows a richness of ideas, which surprise even today. The basic decisions of the first regulation plan are developed continuously with great capability. The ring road is designed as an ensemble of characteristic public places and gardens, representative buildings, monuments and bridges located along.

In the Bulgarian sources there are once again some absurdities concerning the contribution of the Austrian experts to a regulation plan from 1897. The same year's cadastre map in the scale 1:5.000 is attributed definitely to Wilhelm Bartel.

The cadastre shows that the basic decisions from previous plans are already realised. The ring road and Sofia's centre are completed. The orthogonal street grid is executed, but it is interesting to see the chaotic configuration of some inherited buildings inside the newly organised orthogonal blocks.³⁴ Thanks to the efforts of the team of Austrians, today we are able to understand the speed of urban change in the end of the nineteenth century. The cadastre is therefore an important and reliable source.³⁵ But the fact, that in the same year a new regulation plan including the surrounding agricultural belt is elaborated in 1:10.000, remains unnoticed. The content of this plan is by all means the work of Bartel, despite of the fact that the plan is signed by other people.³⁶ The plan foresees the trace of a secondary, outer ring road, which realisation puts to an end a phase of urbanism, very important for the future capital's development. At the end of the nineteenth century the construction of the Central Railway Station in the north and some new quarters expand the city's territory to 7.3 sq. km. The urbanized territory coincides in 1900 with the present day urban core.³⁷

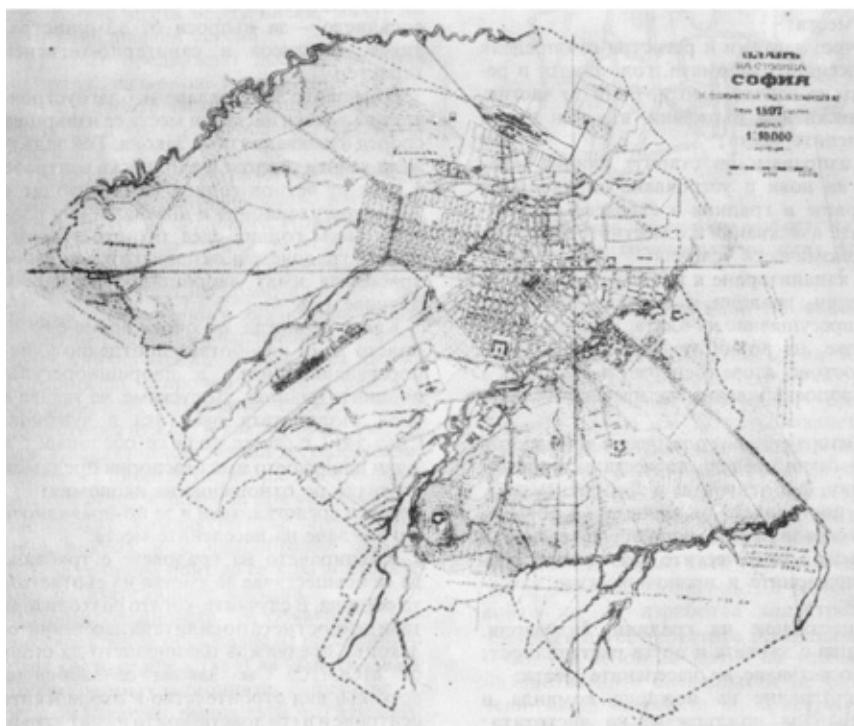


Fig. 7
The regulation plan, 1897.
(Museum of Sofia)



There is without doubt an analogy between Sofia's ring road and Vienna's Ringstrasse, because of both the dimensions and the principles of composing.³⁸ The design of the places is similar: the compositional axes are oriented at right angles to the ring road. The radial streets of Sofia are located as transverse axes to the ring road and can be interpreted as the Vienna's places along the Ringstrasse, getting this way an important compositional role. Despite of the similarities between Sofia's and Vienna's ring roads, there are differences too. The ring road of Sofia is more the result of a generous planning in the end of the nineteenth century and less a historic trace, as like in Vienna. It is planned in the course of an "outer" urban extension, which is the essential difference to the Vienna's Ringstrasse, which is built on the former Glacis, the fortification belt between the medieval city and the surrounding towns. It is consequently an "inner" expansion in the course of the incorporation of the surrounding communities into Vienna in the middle of the nineteenth century.³⁹ To see the design of Sofia's ring road just as a repetition of the Vienna's example would be incomplete, because the topography and the river flows are as well important preconditions for its lay out. Also the consideration of the medieval defensive trench is a point for the tracing of the ring road, especially on the southern city edges.

Sofia's urbanism until the World War I manifest two phases: The regulation focuses on the modernisation of the Ottoman settlement in the first phase. It is a large scaled intervention, which rationalised and intensified the use of the territory.⁴⁰ The first phase is closely related to the activities of the foreign experts, who accelerate the Europeanizing of the settlements image. Their contributions are in the professional sense decisive and trend-setting, but their work is

Fig. 8
The three basic elements of the urban model of Sofia: the historic radial directions, the newly planned ring roads and the orthogonal grid of streets displacing the ottoman patterns. (Doytchinov/Petev)



also of public and political relevance and an important cultural implication in the dynamic developing Bulgarian society. The urban design of the capital city, which combines both the continuum and the innovation, is even today an important identification for the European belonging of the country. The second phase of urbanism covers the time between the 1890s and WW I. It is characterised with the territorial expansion and the planning activities of the first Bulgarian architects and engineers, who have graduated in European higher schools and academies.⁴¹

In relation to the second phase the influence of Camillo Sitte's⁴² principles of the art of building cities have to be mentioned. They are very popular and often quoted in that time.⁴³ The streets and places of Sofia do not solve just pure pragmatic problems, but they reflect on than actual artistic ideas. In the composition of the public spaces the proportional dependences defined by H. Martens and A. Tirsch, as well as the gilt edge proportions, can be identified. The streets and places are in characteristic functional relations of their width, the height of the building frame and the deepness of the perspective. There is a constant characteristic in the perspective change in the ring-road directions and the radials in the frame of the five to ten minutes pedestrian isochronal.⁴⁴



Fig. 9: The boulevard-like northward prolongation of the antique Cardo to the central railway station.

Fig. 10: An area view of the Alexander Nevski Cathedral Place.

**Fig. 11: The Parliament Building and the Alexander-Nevski Cathedral forming the representative part of the center .
(all Figures on this Page: Archive Ganchev)**

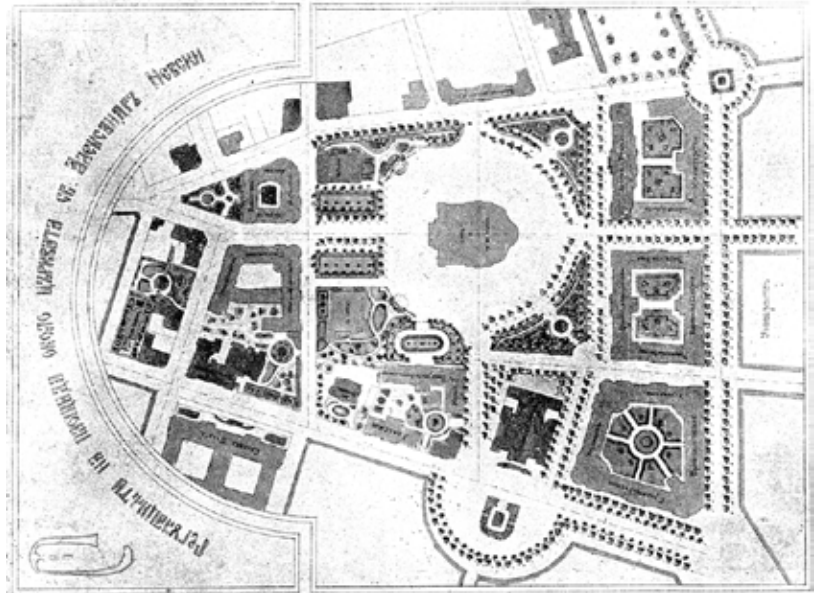
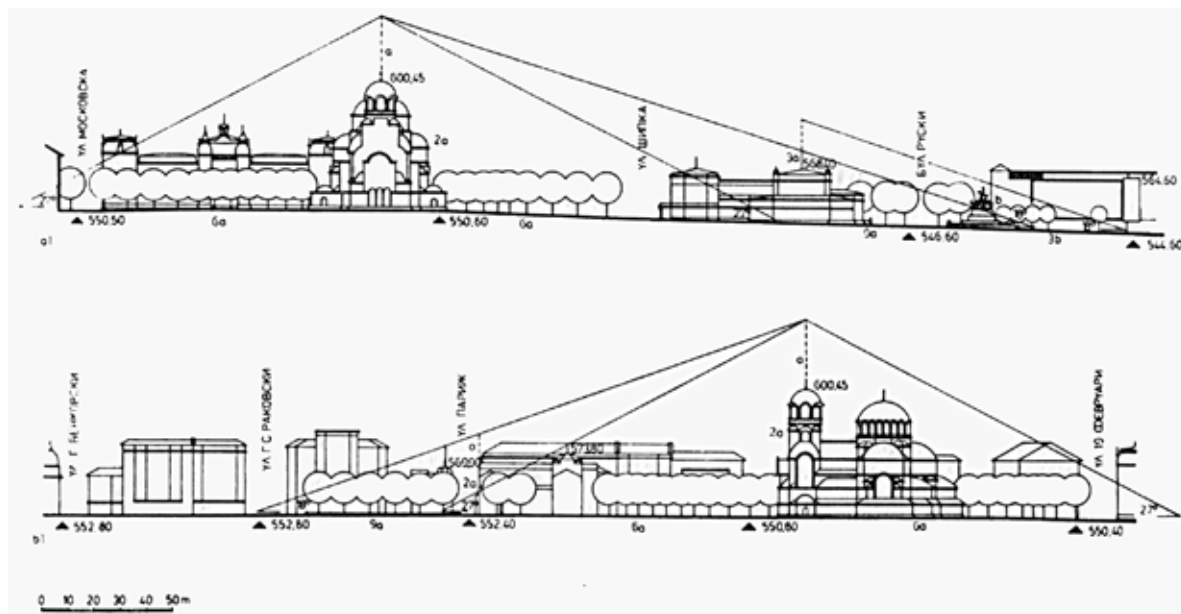


Fig. 12
One of the contributions to the competition for the completing of the representative center in the spirit of Camillo Sitte's urban design ideas. (Archive Ganchev)

The “art to build cities” illustrates in the case of Sofia a model, which is from the nowadays’ point of view sustained concerning the economic development, the social balance and the respect of the milieu.

The basic characteristics of Sofia are formed in the end of the nineteenth century and are defined by two combined communication systems: The historic radials, oriented to the hot mineral water spring⁴⁵ in the city centre and the ring roads as an artistic design product. The orthogonal grid of the quarters between the radials and the ring roads are the third element of the composition. The unity of the three elements is achieved with the design of places, bridges and green areas in the junctions. The classicistic spirit of the composition is completed with a corresponding proportional architectural frame. The more detailed urban analyses show both canonical proportion dependences as well as singular spatial characteristic.⁴⁶ Sofia’s urban core composition reflects the traces of the antiquity, the medieval times and the modernity. We can identify in it the traces of a harmonious evolutionary development, as well as of momentary implemented international urban design models.⁴⁷

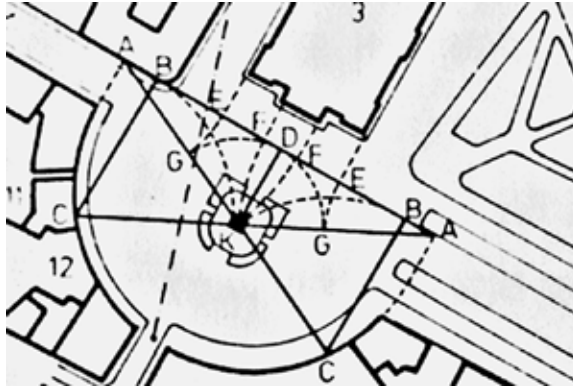
The systematic urbanism suffers from a setback as a result of the demographic crises in the wake of the WW I caused by the unprecedented mass migration influx from Macedonia, Thrace and the Morava Region. The problems are stimulated also by the speedy industrialization, which is strengthening additionally the migration to the capital. The city is practically surrounded by refugee quarters and slums that spring up on undeveloped territory. Although the authorities start with delay to regulate some of these territories, they are not able to get the situation under control. The data from the census 1943 show that the people born in Sofia constitute just 31.5% of the population. Also the urbanized territory reaches in 1938 45 sq. km and remains unchanged



until the period of 1945-1947.⁴⁸ The population rises between the world wars from 100.000 up to 400.000.⁴⁹ The speedy urban growth sets an end of the applied European master plan practice of the nineteenth century, no more able to serve as a regulation instrument. The war consequences bear new problems and provoke the search for new solutions. The 1930s are characterised in the same time by the optimism of economic upturn. But economic growth entails a building boom and another, as yet unknown reorganisation of the city, primarily characterised by housing construction. This development the city doesn't get under control until 1934,⁵⁰ when a technocratic and competent major is appointed and a very fertile and active planning period starts.⁵¹

The effort to control the city growth leads to a regulation plan that takes the form of a development strategy and exhibits the main features of modernistic urbanism. The elaboration of a General Town Planning Scheme of Greater Sofia is decided with the Decree of Sofia in 1934. A number of European architects declare their interest to do the work.⁵² The Bulgarian authorities entrust Adolf Mussman⁵³ in 1935 with the elaboration of the plan without holding a competition.⁵⁴ The Mussmann-plan is an up-to-day attempt to solve the problems of the capital and it is the first theoretic planning approach.⁵⁵ The urban development is based according to the concept, on the enforcement of the infrastructure and the public transportation system, including tangential railways and bypassing highways. The ideas about the green system are of special interest and a new step in Bulgaria's urbanism: Green wedges are foreseen to reach the city center from the outskirts. Mussman's view on urbanism is a modernistic one. Formulations like "harmony of the whole" and principles like "the urban planner must be a creator who forecast the development of the city of the future and open possibilities" are evident for his modernistic approach.⁵⁶

Fig. 13, 14
The analyses of the
representative center by H.
Ganchev find out regularities
in the ensemble design
composition. (Ganchev)



The Mussman-plan is a subject of criticism by both public and experts. The motivations for the objections vary in character. Some of them are strictly professional and are related to the fact that the author isn't acquainted very well with the peculiarities of the Bulgarian reality and of Sofia in particular. The most discussions are born by the idea for the redesigning of the city center, because Mussman doesn't respect the ensembles from the turn of the century. Serious discussions arise from the modernistic idea of the total functional division.⁵⁷ Zheleva-Martins concludes: "Despite the fact that the plan of Mussman is not realized because of WW II, the contents and all the discussions it causes have an exclusively fruitful influence on the attitude to urbanism issues of both professionals and citizens. That is how the spirit of modernistic urbanism with all its concepts, criteria and standards, come in touch with the town planning problems of Sofia."⁵⁸ The discussion on the plan is an expression of a ripe civil society: The urbanism is no more seen as a technocratic decision making, but as the result of a wider professional and public discussion. The post-war political change interrupts this process. Many of the ideas of Mussman are however realized later on even if changed and adapted, but his name is not mentioned because of political reasons.

Despite of the design qualities, Sofia's urbanism policy is from the very beginning a controversial one. It is characterized until WW I with a very fast implementation speed, reflecting both the expectations of the intelligence strata, dominating politically and the need of adequate shape for the dynamic changing society. The regulation plans are a cultural implementation and an accelerating factor for the establishing of the civil society. Sofia's after-liberation urbanism can be evaluated from the distance of time as the right instrument for a sustainable and adequate urban development. But it is in a conspicuous contradiction to the resistant pre-modern way of life of the predominantly uneducated rural population streaming to the capital. The realization of the

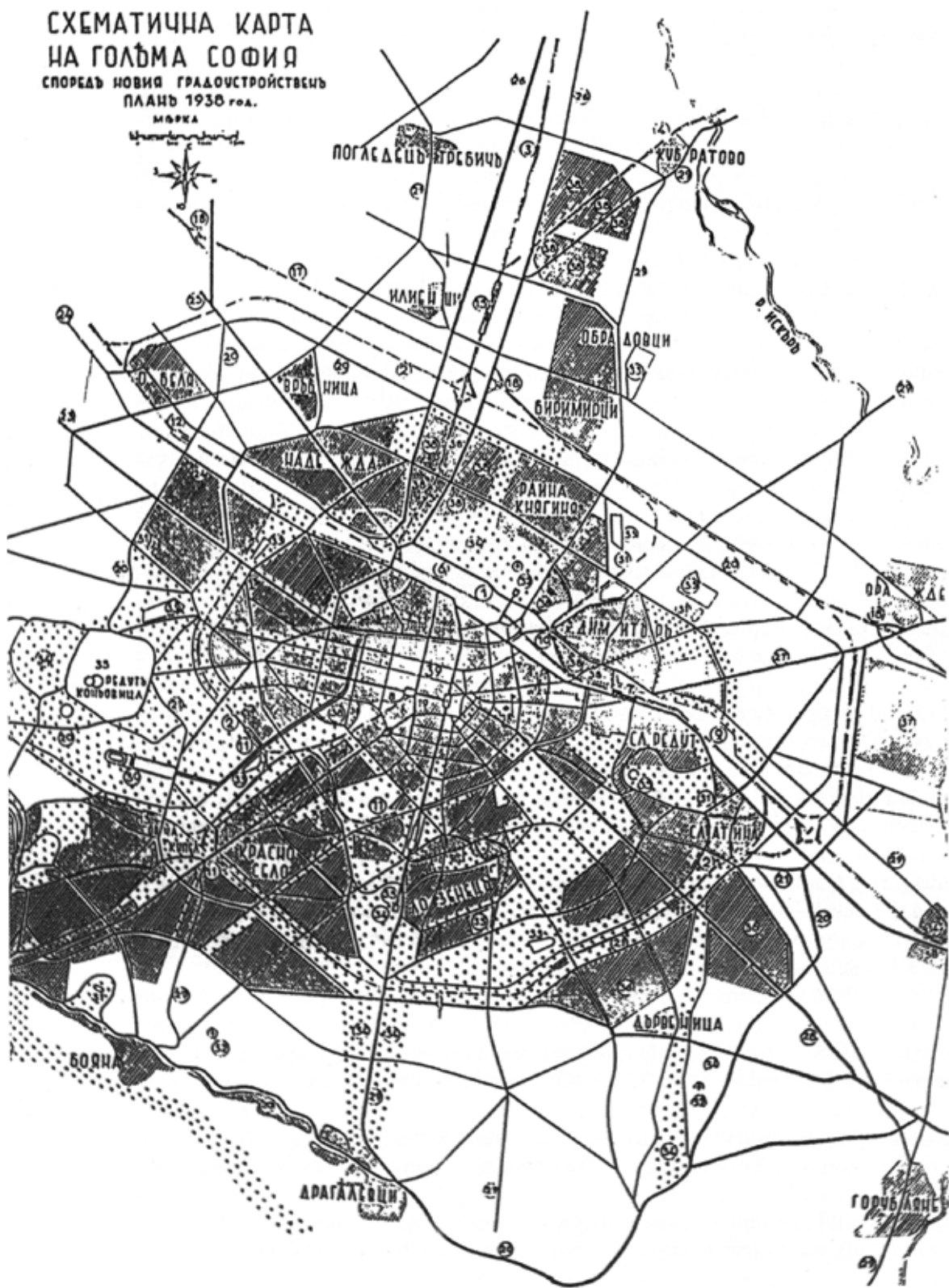


Fig. 15
The Mussmann-plan, 1838,
foresees green wedges to
reach the city center from
the mountain Vitosha.
(Reproduction, Avramov)

new classicistic street pattern in Sofia is overrunning the exchange of the building stock and is causing a “fractured” urban image, best documented by the cadastral map of Bartel from 1995. The technocratic decision making of the planners and politicians can be described as a kind of “intellectual dictatorship” for a speedy break-up of the inherited urban shape, supporting on this way the decline of the pre-modern life traditions and confronting them with the shapes of modernity. The speed of the urban transformation provokes social problems and establishes the urbanism as a pure technocratic phenomenon. Even if in the end of the 1930s the initial signs of a more public integrated urbanism are arising, the character of the planning discipline cannot change in the short time until the WW II. The urbanism is hardly getting over the destructions of WW II and becomes very soon addicted to the dictatorship embrace of the post-war communist era.

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 - 2 Suggestion for Declaration of the Objects of Architectural Heritage from the Period 1878-1944, National Institute of Cultural Heritage Preservation, Sofia 1977.
 - 3 The researches on the “Demarcation of the Historic Parts of Sofia” (1984) and the “Concept for the Preservation and Adaptation of the Historic Parts of Sofia” (1987) are both ordered by the Department of Architecture and Urbanism of the Municipality of Sofia.
 - 4 Дойчинов, Г./Х. Ганчев: *Старите градски части на София и подходът към тях*, НИПК София 1989 (Doitchinov, G./H. Ganchev: *The old parts of Sofia and the approach to them*, NIPK Sofia 1989).
 - 5 Попов, А. а.о. (Ed.): *София. 120 years as capital of Bulgaria*, Academic Publishing House Sofia 2001.
 - 6 Ганчев, Х./Г. Дойчинов: *Градоустройството в България 1878–1918*, in: *Архитектура* 2/2001, 19–23 (Ganchev, H./G. Doitchinov: *The urbanism in Bulgaria 1878-1918*, in: *Arhitektura* 2/2001, 19-13).
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 - 8 Ficker, F: *Entwicklung und Stand der Kunstgeschichte in Bulgarien. Versuch eines Überblicks*, in: *Kunstchronik*, Juni 1995, 218.
 - 9 confer: Аврамов (Avramov), 1987, 8.
 - 10 The liberation is the result of the Treaty of San Stefano, March 3rd 1878. The war is known as the “Liberation War”. The post-liberation Bulgaria is defined as the „Third State of Bulgaria”, following the first (681-1018) and the second (1185-1422) ones.
 - 11 Written by the monk Paissij in the Hilandar-Monastery of Athos.
 - 12 confer: Ficker, 1995, 218.
 - 13 Modernization of the ottoman government initiated by sultan Abdulmecid with the declarations of the Gjulhab Hatt-i Sherif 1839 and the Hatt-i Hümayunu 1856.
 - 14 The state frontiers of Bulgaria defined with the Treaty of San Stefano include the regions of the Bulgarian Orthodox Autocephaly Church. The frontiers are corrected at the Congress of Berlin, 1878 and Bulgaria is divided into three units: the autonomous Principality of Bulgaria in the northern part of the country (Moesia, Southern Dobrudgea and Serdica regions), the Province of Eastern Rumelia (the Thracian region) as an Ottoman satellite state and Macedonia, which falls completely back into the Ottoman Empire.
 - 15 The Declaration of the Independence and the transition from a Principality to a Kingdom, September 6th 1908.
 - 16 confer: Генчев, Н: *Българското Възраждане*, София 1988, 14 (Genchev, N.: *The Bulgarian Revival*, Sofia 1988, 14).

- 17 confer: Аврамов (Avramov), 1987, 10.
- 18 The Nara Document of Authenticity is drafted at the Conference in relation to the World Heritage Convention, held at Nara, Japan, November 1994 in cooperation with UNESCO, ICCROM and ICOMOS: *13. Depending on the nature of the cultural heritage, its cultural context, and its evolution through time, authenticity judgements may be linked to the worth of a great variety of sources of information. Aspects of the sources may include form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors. The use of these sources permits elaboration of the specific artistic, historic, social, and scientific dimensions of the cultural heritage being examined.*
- 19 The topographic surveying of the country starts during the Russian-Turkish War and is completed by Russian military engineers, 1883. Confer: Аврамов (Avramov), 1987, 10
- 20 The decree consists of 74 articles and regulates in four chapters the diverse aspects of the urbanism.
- 21 The nomination of the princes Alexander Joseph von Battenberg (1857-1893) and later on of Ferdinand Maximilian Karl Leopold Maria von Sachsen, Cobourg und Gotha (1861-1948) is indicative for the geopolitical orientation of the country and explains the predominant number of experts from Central Europe practicing in Bulgaria.
- 22 Between 1878 and 1918 four wars are carried on, two monarchs abdicate and 29 governments change.
- 23 confer: Höpken, W.: *Stadt und Zivilgesellschaft in Südosteuropa: Anmerkungen aus historischer Perspektive*, in: Sterbling, A. (Ed.): *Zivilgesellschaftliche Entwicklungen in Südosteuropa*, Otto Sagner München 2009, 112-157.
- 24 confer: Heppner, H.: *Hauptstädte in Südosteuropa*, Böhlau Wien 1994, 22.
- 25 confer: Doytchinov, G.: *Städtebau in Bulgarien vom 10. bis zum 21. Jahrhundert*, in: Bohn, T./M.-J. Calic (Ed.): *Urbanisierung und Stadtentwicklung in Südosteuropa*, Otto Sagner München 2010, 185-196.
- 26 The town of Stara Zagora is burned down by the Turkish army on July 19th 1877. Just 1089 of the former 4500 buildings are over and just 10650 from the former 25460 inhabitants survive. The author of the plan is Lubor Bayer, an architectural technician of Czech origin. Confer: Димов, Л.: *Първите пионери по планирането на градовете*, in: *Годишник Национален политехнически музей* 11/1981, 147–160 (Dimov, L.: *The first pioneers in urban planning*, in: *National Polytechnical Museum* 11/1981, 147-160).
- 27 confer: Аврамов (Avramov), 1987.
- 28 The town of Plovdiv is the interim capital of the province of Eastern Rumelia. The author of the first plan, 1896, is Josef Vaclav Sniter (1852-1914), an architect of Czech origin.
- 29 Sofia is nominated by the Great Parliament for Capital City of the Principality of Bulgaria on March 22nd 1878. Confer: Димов (Dimov): 1981, 147–160.
- 30 On the eve of the Liberation the town occupies 2.8 sq. km, but only 75% is built up. By evidence of church books before the Liberation the Bulgarians in the city are about 6000. The first census in the Principality of Bulgaria is carried on December 31st 1880. According to it Sofia has 20 501 inhabitants, of whom those born in the city itself are 11 395. According to the same census the biggest city of the Principality in 1880 is Ruse, with 26 167 inhabitants. If we take into consideration the than Eastern Rumelia, the largest city according to the census of December 31st 1884 is Plovdiv, with 33 442 inhabitants. The next census is carried out on December 31st 1887. In spite of almost ten years, Sofia has 33 032 inhabitants, still has 2000 citizens less than Plovdiv. According to the third census of December 31st 1892, Sofia already holds first place with 46 593 inhabitants. Confer: Geshev, G./P. Slaveykov/H. Ganev: *Urbanised territories*, in: Popov, 2001, 83 and Hristov, E.: *Demographic development*, in: Popov, 2001, 78.
- 31 Sofia's regulation starts with Decree No 124 of the Town Governor from March 9th 1878. The Governor, Staff-Captain Pauli is appointed by the Russian Military Command.
- 32 The first topographic picture is by the Russian military topographer Komenski. According to Avramov the cadaster is prepared by Amadier, Mishel and Sheks. Zheleva-Martins mentions in opposite Prosek to be the first ordered with the cadaster. Amadier, Roubal and Prosek are experts of Austrian resp. Czech origin.
- 33 The technicians are the Austrians brothers Johann, Wilhelm and Ludwig Bartel, and the drawer Joseph Oberbauer (1853-1926). The drawings of Oberbauer are of historic importance as documentations of the initial spatial and architectural situation, totally lost in the course of the urban modernization.
- 34 The cadastral map documents, that the new orthogonal street system is realized in a short term, while the replacement of the inherited chaotic buildings from the Ottoman period

- by new ones is behind time.
- 35 confer: Николова, Ж.: *Един уникален план*, in: *София, град в полите на Витоша*, Municipality of Sofia, II 2001, 14-17 (Nikolova, J.: *A unique plan*, in: *Sofia, a city in the feet of Vitosha*, Municipality of Sofia, II 1001, 14-17).
- 36 confer: Николова, Ж. (Nikolova), 2001.
- 37 confer: Geshev, G./P. Slavevkov/H. Ganev, 2001, 83.
- 38 confer: Doytchinov, G.: *Die Verwirklichung des Ringstraßensystems in Sofia*, in: *Berichte zur Raumforschung und Raumplanung*, 33 1-2 1989, 26-34.
- 39 confer: Wurzer, R.: *Planung und Verwirklichung der Ringstraßenzone in Wien*, Institut für Baukunst, Denkmalpflege und Kunstgeschichte Vienna 1986, 65.
- 40 confer: Дойчинов (Doytchinov), 1989.
- 41 confer: Аврамов (Avramov), 1987.
- 42 Sitte, C.: *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen*, Carl Graeser Vienna 1901.
- 43 Sitte's principles of the artistic urbanism are the keynote in the three winning competition projects for the Cathedral Place Alexander-Nevski, 1904. The contribution of the architect Kiril Marichkov expresses best Sitte's influence.
- 44 Ганчев, Х.: *Улиците и площадите на София. Планово и обемно – пространствено проучване*, КК-НИПК София 1983. (Ganchev, H.: *The streets and places of Sofia. A research on the plans and spaces*, КК NIPK Sofia 1983).
- 45 The mineral water spring is the fundamental factor for the establishing of the ancient settlement.
- 46 The „golden section“, dependences defined by C. Sitte and H. Martens, the method of the similar rectangles. Confer: Ганчев, Х.: *Теоретико-методологични изводи за реконструкцията на улиците и площадите на София*, (Ganchev, H.: *Theoretical and methodological insights for the reconstruction of the streets and places of Sofia*), Dissertation, University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy Sofia, 1991, 55-57.
- 47 confer: The Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas, adopted by the ICOMOS General Assembly 1987 (Washington Charter): *All urban communities, whether they have developed gradually over time or have been created deliberately, are an expression of the diversity of societies throughout history*.
- 48 Geshev, 2001, 84.
- 49 ib., 87.
- 50 In 1934 the population enumerate 287 096 people and the urbanized territory is 29,9 sq. km.
- 51 Ivan Ivanov, engineer and mayor of Sofia, 1934-1944.
- 52 The architects applying are Henry Prost, Jean Royer and Alfred Agash (France), Hermann Jansen, Paul Bonatz and Adolf Mussman (Germany) and Marcello Piacentini (Italy).
- 53 Adolf Mussman (1880-1956) is professor of urbanism at the Dresden Polytechnics and director of the German Institute of Urbanism. He graduates in architecture in Munich, 1904, and is author of the regulation plans for Bremen, Düsseldorf, Breslau (Wroclaw), Zagreb, the resort Mondorf in Luxemburg and for parts of Leipzig.
- 54 There is the opinion that the decision is taken due to the pro-German orientation of the country. The fact that the dominant part of the Bulgarian architects and engineers have graduated in Germany is of importance too.
- 55 The plan is presented to the municipal council in the end of 1937 and approved with Decree from April 12th 1938.
- 56 Zheleva-Martins, D./Y. Furkov: *Town planning evolution (1878-1938)*, in: Popov, 2001, 472-474.
- 57 ib., 473.
- 58 ib., 474.

Miruna Stroe

Bucharest's urban planning instruments during the communist regime: systematization sketches, plans, projects and interventions

Introduction

The focus of the article will be the urban planning regulation instruments at work during the communist period in Bucharest. As the previous articles pointed out¹, the modernization of Bucharest employed imported urban principles from Western Europe, reshaped and refined to match the reality of a Balkan town. The effort to overcome the historic disparity between planning in Bucharest and its European models can be observed from the first documented regulations regarding urban embellishment and hygiene of the Organic Statute (1834/1835, a precursor law to a constitution) and all the way to the last Directive Urban Development Plan (1935/1939) before WW II. The ambition of the administration, in conjunction with the apparition of a professional milieu dedicated to urban planning² proved fertile for the establishment of urban development principles for Bucharest that were still valid decades later. We shall discuss further how some of these principles were brought back to attention at different times during the communist regime.

Through the influence of “founding fathers” such as Cincinat Sfințescu³, the ideas, methods and institutional organisms active in the West were imported and adapted to the local context. Up until the Second World War, a very active and fertile period of theoretical debate put forward a series of strategic plans for Bucharest, which were incrementally aiming to change Bucharest into a truly European capital.

The change of political regime from parliamentary monarchy to communist republic under the watchful eye of Moscow, together with the need for reconstruction, resulted in an alignment to soviet urban principles. This article is not the place to discuss the Western filiation of many of these ideas, disguised as original soviet science, though this is a valid point. We are only going to point

out that for the next decades, up until the 1970's, the urban development ideas would come via soviet professional literature and even direct counseling, while the local original theoretical corpus was rather timid.

The "socialist reconstruction of Bucharest" was a collection of ambitious ideas about a socialist town, yet lacking large-scale strategic thinking, radically opposed to its former representation role as seat of the monarch. There were many reasons for a delay in producing a first urban plan for a socialist realist Bucharest, including the 1952 reorganization of the architectural profession and economic restraints. Fact is that there are no large-scale interventions from the socialist realist period in Bucharest, only local and mostly discreet ones, built until towards the end of the 1950's.

The return to modernist principles, advocated for by the new USSR general secretary Nikita Khrushchev, was a more visible period in the urban development of Bucharest. A temporary economic equilibrium reached after the war, an ever so slight attempt at detaching from Moscow, a stronger professional milieu designing in a style they preferred (modernism is recognizable, though not named as such), all these point towards a new episode of synchronization to Western urbanism. It is the time of large scale housing ensembles, representative squares and new boulevards. The scale and extent of the interventions (not only in Bucharest, but also the rest of the country) prompt a change in the urban design instrument, in 1959 - enter the "systematization sketch": a simplified, politically easy to control and modify regulation method.

The recurring themes of urban planning in Bucharest were, in different orders and proportions: new housing ensembles and their position in the city (peripheral or central), the position of industrial developments and representative urban spaces. Other issues were concerned with the limitation of the city perimeter and, a favorite theme of the time, erasing the difference between the city center and the periphery.

Politically, this period spans the final years of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's position as general secretary and the beginning of Nicolae Ceaușescu's rule, before his authoritarian manifestations in the late 1970's and 1980's. From the economic and cultural point of view, this period is regarded as one of relative liberalization, with some degree of freedom and welfare. The professional milieu reached a certain maturity that, together with a reasonable level of information on contemporary architecture, which was available through publications, led to the expression of critical points of view quite similar to those circulated in the West.

But all the positive signs one could identify would soon turn to a bleak reality. Starting from the famous visit Ceaușescu made in China and North Korea in 1971, the regime became more and more centered on its leader. Ceaușescu himself got more involved in any decision and urban development of Bucharest was his

favorite subject. All professional opinions faded in front of the will of the leader.

The last decade of the communist regime in Romania is probably the most traumatic period of the development of Bucharest. Reduced to executing minions, the architects were a compliant mass; only a few individuals took a step back from being part of the authoritarian vision for Bucharest, while most were involved because of their position in the state owned design institutes. Beside the megalomaniac project of the “House of the People”, one other stands out as a metaphorical image of the times: the channeling of the river Dâmbovița: an ostentatious effort meant to show the power of ruling over nature. The massive interventions of the 1980’s can be interpreted in the lineage of *founding gestures* of pre-modern political rulers. Ceaușescu’s involvement is so pervasive, that it is difficult to speak about the urban development of Bucharest as the result of a professional gesture. It is very difficult for researchers to position their historical accounts beyond the trauma of the city and Ceaușescu’s figure.

These are the main frames of this historical summary that we shall discuss further.

A terminological explanation is necessary when using the term “systematization”, which is rather characteristic for the communist period and has acquired a negative connotation. The word is used to describe previous (before WWII) urban developments, but the bureaucratic, schematic and authoritarian use of the word in later decades cast a dark shadow on “systematization”. Thus we would carefully translate the names of public documents in connection to their historic periods.

The pre-existing experience in urban development

The change of the regime meant, in many aspects, a deletion of the previous experience, as one issued out of a “wrongful” social and economic order. After a period of publicly denouncing and criticizing all that was accomplished during the bourgeois regime, the inter-bellum urban planning principles (as well as architectural ones) seemed to have been forgotten. In fact, we can point out several continuity lines: some are very reasonable principles, other are recurring themes and some are downright obsessions.

It is difficult to resume a century of urban regulations in a few words but we must notice that the early regulations were part of a consistent strategy for the city. Starting with the 1834/1835 Organic Statute, on to the 1878 and 1890 building regulations and the provisions regarding boulevards and river banks, all these follow principles that were enforced until 1928 (the time of a new building regulation). This period is regarded as one that forged much of the urban character of Bucharest⁴.

In 1921 the first proper urban systematization plan for Bucharest was issued by royal decree. It represented a complex work, strategically imagined for the next 50 years. The plan proposed urban zoning, a unified and hierarchical view of the street network, building and parceling regulations, provisions regarding monuments, etc.

It is important to note that the complexity of a systematization plan was very well understood and established by the 1938 *Instructions and provisions for the elaboration of systematization plans*, which imposes three stages of such a project: *the sketch* (containing the principles), *the directive plan* (more detailed, it offers solutions) and *the alignment systematization plans* (very detailed, with alignments for buildings and streets). The project also comprised of written regulations and an administrative implementation project.⁵

One of the principles that would have an impact on future developments is the determination of a minimum and a maximum height for the buildings on boulevards and housing areas. Bucharest started out as a very spread and low city and it was believed that its urban aspect (and in the end its economic and functional aspects, as well) depended on higher buildings, at least on the main boulevards. So the height was established at minimum 8m, with a maximum dictated by the width of the adjacent street (resulting around 18m) and with possibilities for higher buildings with recessed upper floors. A certain flexibility of the regulation led to heterogenic developments regarding height.

Fig. 1
The 1935 Directive Urban Development Plan. Published in *Urbanismul*, 4/2010.



In 1935 a new *Plan Director de Sistemizare al Municipiului București* (Directive Urban Development Plan for Bucharest) was drafted and its adjacent regulations were approved by 1939. The plan stipulates the paramount importance of housing areas for the future development of the city and, by an import from the German legislation, it proposes building *classes*. These were defined by: “the minimum surface, minimum façade length and depth of the plot, building density, building grouping, overall dimension, direct perspectives”⁶. The admitted height for buildings grew again, to 24 m. The hierarchical structure of circulation was a continuous preoccupation, especially when it comes to the representative urban spaces of the boulevards.

The level of detail of the strategy, going into economic, social, hygienic and aesthetic thinking, remains remarkable, no matter the inherent issues of the project and its subsequent critiques. And, most importantly, it would prove its importance in the next years, during the communist regime, both by loud negation and by silent appropriation. Interestingly enough, the only public mention of a previous planning initiative for Bucharest at the debut of the communist period is concerned with the systematization regulations that are part of the Organic Statute, in an article by Titus Evolveanu in *Arhitectura R.P.R.*, no. 3/1954. Years later, Constantin Jugurică, one of the architects in “Proiect București”⁷ tells the story of the “rediscovery” of this plan from some old newspaper, which he brought back to attention in the late 1970’s. The surprise was to discover that some of the planning principles were still being applied, which is a sign that the political leadership had knowledge of the 1935 experience.⁸

The socialist reconstruction of Bucharest

Soon after the change of the political regime, the need for a new directive plan arose, in order to change the *bourgeois* traits of the development of the capital. In 1949 several professional groups set out to elaborate a new plan. It is important to note that for the first time the urban planners are under the observation of a superior entity, in charge with the *correct* political orientation of the project and the teams working on it. There is also a consulting team, made of members of the Romanian Workers’ Party. So the professional milieu is under political surveillance and its actions would never regain their previous freedom and acknowledgement until the 1989 revolution.

The documents presented to the higher echelons of the party approach urban problems but these seem annexes to a host of political estimations of previous developments. The critical views of all cosmopolite ideas as well as the ever-present examples of soviet experience are the new guiding lines of urban design. A document from 1951⁹ depicting the methods for the next systematization plan states that the plan must be elaborated under the guidance of the Central Committee of the Party, carefully observing the experience of Moscow and in close connection to the economic state plans.

In 1952 the architectural profession officially lost its liberal character and state owned design institutes were established. The requirement for a new development plan for the city became official through the government Decision no. 2448/1952 regarding the general plan for the socialist reconstruction of Bucharest. It is not surprising that both these important decisions were made at the same plenary party session. One change in thinking the subsequent systematization plans is the absence of a detailed building regulation added to the plan. This is mirroring the fact that all decisions were going to be centralized and in a situation where private property lacks, regulations regarding individual buildings were seen as obsolete. In fact, for a long period individual private

housing was still being built in Bucharest, without any legal documentation. The urban principles of the new systematization are briefly expressed in the decision¹⁰:

- an increase in population to 1.500.000-1.700.000 inhabitants and subsequent territorial limits;
- the preservation of the radial-annular circulation system, with improvements of boulevards and representative squares (in the case of the new monumental buildings, classical, national and soviet examples are pointed out as inspiration);
- the introduction of the metro lines;
- the channeling and navigability of the Dâmbovița river by connecting it to the Bucharest-Danube channel and by creating a wider river-bed and a reservoir at Ciurel;
- a rather ludicrous idea of constructing a fluvial port on Dâmbovița for passengers;
- monumental entrances to the city on the main roads and railroads;
- building housing on surfaces of 5-10ha., organized in *cvartals*;
- introducing the complex ensemble as the main rule of urban development; the ensembles were to be completely equipped, with a maximum density of 300 inhabitants/ha. and a maximum built area of 25-30% of the surface;
- a maximum height of the buildings expressed this time in floors, rather than meters and limited in general to 6 floors. On main boulevards the buildings could be 8-10 floors and in the periphery they could decrease to 4 floors. Individual buildings with one or two floors were restricted to the inner areas of the housing ensembles, so as not to affect the new image of the city;
- the limitation and relocation towards the periphery of most industrial areas; erasing the difference between the city center and its periphery by establishing cultural amenities and equipment in all housing ensembles; the preservation of existing architectural and natural monuments;
- the preservation of the existing parks and the establishment of new ones;
- other less important provisions for our subject.¹¹

Though this decision represents a legal framework for new systematization plans for 100 towns in Romania and there was a deadline imposed for a new plan for the capital in 1953, the plan for Bucharest was not elaborated until 1957. In fact only the systematization plan for Galați was approved in this interval. The effect of the lack of systematization was a reduced scale of the interventions at this time and their territorial limitation.

The architectural style promoted and basically enforced was socialist realism with a strong ban on modernism, functionalism or rationalism or any architectural manifestation connected to "cosmopolitanism". When planning



Fig. 2
Sketch for the General
Systematization Plan,
presented in the 5th Congress
of the International Union of
Architects (Moscow, July, 1957).
Published in *Arhitectura R.P.R.*,
7/1957.

new housing ensembles, the preferred formula is that of *cvartal*, the soviet interpretation of the neighborhood unit, monumental and decorated medium height blocks organized around courts.

Some urban planning competitions were still organized, but they affected limited areas in the city and, usually, were not concerned with a larger scale strategy (Nicolae Bălcescu square - nowadays Revolution square, Eroilor Square, monuments, etc.). They also have limited impact on the built reality.

A new instrument: the systematization sketch (1959)

The delay in drafting a new systematization plan was supposedly due to the systematization legislation being very complicated and it prompted a change - the apparition of the systematization sketch. In fact, a complex dynamic between political decision and professional dissatisfaction with the imposed socialist-realist architecture, together with economic restraints after the war proved to be an important hindrance in both urban development and building in the period.

But after 1954 a huge political change was underway - the *destalinization* following the death of Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev's advance to power. This had a remarkable effect on architecture, prompting a transition back to modernism or, as they could call it, rational architecture. Of course, urban planning principles changed as well, towards a species of modernist urban planning: new housing ensembles organized into micro-districts (*microraiion*) with basic amenities. In fact, housing for workers becomes the main element in configuring the city. It is the mass that produces neighborhoods and districts, but also the representative building for new boulevards and urban squares. In Romania the transition back to modernism happened over a few years, with an official acknowledgement by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej in 1958, four years after Khrushchev's famous speech criticizing the exaggerations of socialist-realist architecture.

Before moving on to a brief presentation of the relevant projects of the beginning of the 1960's, we must comment on the systematization sketch, presented in the *Arhitectura R.P.R.* journal under the title: "O importantă hotărîre privind activitatea de sistematizare a oraşelor" (An important decision regarding urban systematization)¹².

The new instrument was meant to allow for a much easier way to approve a general plan, which was no longer detailed, called systematization sketch. This was supposed to be detailed in projects for specific areas, but a lot of times this did not happen. In fact, the hidden agenda behind this regulation is the possibility to enforce political decision much quicker. The sketch had a shorter strategic span than the systematization plan, of only 10-15 years and it would comprise: a strict limited perimeter of the town, beyond which no housing could be built; the *main development elements* of the town such as industrial areas, housing areas, circulation network, equipment, green areas, placement of the main cultural and social amenities, etc., and the investment program for the first 5 years.

An interesting provision is that before enforcing the systematization sketch, the proposal must be publicly debated and only afterwards the Ministry Council would approve it. "Rational decisions, standardization, typified building, economy": all these become the new keywords.

The principles expressed in the decision are rather abstract and the built reality is much more nuanced. As previously stated, urban planning principles stemming from modernism are used, without pointing out their filiation. They are recognizable, nevertheless. A whole theoretical structure creates the basis for a *scientific* urban design, with the complex housing ensemble at its core. The micro-district principle is detailed to a maximum and numerous housing ensemble solutions are presented, each with its economic advantages.

Before the next systematization plan for the entire capital, several local plans detail important boulevards and squares, such as Calea Victoriei, the N-S

Fig. 3
The complex housing ensembles
in Bucharest, in the 1964 sketch.
Published in *Arhitectura R.P.R.*,
6/1964.



axis, Calea Griviței, an urban planning contest for Unirii Square. The issue of industrial development in Bucharest and its placement in the urban context is also debated.

All these projects and debates would become part of the next sketch for the development of the city.

The sexennial plan (1960-1965) and urban systematization

The interval 1960-1965 is supposedly a cohesive period, being a subject of the sexennial plan economic strategy. The General Systematization Plan for Bucharest was drafted in 1962 and debated and approved in 1963/1964. The urban planning principles stated in the rationale of the plan, privilege the large housing complex ensembles, a fact that is noticeable even in the rougher sketches, where important territories are destined for housing developments. In the already established tradition of urban composition based on micro-districts, the cultural and social amenities function as local centers, which emphasize the idea of a polycentric city. This is, of course the embodiment of the equalitarian idea that center and periphery must offer the same social opportunities. Floreasca, Balta Albă, the beginning of Drumul Taberei, Jiului are some of the complex ensembles either completed or started during this period. In some cases the scale is impressive - for instance, Balta Albă was built on 37 ha, with a density of more than 4700 inhabitants/ha, a size worthy of a town.

Housing becomes the focus of most representative urban spaces and it occupies an ideologically charged place. Comfortable housing for the working masses is

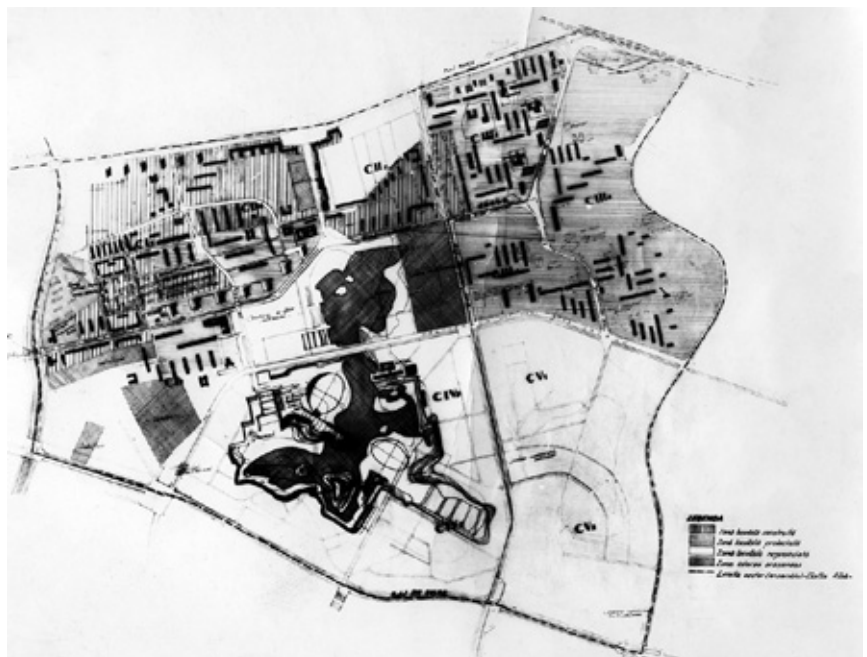


Fig. 4
The systematization of Balta
Albă complex ensemble.
(Courtesy of the *Arhitectura*
magazine image archive, Union
of Architects of Romania)

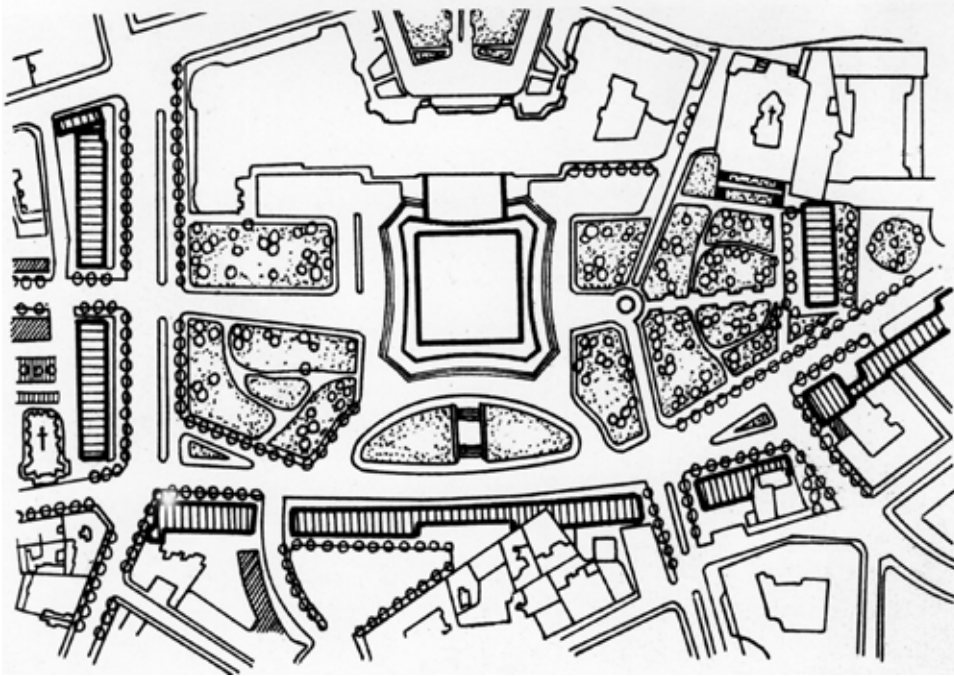


Fig. 5a
The Palace Hall square plan.
(Courtesy of the *Arhitectura*
magazine image archive, Union
of Architects of Romania)

one of the main goals of the political system that, for the first time in history, takes care of the proletariat. Thus this care and social importance of the worker must be acknowledged in the representative squares and boulevards, which are no longer composed only of administrative and/or cultural buildings, but of blocks of flats.

Visually, the return to modernism is obvious and, in the case of the interventions in the center of Bucharest, it blends with the interwar image of the city.

The urban squares situated along the N-S axis are all subject to renewal projects, though not all realized: Piața Scânteii (nowadays Free Press Square), Piața Victoriei, Piața Nicolae Bălcescu (geographically in the center of Bucharest, destined to house the National Theater), Piața Sălii Palatului (Palace Hall square) and Piața Unirii. The Palace Hall square deserves a special mention, as it is one of the most explicit expressions of political ideology embodied in an urban space. Situated behind the royal palace (transformed into the National Art Museum in 1950), it opposes the former representative urban space in front of the Palace, together with other cultural and administrative buildings (the Athenaeum, the Internal Affairs Ministry, completed only after the war, the royal foundation, hotels etc.). Its main components are blocks of flats in a quite dynamic composition and the new congress hall, parasitically connected to the palace. So, a public meeting place destined for political congresses (though it could also function as a concert hall), surrounded by workers' apartments, this is the quintessential ideological urban gesture. It is also a remarkable architectural accomplishment of the time, regarded and paraded as such in publications and international exhibitions.



Fig. 5b
The Palace Hall square.
(Courtesy of the *Arhitectura*
magazine image archive, Union
of Architects of Romania)

The importance of railroads workers in promoting socialist and communist thinking is acknowledged by the importance given to the entire ensemble around the North railway station (Gara de Nord) and Calea Griviței.¹³ This long boulevard is divided into several different sections, in order to achieve the desired diversity, without losing homogeneity. During this period, as the industrial standardization was not yet spread, the façades towards the boulevard compose a dynamic image. As technological progress was made and industrialization was applied more and more, the generalized use of prefabricated panels diminished the variety and the façades of boulevards built later on, fall into dull repetition.

The thoughts on the importance of Dâmbovița in the city are somehow tempered and there is no mention of navigability, but important educational, research and cultural amenities would be placed on the riverbanks such as the Polytechnic Institute (part of the Bucharest University), research institutes, a sports hall, a park etc. The apparition of the subway is also envisioned, though it would take a long time to implement - it was inaugurated in 1979.

At the end of this period an important political event overlapped the finalization of the sexennial plan and that is the death of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Nicolae Ceaușescu's ascension to power. Unexpectedly, this was not a shattering event and, though political changes were obvious, when it comes to architecture and urban planning, things seem to continue unabated for a while. Ceaușescu was a prominent figure even before becoming general secretary and was involved in decisions regarding systematization. It is rather surprising to notice the common sense he showed in approaching the matters of urban



Fig. 6
Calea Grivitei. Published in
Arhitectura R.P.R., 2/1961.

development, with a very different attitude than what he would exhibit towards the end of his rule. For instance, when planning the next housing ensembles with 13.000 apartments to be built in Bucharest in the 1966-1980 interval, he was shown¹⁴ two variants of placement and required demolitions. He chose the solution with the least demolitions. On the same occasion Ceaușescu was shown the next propositions for the systematization sketch for Bucharest, out of which he chose the 7th variant, which used less land, intensively completed existing ensembles both in the center and the periphery and developed the northern part of the city.

Studies and sketches (1966, 1970/1971)

“Proiect București” always seemed involved in designing a new sketch for the development of the town. Though the systematization sketch was envisioned for a period of 10-15 years, every few years the development principles were questioned and the emphasis switched between the different themes: city center, industry and the city, housing etc. In 1966 the main topic was the city center, not only regarding Bucharest, but all Romanian towns, with a new interest in urban renovation and heritage preservation.

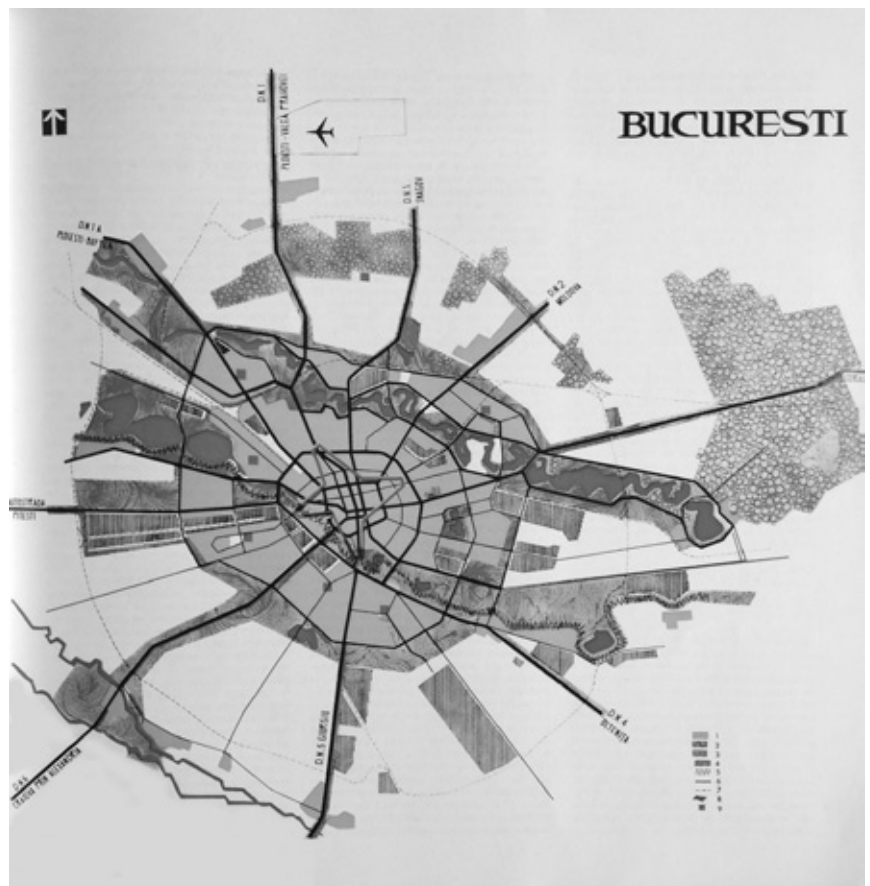


Fig. 7
Systematization sketch, 1971.
Published in *Arhitectura*,
1/1971.

In 1970-1971, new solutions were explored and, during this period, a defining principle was established for the development of Bucharest: “the development of the city along natural elements”, that is a composition defined in the north by the Colentina river and in the south, by the Dâmbovița riverbank.

There is also a shift regarding housing ensembles: the completion of ensembles such as Titan, Militari, Sud-Berceni was required and then, rather than starting

Fig. 8
The center of Bucharest, model of the existing situation and systematization proposals.
Published in *Arhitectura*, 1/1971.



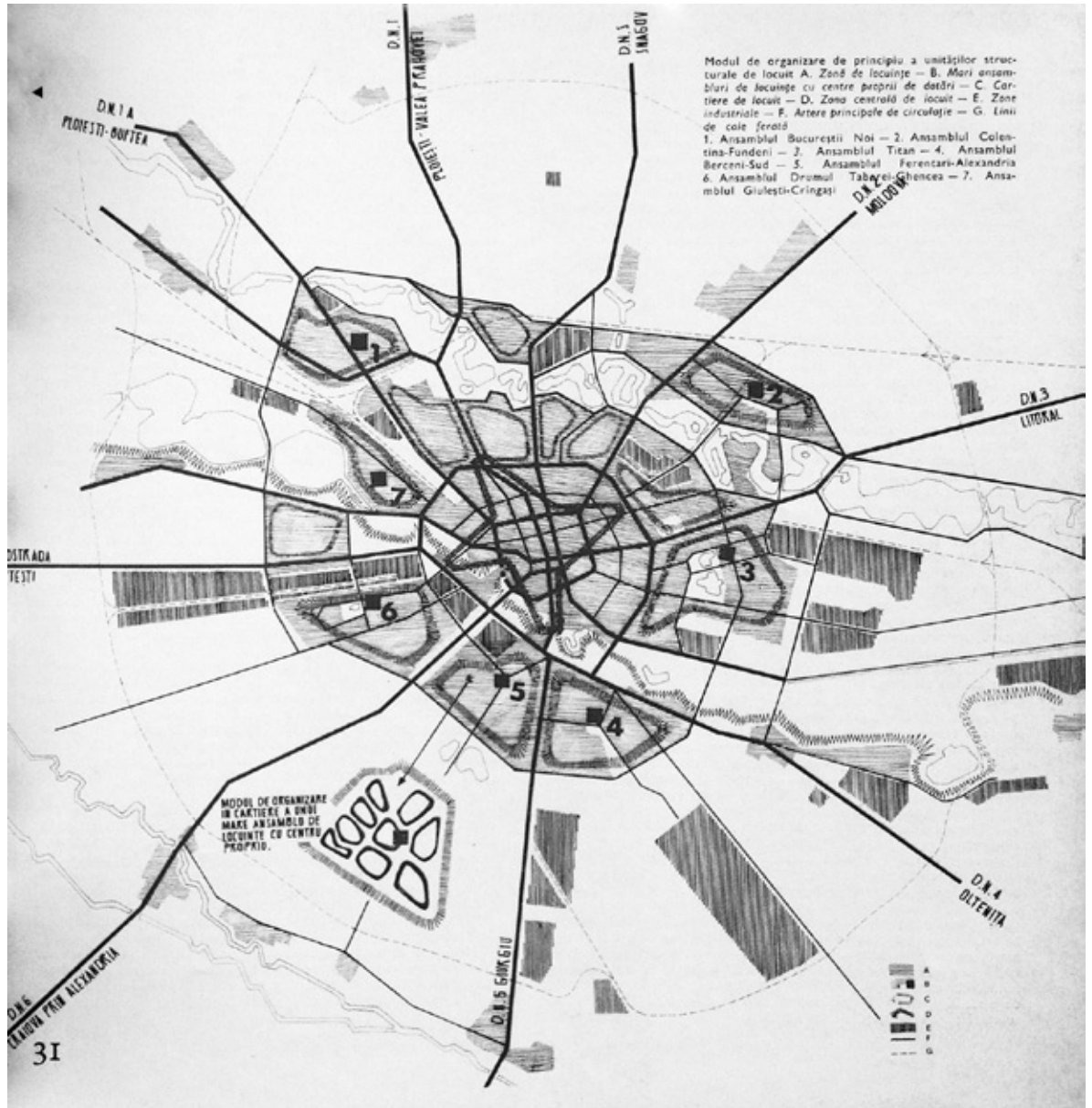


Fig. 9
Housing areas, industrial areas and main circulation routes. Published in *Arhitectura*, 1/1971.

new ones, the densification of existing housing areas was proposed, in order to minimize equipment costs. Moreover, the periphery was subject to demolitions of the areas built outside city limits and without proper systematization.

Throughout this period, the height of the ensembles increased slowly, preferably ground plus 4 floors, with higher buildings along boulevards and important squares.

The “renovation” of central housing areas was also a new topic, but the subject was always approached from the point of view of improper housing conditions that should be entirely changed and not restored. Only the architectural monuments would be restored and preserved.

The industrial development also changed parameters, towards a limited growth principle. Industrial development had to be limited, in order to diminish the rate of population growth, a situation that became worrying for the authorities, as in the period between 1948 and 1970, the population increase was 40% (from 1.1 million to 1.55). Later on, there would be a constant struggle to limit the population of Bucharest, manifested by the refusal to acknowledge domicile changes and issue identification documents and by apportionment of work places in other towns in Romania for new university graduates.

The 1960’s and early 1970’s are seen as a period of relative liberalization, which also saw a reconnection to the planning strategies abroad. Architects could travel more and take part in international meetings. For instance, in 1966 the International Union of Architects held a colloquium in Bucharest, on the topic of housing. Information was easier available, but decision-making was still discretionary and political, so not much of the criticism of modernism could be applied in actual planning.

The theoretical approach to urban planning is visible, as well as the existence of educated specialists for it. The desire to justify scientifically all decisions, also affected urban planning. The designing teams involved in urban planning became more complex, including, for the first time, sociologists.

But while all these seemed to have a more or less natural course, Ceaușescu’s famous visit in North Korea and China in 1971, radically changed his involvement in architectural and urban problems, towards more control.

The laws of 1974

In 1973 and 1974 the historic center of Bucharest was subject to a detailed restoration project. As a methodological premiere, a professional inquiry was conducted in order to investigate the center of Bucharest.¹⁵ The debate on the definition of the center is acknowledged for the first time and taken into account. But, while the scientific and professional aspects of urban planning seem to be heading into a reasonable direction, with debates of sorts, the political milieu would soon change all that.

Two important laws impact on urban systematization and, in the mind of many professionals of the time, they signal the downfall of planning of the era: *the law for territorial and urban and rural settlement systematization* (no. 58/1974) and the so-called “streets law” (no. 37/1975) on the *systematization, planning and realization of thoroughfares in urban and rural settlements*.

The 1974 systematization law was mainly concerned with a new obsession of Ceausescu, the urbanization of rural Romania. It concerns Bucharest as well, because it had an impact on the dynamic of the relations between the city and its suburban villages, as well as the strict limitation of the urban perimeter. The requirements for urban density in housing ensembles increase and this, in return, leads to what is called "the thickening" - placing new blocks of flats in the perimeter of previously designed ensembles. While some signs of densification requirements were previously noticeable and were taken into consideration when designing housing areas, the solution of "the thickening" defies most of the principles employed until then.

The 1975 streets law was, apparently, a benign law concerning the size of streets and roads. In fact, some of its provisions on the principles of building along the streets are extremely impactful. Housing ensembles must have inner courts (somehow reminiscing of the *cvartal*) and façades facing the street - so no more free-stranding blocks, cardinally oriented. Also, the height of the new blocks of flats increases, changing the skyline of the city.

This prompts a discussion in the professional milieu on the importance of the street as urban space. It might seem that the international critiques on modernism are mirrored in this decision and that the street would be reevaluated as an essential component of urban composition. But in fact this was not the case. It would be a rather forced speculation to see a postmodern attitude regarding the street in this law, because the resulting image is not a reinterpretation of the traditional street, but rather of an uneventful, characterless prospect.

The 1977 earthquake - reason for radical change in systematization

Though some of the ideas that Ceausescu was going to impose were already more or less "announced", the disastrous earthquake that occurred on the 4th of March 1977 gave him all the reasons to start a reconstruction of Bucharest. Demolitions and reconstructions, new monumental principles for urban development and new structural requirements would change the way Bucharest looked.

Early in the aftermath of the earthquake, in a meeting on the 10th of March, Ceaușescu was already talking about a new political and administrative center for Bucharest and by the 22nd of March he had envisioned a semicircular square and a boulevard and settled for the Arsenal Hill. That was the moment when some of the ideas of the 1935 plan came to attention once more: the same location was chosen for a new parliament building back then. Odd coincidence! Though in the beginning he seemed to listen to the professional opinion on the repairs and consolidations needed for the buildings affected by the earthquake, the scale of the intervention startled him. So, a few months after some of the affected buildings were in the process of extensive consolidation, he changed

his mind. All the repairs were going to cost copious amounts, if done by the specialists' requirements. So in another meeting of the Central Committee on the 4th of July, he enforced minimal repairs, instead of consolidations for all remaining affected buildings, thus sealing their fate.

At the end of that year a detailed research on the center of Bucharest (*Studiul de delimitare a zonei istorice a oraşului Bucureşti*) was completed and published. It was supposed to be the base of strategic development, but it was never used as such. The study was based on research conducted in the history department of the "Ion Mincu" Architecture Institute.¹⁶ In fact, another legislative change would further simplify the political control over the systematization of Bucharest, by the establishment of the Commission for Architecture and Systematization of Bucharest in 1978, by decree.¹⁷ By this gesture, Ceauşescu directly subordinated the architects and urban planners to his own will. From now on, the development proposals would be drafted overnight, following more and more absurd requests from the dictator. A radical change in Ceauşescu's view on demolitions prompted the beginning of the most traumatic stage in the history of Bucharest.

Authoritarian and violent urbanism - the 1980's

The 1980's are probably the most notorious period in the urban transformation of Bucharest, largely discussed not only in Romania, but also internationally. All planning resources were concentrated on the megalomaniac civic center project, while entire areas of the city were wiped to make room for the monumental political and administrative ensemble. A general strategy for Bucharest was missing, but at the same time the scale of the intervention affected the urban fabric to a general extent. The search for a new "national architectural style" was reiterated, with unsettling memories from the Stalinist period. Ceausescu was massively involved in all decisions of the project, requiring countless variants and 1:1 scale models, in a more or less conscious attempt to minimize every architect's professional self worth. The inhabitants, whose welfare he was previously so concerned with, were very affected by the demolitions and the presence of a large-scale building site for a decade on a surface of about 485 ha.

The project was shrouded in mystery and no public debates were organized. The *Arhitectura* magazine did not publish proposals or articles on the subject, though most architects from Bucharest were involved one way or another with the project. In the beginning there were 17 teams that drafted proposals for a private viewing. The "competition" (again, not a public one) was in the end settled between Cezar Lăzărescu's and Anca Petrescu's teams. The outcome was surprising, as Cezar Lăzărescu was an established architect, with a lot of political influence and Anca Petrescu, on the other hand, was a very young but ambitious architect. Ceauşescu chose Anca Petrescu, most probably because he felt that she would comply with his every whim.

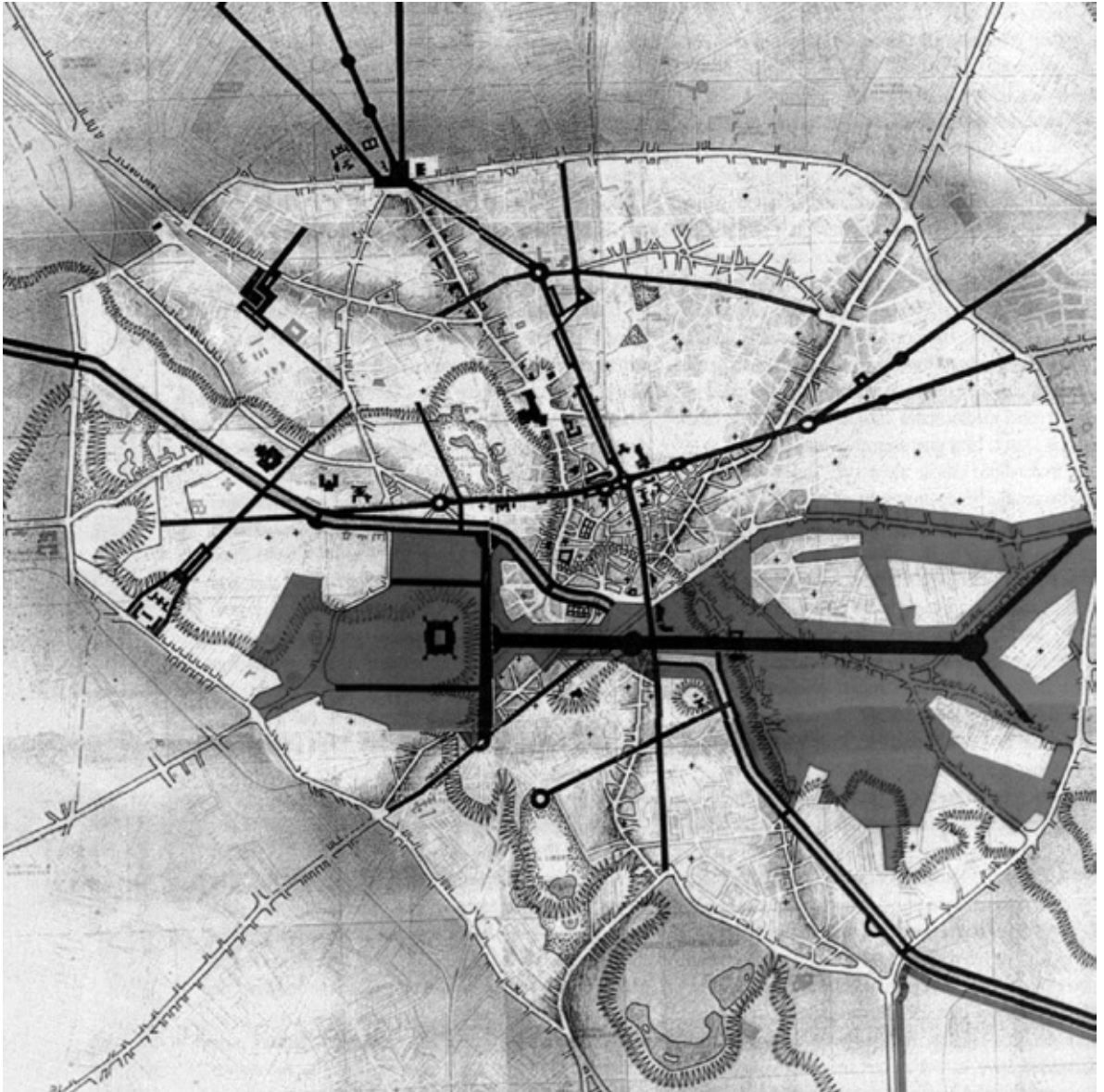


Fig. 10
The extent of the 1980's interventions. The darker grey represents the demolished surface. Published in Dana Harhoiu: *București, un oraș între orient și occident/Bucharest, a city between orient and occident*. Simetria, Bucharest, 2005.

The ensemble is rather simplistic and its only outstanding feature is its size. There is no connection to the rest of the urban fabric or to the functional dynamic of the city. The stylistic language is a cacophonous assemblage of classical influences, this time employed without the knowledge architects had in the 1950's, during the socialist realism episode.

Predictably, 25 years after the 1989 revolution, Bucharest still did not recover from the trauma. There was a chance of professional redemption, represented by the Bucharest 2000 urban planning contest organized in 1995/1996. But various reasons including political and economic instability prevented the winning master plan (by the team led by Meinhard von Gerkan and Joachim

Zeiss) from being implemented. Nowadays, the hope for redemption comes from building an equally controversial cathedral beside the House of the People.

Conclusions

This brief outline of urban planning under communism in Bucharest cannot begin to explain the impact of those 45 years in the history of the city. One can still notice urban tensions and unresolved relations, as well as a pervasive lack of strategic thinking about Bucharest. Some of it could be explained through the process of diminishing the complexity of systematization plans that we followed throughout this period. The profession itself is far from having the required social relevance, in order to have a positive impact.

The unresolved trauma of the city still lingers - and of course we speak of an unresolved trauma, as the only gesture regarding the House of the People was to make it the seat of the democratic parliament, thus acknowledging it. Compared to other European capitals that had to deal with traumatic interventions, such as Berlin for instance, Bucharest did not seem interested in re-contextualizing its recent past. And it is this unresolved past that puts a grey curtain on all that was built during communism and prevents us from seeing any of the achievements of the period. Thus, all nuances are deleted and in the public view it is very hard to advocate the architectural value of certain developments. The profession itself is still struggling with the guilt projected on it right after the revolution and, maybe because there was no definitive distancing from the episode, it still has to do penance in order to regain wide approval.

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Bucharest's urban planning instruments during the communist regime:
systematization sketches, plans, projects and interventions

Grigor Doytchinov

Designing Sofia's city core in the context of the changing ideological paradigm 1945-1989

The chapter deals with the urban part of Sofia, which encloses the territory of the antique and the medieval Byzantine, Bulgarian and Ottoman settlements. The chosen term "urban core" is in so far arguable as it defines an area of urban activities which shows stability over a period of two millenniums.¹ The urbanism of Sofia's urban core has experienced various and occasionally very contradictive phases, but three of them are of great relevance for its contemporary urban pattern: the antique roman period, the after-liberation period, 1878-1918, and the phase immediately after WW II. In these periods the territory receives the forms, defining the image sustainable up to now. The colonisation policy of the Roman Empire and the Christianising in the 4th century achieve an important and sustainable push for establishing the centrality of the city.² The cross point of the *Cardo* and *Decumanus* defines over centuries the mono-centric urban structure. The steps of transformation of the Roman orthogonal grid of streets into the organic medieval pattern are for now not reconstructed in a clear chronological order, but it starts in the byzantine period and continues during the first and second Bulgarian estates and the Ottoman rule period. The middle point set by the Romans is not replaced over the centuries and holds one's own as the focal point of the later radial directions. The basic characteristics of the nowadays urban shape of Sofia's core are finalised in the end of the nineteenth century. The than created composition takes up continuously the antique *Cardo* and *Decumanus* cross point and pre-defines the structure of the later on attached urban territories. Sofia's urban core is even today of great influence on the urbanism of the capital due to its strongly inherited mono-centrism. It retains this character up to now, despite the rapid demographic and territorial growth.

The urban core presents on the eve of WW II as an ensemble of eclectic architectures from the turn of the century. Even if scaled for a smaller capital city, the core is functioning as Sofia's trade and business heart. The



Fig. 1
Sofia's urban core and the
limitation of the antique
Roman city. The core is in the
eve of WW II the trade and
business heart of the city. The
representative buildings of
semantic value are located
eastwards to the ring road.
(Doytchinov/Petev)

representative public buildings of semantic value are located in the east, in the urban segment between the core and the ring road, forming up the monumental part of the city. The zoning follows consequently the tendency of the city development: Its eastern and southern hilly parts are characterised with a building stock of higher capital and aesthetic value than the ones in the western and northern parts. While the eastern and southern parts are extending step by step, accompanied by a continuous punctual modernisation and densification by the exchange of the stock, the western and northern ones are planned and established in a short period for sheltering the migration wave and the future working class strata. They are characterised with buildings of lower quality and the densification happens by new additions and not by exchange. The development differences are an expression of the social zoning, but define also the possibilities for intervention: while the first type is resistant of large scaled interventions, the second one offers as a space potential for total interventions after WW II.³ The image of the urban core's heart is defined by two public places separated by a block: the places around the Sv. Nedelya Church in the south and the Bania Bashi Mosque and the Central Bath in the north. The square Sv. Nedelya Church is planned after the Liberation 1878 to be the representative central place with a clearly defined frame, while the square with the mosque in front of the bath is more or less an Ottoman period relict, continuously established as the focal point of the settlement. Both places keep traditional peculiarities.

A break of grave consequence in the continuity of the core's formation follows WW II and the force of the Soviet type of ideological paradigm upon the country. The centralistic principle causes in the beginning a mighty impetus but also a rigorous restructure. The political system brings the influence of the state in a dominating position and the possibility of expropriation of real estates for the benefit of urban re-ordering are reaching scales, not known before. The pretension of the communist ideology for exclusiveness and the refusal of the historic background leave for long the traces of this one-dimensional way of acting. The technocratic top-down planning, characteristic for the Bulgarian urbanism receives ideological and political tailwind and wipes out the attempts for a public participation, arising vague in the course of the discussion on the Mussman's plan, 1938.

The implementation of the Soviet type of urbanism and the style of the "socialist realism" does not start immediately after the war. Although in 1944 a watershed is set in the public life, there is an interim phase reflecting on the step-by-step political changes until 1948.⁴ Numerous pre-war projects are finished and the architectural offices are functioning in the transitional period as before. Although the ideas of the socialist realism start sprawling, the projects realised and the contributions to the competitions of that period show a clear genetic link to the pre-war modernism and neo-classicistic approach, they are more related to the pre-war German architecture than to the Soviet one. The process of the total public subjection to the communist party is finished in general in 1948-1949 and with it the rising role of the soviet model of public life and urbanism.⁵

The critical state of the city in the years after WW II and the call for urban interventions isn't provoked just by the rapid changes in the country's social and political system. The growing pressure of migration arising due to large-scale collectivization in the farming industry and the onset of industrialization in the city are also factors that considerably complicate the efforts to control the urban space. A factor of decisive importance for the reorganising of the urban core is the destruction of a substantial amount of approximately 12.000 residential buildings by bombing in WW II. The bombardment destroys mainly the urban core and opens the door for a rigorous re-structuring. The unlucky constellation of war-resulting space potential and political megalomania makes possible to realise a totally new concept in the urban core, regardless of historic urban patterns and private ownerships.

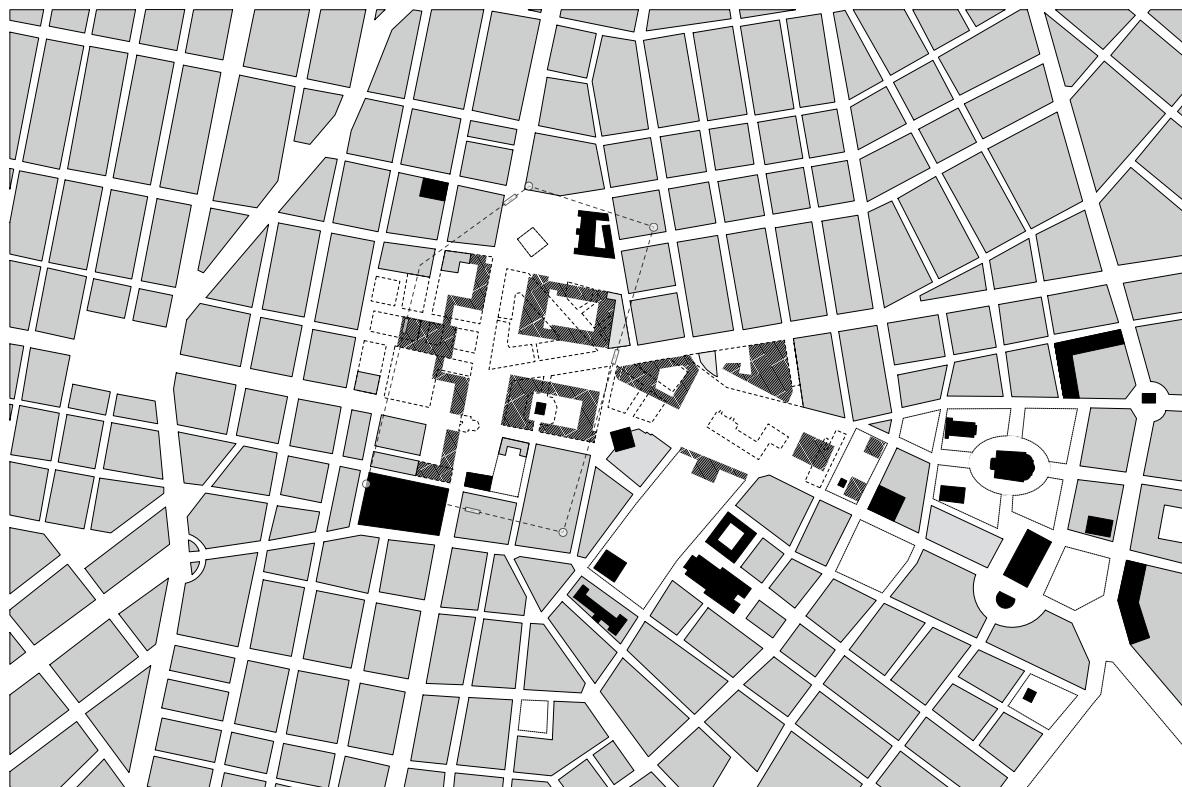
In order to get to grips with the post-war situation, the authorities begin initial planning efforts. A national town planning competition is carried out already in the end of 1944 to mobilise the potential of the architects for solving the city's problems.⁶ The contributions express the spirit of pluralism still existing at this time: The ideas reach from contributions continuously developing the concept of Mussman's plan from 1938 till projects in the spirit of Le Corbusie's Ville Radieuse. The idea of the extension of the monumental centre westwards



Fig. 2
The master plan, 1945, respects the pre-war pattern of the urban core and foresees the reorganisation and monumentalizing of the King's Palace area and the Cathedral Place. (Doytchinov/Petev)

emerges for the first time in a lot of the contributions. As a result of the competition a new general development plan (the "Tonev-plan") for the capital is elaborated.⁷ In its initial stage the plan aims at establishing some order in the planning chaos that arises after the war. Complemented to meet the requirements of the new social and economic formulations concerning the further development of the country and its capital, it is once more confirmed in 1949 and remains in effect till 1961.⁸ The plan is the first to propose the polycentric structure with district centres and a strict functional zoning of the basic town forming systems.

The detailed master plan for the reconstruction of the city centre, accompanying the land use plan, is of special interest: The plan is dominated by the concept of a parallel densification of the territory with mighty bulks to shelter the new political power. Monarchy is abolished and the King's Palace is replaced by an enormous high-rise building. A new monumental space is planned to replace the former ensemble consisting of the three elements: the palace, the Town Garden and the palace court fence in between. The palace court fence is abolished by the prolonged boulevard "Car Osvoboditel". The heavy intervention can be seen as an answer to the pre-war Mussman plan, criticised to deal predominantly with the urban periphery and failing to offer monumental places in the urban core. The intervention is partly realised: The prolongation of the boulevard destroys the palace court and interrupts



the former ensemble. Fortunately the palace is not demolished. The plan focuses also on the Cathedral square Sv. Alexander Nevski which is turned into a symmetric and rectangular shape. The cathedral square is winning on this way a dominant position in the system of public spaces, which doesn't correspond too much with the attempts of the communist ideology, trying to set its symbols in a first range position. Despite of the ideas for a total restructuring of the palace area and the monumentalizing of the cathedral square, the plan is attracting attention with the preservation of the street network of the former trade and business area in the urban core.⁹

One of the points of criticism on the plan is the missing locations for the new governmental objects including the Building of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party (the "Party House"). For all the ideas the Tonev-plan bears, a competition for the reconstruction of the city centre is held very soon in 1947 with great consequences for the urban core. The true reason for carrying out a new competition is an ideological one. The political aim of the communist government is to establish a representative centre demonstrating the demarcation from the bourgeois past and the orientation to the socialist future. This background explains the disrespectful handling of the inherited urban patterns and the heritage. The ideological attitude towards the urbanism results in disregarding the historically set tendency from the end of the 19th century to locate the representative spaces and objects eastwards and

Fig. 3
The master plan, 1947, related to the pre-war urban pattern. The plan disrespects the urban core pattern and the emblematic religious objects. (Doytchinov/Petev)

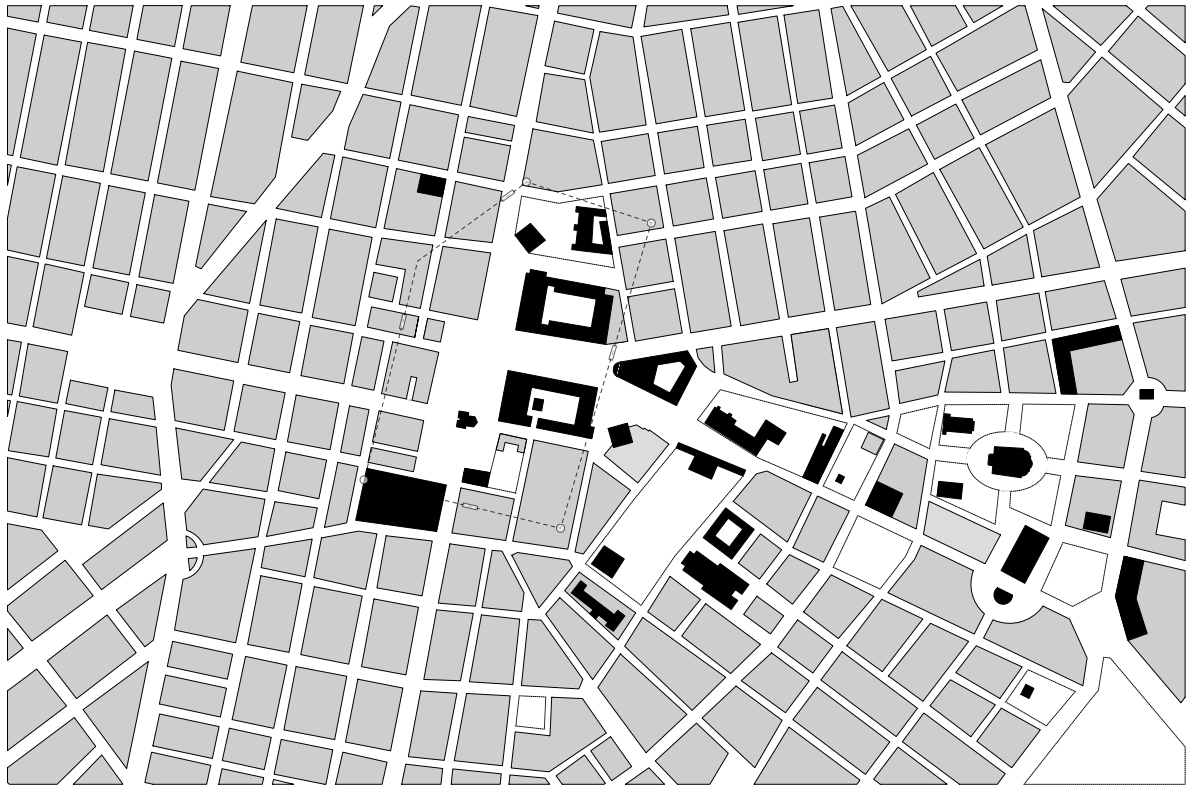


Fig. 4
The realised eastern part of
the monumental post-war
ensemble. (Doytchinov/Petev)

alongside the ring-road and to keep the urban core as a business and trade zone. The aim is now the opposite: to neglect the bourgeois urban heritage and to replace it by the symbols of the communist ideology.

No first prize is awarded after the competition, so D. Mitov and P. Tashev are entrusted directly with the plan elaboration. The steps of planning reflect the arising influence of the ideology. The initial concept is corrected several times in the sense of the socialist realism, not at least with the support of invited Soviet experts.¹⁰ The authorities' imperative requirement for the architecture of the buildings is to be "national in form and socialist in content", a typical formulation related to the "socialist realism".¹¹ The master plan follows the principles of the urban design of the Stalinist era. The created space doesn't aim meeting the real social and functional needs and doesn't leave any chances for a free interpretation, not to mention the fact that it doesn't allow any utilization possibilities. The ensemble in the urban core organises the social space vertically in its entirety and implements a decidedly hierarchy, which subordinates the individual wishes under the collective power. The urban core changes to a disciplining organism aiming to shape the view of life horizon in a way that the individual view is locked up.¹²

The master plan contents some general solutions which define the image of the urban core ultimately. The plan re-organises totally the inherited urban

structure around “Turgovska” street and “Dondukov” boulevard. The so called “communication fork”, predestined to locate the Party House in a dominant position is established. The concept of the symmetric main representative axes (the “largo”) in front of the Party House emerges for the first time. The largo is flanked by the buildings of the government, the presidency, the representative hotel and the central universal shop. The westward extension of the largo is planned to be finished with the monumental building of the House of the Soviets which is not realised. The plan brings some basic changes concerning the space organisation in the north-south axes too: The two traditional public places around the Sv. Nedelya Church and around the Bania Bashi Mosque and the Central Batch are unified to a large scaled open space by demolishing of the separating block. The collected north-south space is subordinated to the representative largo. Moreover the urban design intends to demolish the emblematic buildings of the Sv. Nedelya Church and the Bania Bashi Mosque, and once again the King’s Palace. Fortunately the ideas about demolishing the objects are not realised.

The conservation and exposing of the archaeological findings from the antiquity and the medieval times play a subordinated role as well. The architects succeed in preserving the unique antique complex of Sv. Georg Church and the small Sv. Petka Samardzijska Church, but a lot of the archaeological remains falling under the new buildings are lost. Despite of the anti-historic approach, the possibility to expose parts of the antique heritage is used for the first time in the city’s history. Tough it is just a remaining stock saved during the construction activities, the contours of a future conservation and preservation policy become visible. It is a signal for the later on designed underground pedestrian pass ways in the beginning of the 1960s, which integrate the archaeology and the antique patterns in the everyday life.

It is surprising that in the Bulgarian professional literature the master plan for the representative centre has rarely been an object of professional criticism. The critics arising after the change of the political paradigm in 1956 are directed generally to the eclectic style of the socialist realism, its questionable formalism, its functional and financial weaknesses, but do not touch the urbanism. Even the authors of the plan limit the presentation just on the architecture describing it as “monumental and corresponding to the scale of the capital”.¹³ Apart from defending the symmetric street fork as “one and only possible and logic” the authors do not engage with argumentation for the urban plan solution.¹⁴ It doesn’t make sense now to criticise the principles of the socialist realism from the position of the distance in time. The ensembles marking the period are nowadays accepted as historic documents and set under preservation as monuments of culture. But the urban concept even today provokes some basic professional, non-ideological questions not answered up to now: As a result of the intervention an open space is finally created based on an east-west and north-south directed crest-composition. With exception of the eastern axes rendering the Party House prominent, the arguments for the other space axes

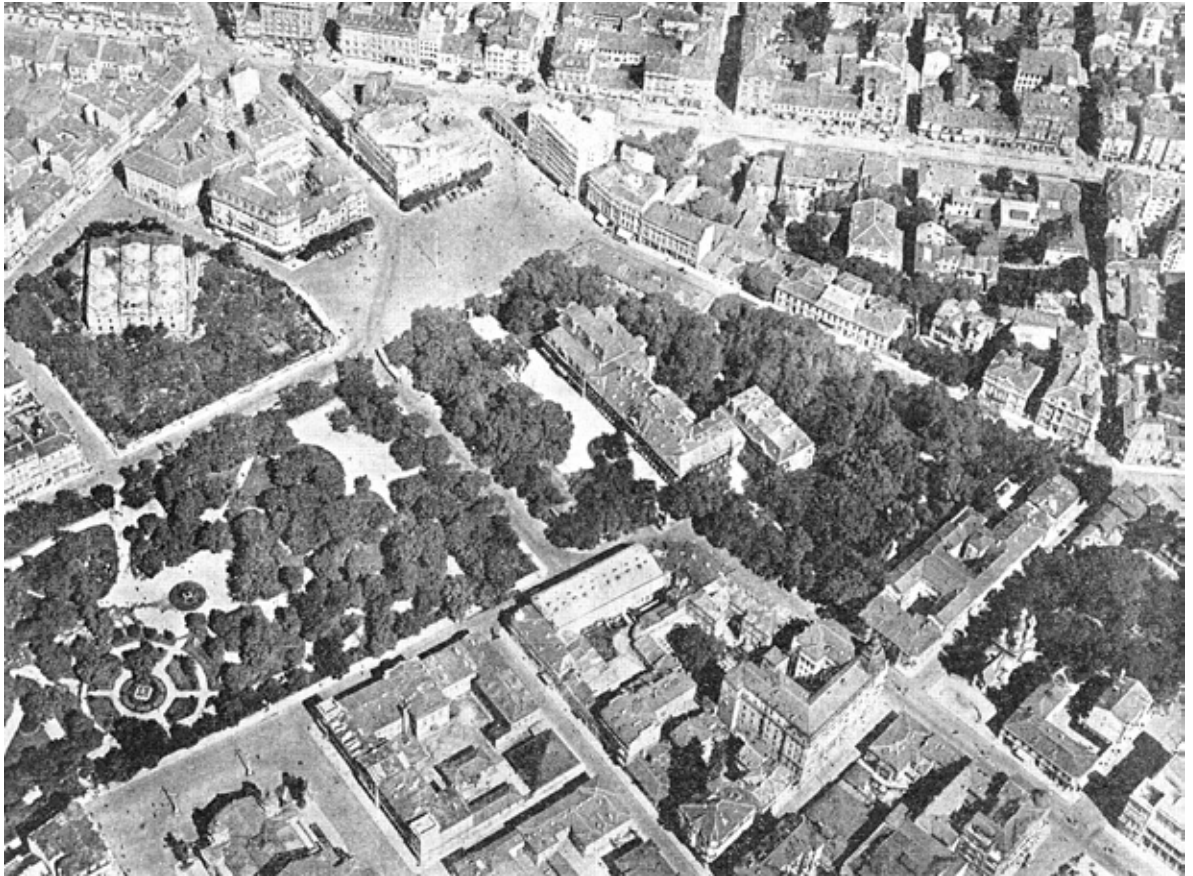


Fig. 5
The aerial view from the 1920s shows the former ensemble of the King's Palace, the Town Garden with the palace court fence in between. In the background: the urban core destroyed in WW II. The post-war plans foresee the abolishment of the fence and the creation of a monumental place. (Archive Ganchev)

directions are missing. The crest-based space composition is in contradiction to basic principles known from the history of urbanism. Moreover the shape of the new designed place doesn't show any correspondence with the topography. It dismisses totally the human scale and offers therefore the image of a left over field. The ensemble is never finished on the western site, which strengthens its character of an undefined and unorganised, transitional space. The fact that the initial concept proposes the demolishing of the Sv. Nedelya Church and the Bania Bashi Mosque speaks about a totally deductive planning approach, obliged to the ideological symbols and not respecting at minimum the human expectations and perceptions.

The dictate of the socialist realism is of short duration. The political changes in Bulgaria in 1956 cause a prompt revival of the rationality of the modernistic urbanism. The 1960s can be characterised as the "heroic" period of the "pathetic" defence of the modernistic values.¹⁵ Their deterministic character seems to be now the right instrument for the rapid realisation of the new device: the high living standard.¹⁶ For protecting the longevity of the political system the utopian dream is getting replaced by the materialistic one on a hidden but decisive way.¹⁷ The urbanism is seen as the prolongation of the social policy and as an instrument of its realisation. The tendency towards



Fig. 6
The representative largo in front
of the Party House implements
the hierarchy of ideological
meanings.
(Reproduction, *Architectura*)

a simplified canonisation and average-thinking take over in the attempts for quantity. The problems caused by that are well known: mono-functional splitting of the territory, schematic thinking in well-known patterns, short-term town extensions instead of sustainable adaptations of the existing urban parts and so on.¹⁸ Sofia's urbanism in the 1960s and 1970s means predominantly housing developments in the course of the urban extension. The historic urban parts and the core fall into a zone of disinvestment. By the way, the urbanism focuses on the conversion of abandoned military areas, some of them located near the city centre. The orientation of the urbanism to not build up territories has however also some positive aspects: it is a chance to preserve the urban heritage in the compact parts of the capital from the unreflecting modernistic patterns.

The shift from the intensive to the extensive urban policy doesn't happen at once. In 1956 the Council of Ministers orders a new land use plan for Sofia and the adjacent territories. Two teams are ordered and offer two substantially different concepts: The first one (the "Neykov-plan") pledges upon an inner reconstruction and succeeds in shrinking the cities growth. The second one (the "Siromahov-plan") proposes using the free territories surrounding the capital in order to solve the need for mass housing development as well. The

Neykov-plan comes into action in 1961 due to its reconstruction principle.¹⁹ The plan respects the historically formed urban composition and this provides the chance for its preservation in the next decades when further ambitions for a total reconstruction develop.²⁰ The concept for the intensive urbanism developed in the Neykov-plan soon turns out to be not tenable. Just seven years after the plan comes effective, the demographic prognoses is exceeded and the reconstruction-concept proves to be unrealistic. The speed of growth and the need of housing development in large scaled units shift the planning attention to the city periphery. This tendency is strengthened by the import of the new technologies in housing construction which are not effective in inner-city locations. In fact Sofia's urban development follows the ideas of the not accepted Siromahov-plan. This is a contradiction which accompanies the practice and the discussion for the next decades.

Fig. 7
In the background of the Party House: the monumental place between the former King's Palace and the newly constructed mausoleum displacing the court fence. (Reproduction, Avramov)



The urban core with its unfinished design moves as an object of interest back in stage, when in 1963 an international competition for the reconstruction of the main city centre is announced. Most of the contributions continue developing the idea of the east-west axis, born in the post-war largo-concept and focus predominantly on the territories west of the core.²¹ The non-resistant building stock in these territories induce the participants to offer large scaled interventions and are examples of thorough disrespect of the existing urban patterns. They obliterate almost fully whole districts with valuable places of social meaning including the Central Market area.²² The participants seem to be infatuated with the ambition to demonstrate the new technological abilities and to show off through a certain kind of constructional gigantism.²³ The projects express the ambitious vision for the great structural change, owning the intellectual world in the 1960s internationally. The call for far-reaching changes soon becomes unrealistic because of the speed slacken of the economic development. The expectations are very soon out dated and the disappointment is inevitable. In the following years numerous alternative master plans for the reconstruction of the center are elaborated, communicating the message of determinism, but they do not offer convincing solutions.²⁴ They describe static images of the future, not offering phase-wise realization possibilities.

The gradual evolution of the concept for the urban core becomes of special interest in the 1970s, after

continuous discussions “for” and “against” the total reconstruction.²⁵ The ambitions of cleaning down buildings are successfully overcome in the late 1970s, not at least because of the influence of the rapidly changing international practice and some events of great importance.²⁶ “The attitude towards the architectural heritage of Sofia changes as well. Almost 700 buildings on the territory of the old town are declared in the 1970s architectural monuments.²⁷ This strongly influences the detailed studies and replaces the demolition concepts with moderate solutions, taking into account the historically formed urban structures. Thus the unique areas around (...) are saved for generations to come. (...) Recognizing the failure of the attempt for a total reconstruction of the urban core, the municipal authorities order a series of town-planning inquiries. The result proves the applicability of a ‘historic approach’, achieving re-evaluation through preserving not only the valuable buildings but also the historically formed urban structure. (...) Step by step, public intolerance towards town planning and architectural ‘overshooting’ is established. The efforts of the municipality are directed to renovation actions at no great ‘representation’ confirming to the spirit of the governmental decisions supporting the preservation of dwellings that are in good condition.”²⁸



Fig. 8
The two traditional places around the Sv. Nedelya Church and the Banya Bashi Mosque are unified to an over-scaled open space. The initial intention was to demolish the two emblematic buildings. (Reproduction, *Arhitektura*)



Fig. 9
The integration of the antique Sv. Georg Church and the Roman ruins in the pedestrian pass ways is an early example of socializing the medieval and antique heritage. (Doytchinov)

Since the 1970s, Sofia's urban core planning is a playground for pragmatic interventions on one side and delayed ideological approaches on the other side. The international competition 1963 sets off a wave of avant-garde and radical visions, but the unrealistic projects do rather hold back the development than support it. The missing practicability of these visions marks the apogee and crisis of the deductive work approach and starts preparing for a change. The meanwhile arising pressure for new locations for cultural and administrative functions of the growing capital is an additional factor for an alternative development of the city centre. It is the hour of birth of the socio-cultural and spatial development of the southern direction. The meaning of the silhouette of the hill of Lozenec, the Southern Park and the visual connection to the mountain Vitosha play an important role in the search for development territories.²⁹ Moreover, the meaning of these elements for the urban identity is recognized and the orientation of the center to the south turns a basic idea for the next decades.

The contact zone between the city center and the hill of Lozenec is until the WW II a large scaled military area with low rise barracks and an enormous potential of open spaces. The barracks are initially located outside the city, but in the course of the urban growth between the two world wars the whole area is surrounded by housing quarters. The idea of conversion of former military barracks in the capital is formulated already in the post-war plan, 1945. In the contact zone the conversion starts in the 1950s and goes in phases, offering interim uses, but also extending the system of open spaces. For the reason of the 13th century jubilee of the Bulgarian estate in 1981, the government decides to force the extension of the center to the south with the location



of the National Palace of Culture and to create a new dominant public place named “Bulgaria”. It is of symbolic meaning for the spiritual change in the society that the character of the new place is defined from the very beginning as an identification place for the people of Sofia and a location for culture and leisure, in difference to the representative shape of the largo from the Stalinist era.

Fig. 10
The plan, 1963, expresses the ambitious vision for the great structural change typical in that period. (Reproduction, Arhitektura)

The first step to a final conversion of the area is set with the attempt to locate the new National Opera in the contact zone. The discussion starts with an international competition, 1972.³⁰ The competition results confirm that the location is predestinated for an outstanding public building and place, and that it is of surplus for the development of the city center. The location is limited between the inner and secondary ring-roads of Sofia and the initial point of the Southern Park, which is in a realization process. But the frame conditions of the location are very contradictory, being the link between the urban core and the Southern Park. The main entrance of the building has obviously to be oriented to the city center in the north, but the attractive view to the topographic formations and the park in the south has to be respected too. The contradiction means that a conventional scheme of an opera building with an official entrance and a backside is not suitable for the location. Another problem is that the big volume of the building doesn't have to close the entrance to the park and the view to the silhouette of the topography. No building can be more important



Fig. 11
The concept for the urban image from the 1970s: The meaning of the mountain Vitosha for the urban identity is the reason to orientate the urban core development to the south and to reborn the pre-war idea of the Southern Park. (Mollov)

than the public green space around, especially if the space is as large as the Southern Park. The third problem of the location is that the National Opera will be seen by both entering and leaving the park. It means the building cannot have an entrance and a back side.³¹

The first awarded project of the Yugoslav architect I. Strauss reacts with an original solution on the contradictory circumstances: He divides the building into two volumes and creates a kind of propylaea to the park, defined between the two building entrances. It is a wasted chance for the capital that the project is not followed up. It is a sign of provinciality and belated patriotism of the decision making politicians to cancel the idea of the opera building, because the first prize isn't given to a Bulgarian architect.³² A new object is defined for the location - the National Palace of Culture, realized in the jubilee-year 1981.³³ Its concept is based unfortunately on the concept contributions not being awarded from the jury of the international competition for the opera building: The palace entrance faces the city center in the north and turns its back to the mountain and the park in the south. The building volume is positioned in the middle of the space, dominating over the park entrance and defining obviously a representative axes.³⁴ The design for the National Palace of Culture gives expression of a correction in the political main stream spirit and is closely linked to the missing innovations in the architectural scene in Bulgaria in the period. At the end of the 1970s it could easily be observed that the

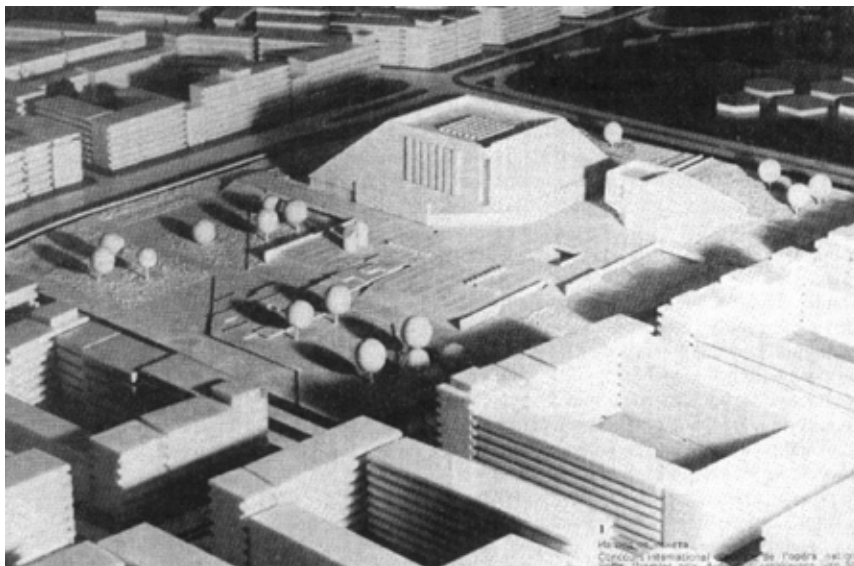


Fig. 12
The awarded but not realized contribution of the Yugoslav architect I. Straus for the National Opera Competition, 1972. (Reproduction, *Arhitektura*)



Fig. 13
The place "Bulgaria" with the National Palace of Culture, 1981, establishes as the most attractive urban space in Sofia. (Reproduction, *Arhitektura*)

ideas of modern architectural design in Bulgaria gradually exhaust and turn to be banal. The stable political situation of the 1970s is a precondition of an "official" type of design to spring up. The modernistic approach is abandoned and symmetric compositions with imposing central spaces determine the main stream appearance, typical of the period.³⁵

However the critic on the out-of-date ideological message, the palace is perceived very positive by the citizens and visitors because of its high leveled technology and its multi-functionality. Moreover the public perceives the new square as a place of central meaning for the capital and one of the basic elements of urban identification. With its luxurious surrounding areas it gradually turns to be the main entertainment and recreational area of the city. The success of the urban intervention is later on proved by a sociologic study.³⁶ According



Fig. 14
The Vitosha Boulevard in the 1960s, turned into a pedestrian zone in 1985, is a prolongation of the antique *Cardo* and is of decisive importance for the southward extension of the city center. (Archive Doytchinov)



Fig. 15
The Vitosha Boulevard as a pedestrian zone. (Ganchev)

to the study 80% of the citizens link the place with the image of Sofia's city center and define it as the secondary image symbol after the Alexander Nevski Cathedral. The place "Bulgaria" is defined as the "most frequented" and most "comfortable" by young people. The realization of the place directs definitely the orientation of the city center to the south and creates a unique link between the symbols of the urban core and the regional ones - the mountain Vitosha and the hill of Lozenec.

The immediately afterwards following urban intervention is a logic step: the turn of the central boulevard "Vitosha" into a pedestrian zone in 1985.³⁷ The boulevard connects as a strip of urban animation the largo zone with the place "Bulgaria" and the Southern Park. The creation of the large scaled pedestrian zone³⁸ contributes to Sofia's urbanism, which is winning complexity in the 1980s because of the renewal measures intended in the urban core. The creation of the pedestrian zones cannot be argued with city-establishing or crowded traffic volume, known from western cities.³⁹ In this sense the tendency can only be explained with the wish for streamlining with the West, but also with the approach of the political system for representation.⁴⁰ Though even here political necessities are the driving force behind the project, the intervention in the historic part of the city upgrades the urban heritage as well as the public spaces in a human way. The differences between the new qualities created in the renovated parts of the urban core are in a serious contradiction to the poor standard of the peripheral housing developments from the socialist period. The technocratic work approach sticks with the awoken public desire for context and emotion in the urban milieu. The policy of human space creation causes a change in the professional attitude of mind, partly running as a controversy between a critical younger architectural generation and the established masters of the socialist modernity. The controversy "total rebuild versus identity causing preservation" leaves the closed professional discussion and comes slowly but surely in the media, becoming an object of public criticism. Some critical articles of the 1980s focusing on the low quality of the housing complexes can be assessed as the fore-signs of the political changes in 1989.⁴¹

The crises of the political system reflect on Sofia's urbanism in the 1980s. The collapse of the socialism is closely connected to the incapability to reach the expected consummation level. The processes of self-excessive demand make



Fig. 16
The view on Sofia's urban core shows a regulated matrix and a southward orientation. (Google Earth)

clear that the crack between the intention for a “complex and harmonious milieu” and the reality is not bridgeable. Though the everyday life is determined more and more by informal behavioural and organisational patterns,⁴² the urbanism frees hardly from the disastrous involvement with the political system and the centralistic idea. Valuable potentials for the change or even adaptation to the changed circumstances for the discipline stay on this way disregarded. It is the political and territorial watershed in 1989 that once again creates a totally new situation. The end of the socialism greatly diminishes the influence of the public authorities and the public itself on urban developers. The change marks the start of a new phase in Sofia's urbanism.

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- 1 It is the core of the territory named Historic Centre in the sense of the terminology of the National Institute of Preservation of the Monuments of Culture and Main City Centre or Old Town in the sense of the terminology of Sofia's post-war urbanism. The last two terms cover naturally much larger areas.
 - 2 The settlement is reorganised and fortified as a roman colonial city during the reign of Marcus Ulpius Trajanus (98-117) replacing a former Thracian settlement. The hot mineral water spring is included into the city limits. The city is redesigned by Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus in 176-177. Flavius Marcianus Augustus (450-457) and Leo I (457-474) develop Ulpia Serdica as the capital of the province of Dacia ripensis. Serdica is for a period the residence city of the Christian Emperor Constantinus. Confer: Балабанов, П./С. Бояджиев/Н. Тулешков: Крепостно строителство по българските земи. АРХ&АРТ София 2000 (Balabanov. P./S. Bojadjiev/N. Tuleshkov: Fortifications on the Bulgarian lands, ARH&ART Sofia 2000).
 - 3 Дойчинов, Г./Х. Ганчев: *Старите градски части на София и подходът към тях*, НИПК София 1989 (Doitchinov, G./H. Ganchev: *The old parts of Sofia and the approach to them*, NIPK Sofia 1989).
 - 4 The putsch on the 9th September 1944 and the assumption of the power by the National Front, the establishing of the Republic 1946 after a public opinion poll, the Nationalization 1947 etc.

- 5 confer: Булев, Т.: Следвоенното развитие на българската архитектура 1944-2006. *Архитектура* София 5 2007, 90-91 (Bulev, T.: The post-war development of the Bulgarian architecture, 1944-2006. In: *Arhitektura* Sofia 5 2007, 90-91).
- 6 The competition is announced on 1st December 1944. More than 30 teams with 120 architects take part in the competition. For more details confer: Tashev, 1972, 41.
- 7 The development concept and the land use plan for the capital city forecast a population growth up to 800 000 for the next 30 years. The real growth surpasses the expectations very soon.
- 8 The plan is ordered to the Department for Architecture and Urbanism with head L. Tonev and comes into effect on 6th September 1945 together with a Building Code and a Regulation Law for grouping and complex building-up of plots and quarters in Sofia. Confer: Labov G.: Contemporary town-planning development. In: Popov, A. a.o. (Ed.): Sofia. 120 years as capital of Bulgaria, Academic Publishing House Sofia 2001, 516-517.
- 9 confer: Ташев, П.: София – архитектурно–градоустройствено развитие. Техника София 1972, 41-42 (Tashev, P.: Sofia – architectural and urban development. Tehnika Sofia 1972, 41-42).
- 10 The soviet architects A. Shtchuseb, N. Baranov, A. Mordvinov, K. Aljabin, N. Belinkin, and D. Arkin are ordered to consult already the Tonev-plan, 1945. In the last work phase of the plan from 1947 the soviet architects N. Poljakov and A. Naumov are invited as consultants. Confer: Аврамов (Avramov), 1987, 73, 77.
- 11 Decree of the Government from November 20th 1951.
- 12 confer: Лозанов, Г.: Посткомунистически, постархитектурен, постманифест. *Архитектура* София 2 1994 (Lozanov, G.: Post-communist, post-architectural, post-manifest. In: *Архитектура*, Sofia 2 1994).
- 13 confer: Ташев, (Tashev): 1972, 56.
- 14 ib.
- 15 confer: Булев (Bulev), 2007, 92.
- 16 The changes follow the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party of April 1956. One of the results is the disciplines of architecture and urbanism leave the ideological sphere.
- 17 confer: Ditchev, I.: Die Konsumentenschmiede. Versuch über das kommunistische Begehren. In: Groys, B.: Zurück aus der Zukunft. Osteuropäische Kulturen im Zeitalter des Postkommunismus. Frankfurt 2005.
- 18 confer: Spacek, R.: Bratislava. In: Ilsinger, R./G. Doytchinov: Öffnung der Grenzen, Haus der Architektur Graz 2000, 22-31.
- 19 The Neykov-plan forecasts a population of 900 000 by 1980. The Siromahov-plan envisages an increase of the population to 1 050 000 by 1980, which turned out to be very close to the real figures later established, yet it doesn't foresee the incredibly rapid automobile transport development. Confer: Аврамов, И.: *Съвременно градоустройство в България*, Техника София 1987, 99 (Avramov, I.: *Contemporary urbanism in Bulgaria*, Tehnika Sofia 1987, 99).
- 20 confer: Лабов (Labov), 2001.
- 21 confer: Ташев (Tashev), 1972, 56.
- 22 The Central Market is established historically as a very outstanding diagonal in the orthogonal network of streets. The diagonal is the trace of a former river flow, replaced around 1900.
- 23 confer: Лабов (Labov), 2001.
- 24 On April 25th 1972 the Council of Ministers orders V. Romenski, later on Chief Architect of Sofia, to lead the project for the reconstruction of the main city center.
- 25 The urban core area finds finally its appropriate way of development in the project of N. Nikolov in 1976.
- 26 The ICOMOS-Conference takes place in Sofia in 1974.
- 27 Suggestion for Declaration of the Objects of Architectural Heritage from the Period 1878-1944, National Institute of Cultural Heritage Preservation, Sofia 1977.
- 28 confer: Лабов (Labov), 2001.
- 29 The idea to connect the city center with the mountain Vitosha (National Park, 2 225 m over the see level) by the green wedge of the Southern Park comes from the pre-war Mussman-plan.
- 30 123 contributions from nearly all European countries incl. 15 from Bulgaria are presented. Confer: Драганов, С./И. Димов: Международен конкурс за сграда на народната опера в София. *Архитектура* София 3-4 1974, 36-46 (Draganov, S./I. Dimov: International competition for the National Opera Building in Sofia. In: *Arhitektura* Sofia 3-4 1974, 36-46).

- 31 confer: Попов, С.: Пропуснатите шансове на българската архитектура. In: *Архитектура* 6 2001, 54-56 (Popov, S.: The lost chances of the Bulgarian architecture. In.: *Arhitektura* Sofia 6 2001, 54-56).
- 32 ib.
- 33 The large scaled intervention includes the Palace of Culture, the station for the future underground line, public garages, the square "Bulgaria", the reconstruction and renewal of the architectural frame etc.
- 34 The project for the Cultural Palace is directly ordered to A. Barov. The design of the square is ordered directly to A. Agura.
- 35 Typical examples for this late modernism in Sofia are the Boyana Presidency Residence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- 36 Социологическо изследване за централната част на София. Българска социологическа асоциация, колектив с ръководител Н. Генов, София 2000 (Sociological study for Sofia's city centre. Bulgarian Sociologic Association, team leader N. Genov, Sofia 2000).
- 37 The direction of the boulevard follows resp. prolongs the trace of the ancient Roman Cardo to the south.
- 38 The first small pedestrian zone of Sofia is realized 1976 in front of the National Theater and is accepted by the population as a social space with a historic frame. The second attempt for a pedestrian street establishing is the boulevard "Car Osvoboditel", but without success, because it isn't really accepted by the people as an area for leisure.
- 39 In no other socialist country so much large scaled pedestrian zones following the patterns of the western-European planning practice are realised like in Bulgaria in the 1980's.
- 40 confer: Дойчинов, Г.: Пешеходната зона като градоустройствен проблем. *Архитектура* София 4 1987, 28-29 (Doytchinov, G.: The pedestrian zone as an urban planning problem. In: *Arhitektura* Sofia 4 1987, 28-29).
- 41 The first critical messages and opinions are published in the newspaper "Narodna cultura" since the beginning of the 1980's. The circle around the magazine "Sofia" and the public Club of the Friends of Sofia's Architecture, presented by persons from the creative sphere, establishes itself in the 1980's as a critical instance.
- 42 confer: Brunnbauer, U.: Die sozialistische Lebensweise. Böhlau Wien 2007.

Aleksandra Đukić

New Belgrade: visions, plans and realizations 1950-2014

Introduction

The iconic modernist structures of New Belgrade have always been a symbol and a testimony of all ideological shifts in the Yugoslav and Serbian society. More than 60 years of its urban existence has brought numerous adjustment and changes in its economic, social and functional structure, but its rigid and over-scaled urban matrix has mostly remained untouched. Once flooded marshland, New Belgrade had been planned by numerous of Yugoslav architects who implemented their visions and beliefs into the new planned city. However, a process of a specific urban reconstruction has been started in the 1990s, tackling the sensitive issues of the modernist architectural legacy, challenging the purity of the original conception and introducing some new patterns of behavior and urban needs.

Since then, New Belgrade has been influenced by socio-economic turbulences on local and global levels and included in an inevitable transformation of urban tissue. Its identity has been redefined, tracing a new path for emerging models of urban life.¹ The urban pattern, as well as the spatial and functional concepts of the mega blocks have been questioned and exposed to professional criticism, while the upgrading and adjustment to the contemporary demands and standards have become an imperative of its further development.

The old framework has been tested and modified, many questions about current development have been raised, but the regeneration of the mega blocks still has to be synchronized in order to provide a flexible and satisfying urban setting. The increased speed of global flows certainly requires immediate solutions, but they should provide a long-term sustainability and not just another instant remedy with numerous contraindications.

The first urban plans for New Belgrade: the period from 1921 until 1945

The idea about the urbanization of this area was presented the first time at the competition for the General Urban Plan of Belgrade in 1921. The first Plan of Belgrade was done in 1923 by Djordje Kovaljevski and included the left bank of the river Sava (the New Belgrade site). One of the goals was the providing of an „organic“ connection between the town of Zemun and the historic Belgrade. The new urban matrix was composed of several smaller geometric ones. The critiques toward this plan came from the Czech architect Jan Dubovy, who pointed out the problem of finding solutions for the newly formed settlements in megaprojects. In his critiques he also promoted values of the contemporary European urbanism, especially of the „garden city“ idea.² However, just some roads, a railway and a bridge, the airport and Belgrade’s fair were built on the area because of the swampy and inhospitable land and the lack of investments.



Fig. 1
General Urban Plan of Belgrade from 1923 by Djordje Kovaljevski. (Archive Đukić)

A decade later, in 1932, in the Regulation Plan for Zemun by Djordje Kovaljevski, done in a Beaux Art style, the urban expansion was planned southwards, toward Belgrade and Sava River. The new settlement was divided into three zones, differentiated by the population density: one dense, one medium and one rare populated areas. The dense populated area was planned to be the administrative, business and cultural core of the settlement. A square was planned in the center of the zone, connected with the other parts of the settlement, as well as with Belgrade, Zemun and Bežanija. The center was pointed out by a square with a monument and surrounded by public buildings.



Fig. 2
Urban plan of reconstruction of Belgrade from 1940 by Milorad Pantović. (Archive Đukić)

Another vision for the ideal city of Belgrade is shown in the sketch of Milorad Pantović, done for the touristic exhibition in Belgrade in 1940, with the aim of promoting mass-tourism. The plan suggested a radical reconstruction of the historic Belgrade. Pantovic followed Le Corbusier’s ideas about the abolition of the urban blocks and streets and the construction of skyscrapers surrounded by green

areas. New Belgrade was seen in this sketch as a huge landscaped city garden. Another idea for a radical reconstruction of Belgrade was proposed in 1941, on the eve of WW II. The sketch was done by Dragiša Brašovan and included the area of New Belgrade, named “Sava New Settlement-City Belgrade” too. New Belgrade was planned for 500.000 inhabitants as a connection between Belgrade and Zemun in a radial urban matrix. Besides the residential area and a new railway station, a huge park with sport and recreation facilities surrounded by representative public buildings such as theaters, museums, churches were foreseen. Brašovan respected in the plan the Olympic stadium project, done by the architect Werner March in 1940.

The period from 1945 until 1960

After the end of WW II, Belgrade became the capital city of the new-formed Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia. New Belgrade was conceived as a new governmental centre, reflecting the ideological and technological aspirations of the recently established socialist society. Its unique position in the topology of Belgrade enabled its total modern design based on a grid which followed the modernist ideas of Le Corbusier, proclaimed by CIAM in 1928. The ideas implemented in the urban plan denied the aestheticism and academicism and proclaimed the functionalism, presented by open mega blocks, divided functions, flat roofs and transparent ground floors.

The first urban plan “Sketch for the Regulation of Belgrade on the Left Bank of the River Sava” was designed by Nikola Dobrović in 1946, who was famous Serbian architect and the head of the newly formed Town Planning Institute.³ According to this plan New Belgrade was considered as an administrative center with governmental buildings, a new railway station and a residential area for diplomats. The urban matrix was asymmetrically radial (the main streets were planned parallel to the river Sava) and formal, with mega blocks and large percentage of greenery. The new building of the 50 m high Parliament was located within the historic Kalemegdan castle on the top of the hill, flanked by two skyscrapers of 100 m height.

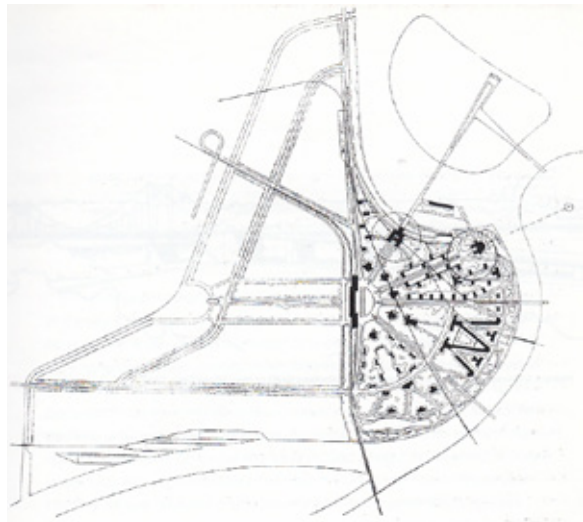


Fig. 3
Sketch for the regulation of Belgrade on the left bank
of the river Sava from 1946 by Nikola Dobrović.
(Archive Đukić)

The majority of the participants in the architectural competition in 1946 followed principally Dobrović’s concept, but neglected the radial urban matrix and suggested an orthogonal one. The member of the jury Josip Seissel divided in his report about the results of the competition the proposals into three groups, according to the size and the use of the space: maximalists, minimalists and the moderate solutions

(with middle measures/dimensions).⁴ The proposals for a new settlement for 200.000 inhabitants that covered 1300Ha (400 Ha for a public buildings zone) were opposed to solutions for a settlement for 70.000 inhabitants that cover 70 Ha for residential land use only. The most of the proposals belonged to the moderate solutions. However, it was clear after the competition that the idea of New Belgrade as a strictly administrative center was replaced by the more realistic one by the majority of the participants. There was a lack of housing after the war period and the number of citizens increased in Belgrade.⁵ Therefore the competition contributions proposed a large residential area in New Belgrade. At the same time an architectural competition for modern multi-family houses and apartments was launched.

The first version of the “Sketch for the General Regulation of the Communication System and the Land Use of New Belgrade”, done by Nikola Dobrović was finished in 1948 and it became the basement for the General Urban Plan (GUP) of Belgrade. The inputs for the plan were also a five years development program for the period 1947-1951, the analysis of the current situation and a program for the future development of Belgrade until 1966. The individual and creative method and the procedure in urban planning were replaced by the team decision-making. The Commission of Urbanism consisting of more than 30 experts in urban planning was part of a team, which created the GUP of Belgrade. The Action Plan, a financial framework plan for the implementation of the GUP Belgrade, which was mostly oriented toward the economic domain, was also considered as a part of the plan. The important zones of the city were preliminary studied through 3D models, urban design projects and sometimes even through preliminary construction plans. However the composition of the new city as well as the functional zones were defined. The plan proposed four units, each of them consisting of three mega blocks. The first unit, parallel to the riverbank was intended for the federal administration, while the others were planned for residential areas. The position of the Government Presidency Building, the Sava bridge and a luxury hotel were fixed in 1947 after a Design Competition. Some of the proposals were never accepted, such as the canal, connecting the rivers Sava and Danube and crossing New Belgrade or the artificial lake between the island of Veliko Ratno Ostrvo and the Danube riverbank. The GUP of Belgrade was adopted on October 20th 1950.

Several design competitions for New Belgrade were announced between 1947 and 1950: the competition for the FPRY Government Presidency Building, for the building of the Central Committee of the Union of the Yugoslav Communists and for typological apartments in multi-family residential houses. In the course of the competition for the Government Presidency Building a few general requirements were set: the position of the Central Committee Building as a landmark, the railway route and the position of a new railway bridge as well as for two other bridges across the river Sava, the complex of government buildings around the Central Committee Building and the diplomatic quarter with 20 representative buildings were fixed. The key elements for evaluating



Fig. 4
The General Urban Plan of
Belgrade from 1950.
(Archive Đukić)

the competition works were: monumentality, functionality, harmonization of the synthesis of architecture and art, the constructive solution and the contribution to the urban design of the location. Dobrović's concept from 1948 was completely negated in the proposals. None of the winning projects followed the radial pattern of Dobrović's sketch, but the hierarchical structure of the city center was accepted. Finally, New Belgrade was seen as an integral part of Belgrade and not only as a location for newly designed monumental buildings.

The planning of New Belgrade was continued with the Regulation Plan of New Belgrade by Vido Vrbanić and was finished in 1950. He insisted on the natural conditions (topography, microclimate, geology, hydrology), the demographics and specific contents within the functional zones.⁶ He designed the urban composition of New Belgrade insisting on its artistic realization and considering architectural values.⁷ Instead of the radial matrix and the diagonal axes, he used a formal orthogonal grid, with strictly defined functions within the zones and mega blocks. The initially proposed landscaped design of the new settlement was denied, and the "free standing structures" were re-planned as mega blocks with an exactly defined typology of buildings and assemblies. The residential area was planned for 80.000 inhabitants. 80% of the land within the blocks stayed unbuilt, while 70% was covered with greenery.

A next urban study of New Belgrade with the aim of checking and actualising the GUP was done in 1954 by Stanko Mandić. The study rejected the proposals for the regulation of the rivers and the formation of an artificial lake as well as the filling in and leveling of the entire area. It insisted on the integral approach to planning and simultaneous solving of the problems. It suggested the concentrated construction of tall apartment buildings in 11 nodes instead of the residential four-storey buildings with higher density. In the further

consideration of the urban plan of New Belgrade, the concept of the leveling of the ground was accepted as well as the general idea about the construction of tall buildings instead of four-storey ones.

The Town Planning Institute was founded in 1955 and one of its tasks was to continue the work on the GUP of New Belgrade. The new plan covered an area of 2.000 Ha. One of the authors of the plan was Branko Petričić who changed the New Belgrade once again according to the concepts of the Athena's Charter and Le Corbusier's model of the "Ville Radieuse" with focus on the landscape design and the insulations of each building. He offered a catalogue of blocks, with buildings set in square blocks with the dimensions of 400m/400m. The draft version of the plan has undergone significant changes after the discussions with experts in professional organizations and was adopted in 1958.⁸ The projects for the residential mega blocks 1 and 2 with 3600 apartments were built according to this plan between 1960 and 1963. The residential area was

strictly separated from the administrative one and the public buildings for culture and arts were located in a park along the Sava riverbank. Block 1 was in its form basically a square of 400/400m and block 2 was trapezoid-shaped. The residential buildings were organized in two basic types: towers, which were designed as landmarks, and long two-tack buildings, conceived as connecting visual elements. The public space of the urban blocks 1 and 2 was not articulated enough, which caused its inappropriate and uncontrolled use. Since the first generation of inhabitants came mostly from rural areas, they 'cultivated' this space in their own way, creating a semi-rural ambiance of gardens and small orchards around the buildings. Simultaneously, the traditional places for social interaction – streets and squares – were substituted with over-sized communal spaces which stimulated the alienation of the potential users.

Another design competition was announced for the residential block 21 in the central part of New Belgrade in 1958 and 1959. The main task of the competition was the solving of the conflict of functions along the Boulevard Mihajlo Pupin - the residential area was planned along one side of the boulevard and the administrative one along the other side. One of the demands of the competition was the design of the urban plan for the central part of New Belgrade. The first prize was not given and it was decided that a team made up of the winning participants should deliver the

Fig. 5
Urban plan of New Belgrade from 1950 by Vido Vrbanić.
(Archive Đukić)



plan for New Belgrade's central zone. The zone was planned as the central axes of New Belgrade connecting the Government Presidency Building with the new railway station. Three main squares represented the cultural and entertainment life along it.

The construction of Novi Belgrade started in 1948 by mobilizing the Youth Work Brigades which counted more than 100.000 people.⁹ At the beginning of the 1960s the construction was halted due to the economic crisis and the blockade by the USSR. The construction of the Government Presidency Building had been stopped in 1949 and continued six years later. The building has become a major focus of the new city and a decisive factor for the future planning of its central zone. The building concept was based on the "H-form" organizational scheme with two concave curved side blocks connected with a linking tract. The tract was extended in the center by an annex orientated to the park and the Danube River. The side blocks and the linking tract defined a spacious square and the access to the ceremonial entrance and the lobby on the ground floor.¹⁰ Giving up the construction of the complex ministry around the Central Committee Building, there have been significant changes in the planning of New Belgrade. The planning paradigm has changed and the so called "management city" became a "residential city". The construction companies took over the business from youth brigades in 1956 and continued the construction works.



Fig. 6
General Urban Plan of New Belgrade from 1958 by
Branko Petričić. (Archive Đukić)

The architectural style was in the spirit of the "socialist realism" but the politicization of the architectural scene was quite different from the one in the other socialist countries. The serious break between the Yugoslavian and the USSR communist parties happened in 1948 and was followed by the economic blockade of Yugoslavia. The braking up with the Soviet Union and the introduction of an own form of socialism, forced Yugoslavia to open to Western Europe, which brought a strong economic support of the capitalist countries in the following decades, a political independence and a privileged position in the communist part of Europe. During the cold war Yugoslavia was between two opposing systems and blocks - the capitalist and the socialist ones. Furthermore, it took a neutral position and was one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, according to which its foreign policy was oriented. During the 1950s, the economy was partly liberalized, the self-management public ownership in the production sphere replaced the communist concept of the state ownership, and

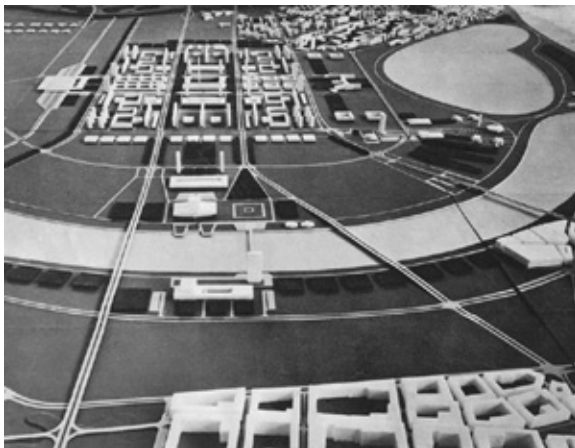
a decentralized political system was practically applied by transferring a large number of jurisdiction to the federated republics in the early 1960s.

The situation changed after the conflict and the Stalinist ideas and models were thrown off in Yugoslavia. The local architecture orientated to the modernist Soviet architects of the 1920s who defined the functionalism as a principle that is applicable in the context of the social needs and to the programs of CIAM defining a progressivist approach to the functionalist city.¹¹ The architects in Yugoslavia tried to re-invent the architectural style and to find new models to express their commitment for the creation of a “new architecture”, the so called “contemporary socialist architecture”. It was proclaimed in Yugoslavia that the architecture should have a political, social, moral and artistic cohesion as well as to “serve the masses” not the group of individuals.¹² Furthermore, the art and the architecture of the pre-war period were neglected. The thesis that architecture should change its qualitative values and that in the contemporary architecture there is no place for historic elements was accepted as a new way of thinking.¹³

The period from 1960 until 1990

A new Regulation Plan of New Belgrade which covered 4.160 ha was adopted in 1962. The plan was a basis for the further development of the other parts of New Belgrade until 1984, when the residential block 24 was built instead of an administrative one. The whole settlement was divided into five functional zones: housing, recreation, industry, public sector and agriculture. The public buildings were also positioned in the area. An integral part of the plan was the project for the monumental central zone. The plan of the central zone covered an area of 1600/1600 m. The central axes of the zone was planned as the main pedestrian prospectus and 12 skyscrapers were positioned at the corners of the blocks, along it. The detailed urban plan for Block 30 was done in 1967, but only the residential buildings, the commercial center and the local community center were realised according to this plan.¹⁴

Fig. 7
Regulation plan for the center of New Belgrade from 1962.
(Archive Đukić)



The Central Committee Building was realized in 1965 according to a design competition launched in 1960. The building was the highest one in New Belgrade until the 1980s. With its strong form of simple, pure parallelepiped covered with an aluminum and glass facade, and its position, this building was the main symbol of New Belgrade during the socialist era and is even today.

There were several other urbanistic competitions during the 1960s: the competition with invited participants for the residential mega block 29 in 1967, the federal competition for the residential mega blocks 22 and 23 in 1968 and the internal Belgrade's competition for the residential mega blocks 61 and 62 in 1971. The subject of the competition for the residential mega block 29 was a local community of 4000 inhabitants in 7 residential buildings. The rewarded works were constructed according to the urbanistic conditions, with a minimum of corrections of the buildings length. Each building has got a ground floor and six upper ones as well as an attic. A prefabricated frame system was applied according to the request of the investors.

The GUP of Belgrade from 1972 reconfirmed the urban regulation of New Belgrade and the previously posted goals. A Study of the Central Zone of Belgrade from 1976, took into consideration both sides of the River Sava. The concept re-emphasized the role of the Sava riverbanks and the Sava Amphitheatre as important urban connectors between the old and the new parts of Belgrade. An activation of both riverbanks was proposed.

Several studies, controversies and books were written about the possible reconstruction and regeneration of New Belgrade during the 1980s. In the book "Experience of the Past"¹⁵ the urban matrix and urban pattern of New Belgrade were compared to the matrix and patterns of historic towns. The idea was to change the urban pattern of New Belgrade into a "more acceptable for users and especially for pedestrians" one and to introduce the concept of the mixed use development.

An international competition for the New Belgrade Urban Structure Improvement was launched in 1985. The participants offered a variety of

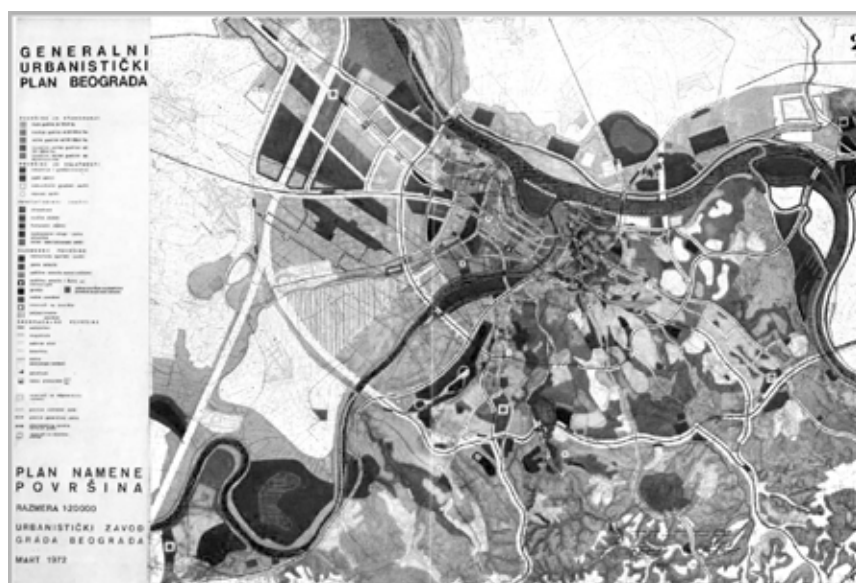


Fig. 8
General Urban Plan of Belgrade
from 1972. (Archive Đukić)

design proposals for the improvement of the urban structures of the central zone of New Belgrade and the Sava Amphitheater and were focused on filling in “the gaps” inside the mega-blocks. The implementation of small “villages” with little houses between the skyscrapers was seen as an idea for the regeneration of the blocks.

Facing the changes: the period from 1990 until 2015

The strongest efforts for changing the character of New Belgrade belonged to the period of the post-socialist transition which started in the 1990s. “Even at sites such as the central axis, where the question of forming an urban centre takes clear precedence over any other, the agenda for a new architecture and an urban representation has been narrated under an ideological veil of the market democracy, identified with economic viability in general and a principle of *laissez-faire*’s primacy over other regulatory instruments.”¹⁶ The 21st century brought significant changes in the physical and functional structure of New Belgrade. The density has increased, new commercial activities have been introduced and it has become one of the major construction sites in Belgrade. The original typology of the mega-blocks was modified with new buildings positioned along the existing boulevards changing the previous character of public spaces. The open modernist mono-functional assemblies were upgraded into a mixed-use development but some green spaces disappeared under hundreds of thousands of new square meters built up area. Considering the number of about 300.000 inhabitants and their new social structure, a new profile of space users/consumers and their contemporary needs, it was necessary to focus attention to the quality of the open and public spaces.¹⁷ Therefore, during the last decade, a process of revitalization and rehabilitation has started, (re)shaping the existing urban environment and inserting some new facilities.

The project and competition “Third Millennium” organized by the Serbian Academy of Science and Art in 1991, once again raised the discussion among the professionals about the connection between the two Sava riverbanks and the developing of the areas alongside. The main idea was the establishing of a cultural center. The organizers of the project invited seven teams and suggested seven topics on major development issues, one for each team: the City on Water and the ecological approach, the futuristic vision New Ada, the Sava boulevard, the Urban Matrix, the Sava City, the Border Zones and the Initial Places.

The end of the 1990s was marked by another proposal for the Amphitheatre - the study for a City on Water, made by the Town Planning Institute. The study re-lunched the idea of a closer connectedness between the urban tissue and the waterfronts, focusing on the both sides of Sava, as an integral functional and architectural entity. However, the special importance was given to the space of the river banks. The proposal included networks of canals and artificial islands which were supposed to link New Belgrade and the historic urban part,



while housing, commercial and business activities, services and tourism were integrated into compact urban blocks.

Fig. 9
City on Water.
(Town Planning Institute, 1990)

Another architectural design competition was launched in 2003 for a program and a design of New Belgrade's Block 16 (palace Ušće - ex Central Committee Building). The task was the redesign and re-modelation of the building with new business and commercial functions and with an urban design of the surrounding area. The adoption of the new architectural and urbanistic values as a positivist principle, such as the continuity and preservation, oppose to the demolition and contempt of all the previous attainments, was finally accepted. The whole process has shown the formation of a new awareness of New Belgrade, of its cultural and historical values.

The current GUP of Belgrade 2021, adopted in 2003, is a basic strategic urban plan document for the territory of the whole city and the only one covering the entire space of New Belgrade. It proposes the increasing of the intensity and a variety of activities and physical structures on both sides of the Sava riverbanks. The critical analysis of this plan shows that the issues of the New Belgrade development and transformation as a unique and specific urban architectural entity have not been recognized and that a basement for a future development is still missing.¹⁸ At the same time, New Belgrade is considered as an important urban part which should be activated as a new business and commercial center. The main problem of its current and probably future development is the process of filling in the undeveloped parts of the blocks under the pressure of the new commercial facilities which basically changes the character of the planned

urban matrix of New Belgrade's mega-blocks. Despite a declarative attitude that the ambiance of New Belgrade as a modern city should be preserved, open spaces are recommended for intensive development following the logic that more free spaces enable a greater scope of a new development.

The competition for a program and an urban and architectural design of the blocks 25 and 26 in New Belgrade in 2007 showed that the initial idea for the axis between the Governmental Presidency Building and the train station is definitely abandoned. One of the early examples of this process has been the Stadium Hall¹⁹, which construction started soon after the architectural competition in 1991 but was realized in 2007. This generic, introverted volume, further separated from the rest of the plan by a massive access-exit infrastructure, was not placed in an appropriate peripheral location, but was slightly moved to the axes. It was the first realized building in the previously planned center of New Belgrade, which undermined the symmetry and annulled the role of the axis. By changing the urban composition the central part of New Belgrade finally lost its symbolic elements and meanings.



Fig. 10
Palace Ušće after the reconstruction. (Đukić)

In the Block 67 modern housing was accomplished for the Universiade Student Games in Belgrade in 2009. Made up of six plots and spread over 14 hectares, the complex also included 35,000 square meters of commercial and retail space.²⁰

Conclusion

The urban planning of New Belgrade has shown continuity since the beginning of the 20th century until nowadays, although there were periods of stagnation caused by the political and/or economic crises. The characteristics of the period from 1921 until WW II and from 1945 until 1960 is the adoption of plans based on totally different concepts. Although there were several architectural-urbanistic competitions and a dozen of urban plans adopted between 1960 and 1990, there were no planned changes or differences in the planning concept during that period. However, it is important to emphasize that until the 1980s New Belgrade was planned as an integral entity based on the Regulation Plan adopted in 1962.

A series of non-economic factors, as the political, social, military and technological once which purpose was to demonstrate the superiority of the socialism over the capitalism or the state commitment to the society and the achieving of social equality were of great importance for the urban



Fig. 11
General Urban Plan of Belgrade 2021.
(Reproduction)

development in this period. New Belgrade was as a realized mega project the symbol of a new formed socialist country in the political and social ways. The social organization of the state was represented through this realization. In opposite to the current social policy, the government was obliged to care for the employment and to shelter all the residents. Very often the social goals were given priority in contrast to the logic of profit making. Therefore the socialist city offered, in comparison with the capitalist one, a different and higher level of social security, with a lower degree of residential segregation and marginalization.

The construction of the residential buildings in Block 24 carried out in the period 1984-1989, represented the first deviation from the Regulation Plan, as well as from the Central Zone Plan. Furthermore, the deviation from the



Fig. 12
New structures in Block 21 built during the last decade.
(Đukić)

original plans and concepts, the monumental grid and the axes continued with the construction of the Blocks 26 and 25 and Belgrade's Arena. Primarily developed as an antithesis of capitalism, which has essentially determined the concept and strategy of its development, New Belgrade today represents an illustrative example of how the market law defines the space organisation of the capital. The current urban transformations are colored by the specificities of the post-socialist development in which an unbalanced role of the actors involved dominated. Various current planning documents, from the Master Plan of Belgrade 2021 to the district regulation plans and municipality programs, provide certainly a good foundation for the future development of New Belgrade.

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Eva Vaništa Lazarević

Urban regeneration tools (city branding) in Belgrade after the democratic change in 2000 – social frame

Introduction

Serbia's capital Belgrade received in the past decade one of the best 'presents' it has ever received in its turbulent history: a brand name. This developed both spontaneously and naturally. The city went in the span of just a couple of years from having a terrible image to one of quality, interest and recognition.

Despite several Hollywood thrillers which tried to cast the Serbs as the 'baddies', or the main negative protagonists (a role inherited by the Russians) fighting against the good and noble US soldiers, a few pleasantly unexpected events occurred fortunately for Serbia during the transition period after 2000. A diverse mix of positive circumstances helped play their part in order to enhance these favourable outcomes.

If we look to the past, one that varies in comparison to other eastern European countries, Serbia and the Western Balkan region had the misfortune of living through an entire decade of cruel civil wars (1991-1999). This resulted in a long period of transition (1989-2000) from one system to another, namely to liberal capitalism.

The transition towards the liberalisation began after a dictatorial period lasting over five decades and ending in a period of postponed 'heroism', full of controversy. It was marked by a lack of strict laws and a laid back attitude of the state regarding the societal order. This prevailed until the tragic events of 2003, when the Prime Minister, the very person who liberated the country from the previous ruler, was assassinated. The ministries were occupied by new politicians, who came for the most part from the governmental institutions and lacked any real political experience. These individuals gelled well with the repositioned moral values of the society. Some political leaders came from

abroad, after receiving an education far from home, and were unversed in the local happenings. Unexpectedly, they met in their new posts with individuals who can be defined as inexperienced local 'revolutionaries'. This multi-party system helped to establish quickly a brand new and fresh society.

A whole decade after the Czech Velvet Revolution, the bloody fall of Ceausescu and just a few years before Bulgaria and Romania traced their road towards the EU integration Serbia found itself in 2000 in the middle of a whirlpool, crammed full of huge social reforms.

Analysing Serbia's social framework by that time seems to be a daunting task: The huge number of refugees migrating from Bosnia and Croatia changed completely the social structure in Serbia. The brutal behaviour of local soldiers, returning home after the war, very nearly became the norm. The young and middle aged intellectuals fled as far away as possible from the overcrowded country and the local media, with its newly gained freedom, misused their position and popularised this kind of behaviour, allowing it to further poison the country's already weak social structure. What is more, the crime, the drug trafficking and the corruption, penetrated all the social strata.

Still, the lively lifestyle of the Serbian metropolis has morphed to offer an amazing and mischievous nightlife taking place on countless raft water clubs and great local restaurants. This has given the City of Belgrade its spontaneous and famous image of being the European equivalent to Las Vegas or, even a 'sin city'. This is a place where everything seemed to be allowed, a place accessible for everyone. It is not only the mentality of the local population which defined this observation. It was also due to a set of circumstances, which give momentum to the local patriotism felt by its inhabitants, pushing the city to stand once again proud on its own two feet.

The City of Budapest has put for example a great amount of effort to invent and promote its image of being a gourmet's dream destination, as well as having a fantastic nightlife. The City of Sofia has done the same with its well-known "free spirit" slogan, promoting various forms of entertainment available. Belgrade, however, if we look at statistics, has taken over the role of the 'Kingdom of the Balkans' with regards to the opportunity for fun affordable for foreigners, with an environment that has a relatively blasé attitude towards a strict sense of order, but is still relatively safe. In the meantime, Belgrade's fresh creative community has once again spontaneously built all sorts of cultural amenities, which are both alternative and mainstreaming. The free spirited atmosphere resulting from the democratic changes that had taken place in the region, encouraged the free thought, a main characteristic of the cities we consider creative. Within only a few short years, Belgrade became famous for its affordable nightlife, liberated from the type of order which characterises western European countries. This image caught the attention of the tourism economy, which then led to economic regeneration. Economic prosperity

was generated independently, naturally, without any strategic assistance. The positive image of an easy and 'cool' place encouraging the organisation of events famous all over the globe, like EXIT, or people like the champion tennis player Novak Đoković whose success in his field has turned his name into a worldwide brand, a brand positively associated with the City of Belgrade and Serbia. The city's positive image change, or its new brand name happened more naturally and less strategically, which is a rather unusually occurrence, one that is rarely achieved with success. Plus, although the word, 'cool' is not strictly synonymous with 'good', it possesses a bit of the 'let's be naughty' in it: i.e. liberated from discipline and strict order.

Guidelines: urban regeneration tool and city branding

The image of a fresh capitalistic and consumer-oriented nation was soiled at the beginning due to its loaded role during the civil war. However, things began slowly to change in the first decade of the new millennium. The *city branding*, an important tool in the urban regeneration process was so present that we could almost feel it in the air, throughout the short period of a mere decade. However, it was not without its difficulties.

The city of Belgrade, with its population of almost 2 million, did its best to pass several steps in managing the newly gained position of a liberated metropolis faced with increasing social and urban issues. The author of this paper became a member of the City Council of Belgrade in November 2000, immediately after the Democratic change and the circumstances surrounding it.

Certain innovations were implemented from the moment the collaboration began on urban planning. In the euphoric post-revolutionary spirit and the four years afterwards, a great number of plans for the urban redevelopment and regeneration were established and implemented, from detailed regulation plans to regional ones. A new Plan for the General Regulation of Belgrade 2025 was adopted as well. Some new experts were invited by the municipal government to lead the process: the architects Vuk Đurović, Đorđe Bobić and Ljuba Anđelković, who took the role of the Head of the Commissions for Urban Planning. Thanks to their rich practical experience in urbanism and architecture and their persistence and drive, they were successful in categorising efficiently the many questions related to urbanism that remained open, bringing some sense of order and helping to prevent the expected chaos that was to be permeated by the city under its new leadership.

But the avalanche of events that occurred was greater than any law could prevent. The whole new illegal slums sprung up and were then wiped out in the late 1990s. The federal government's standpoint was, without any thought of the consequences, that this should all be accepted in order to help those forced to migrate into the country. Even today, the millions of square meters of illegally built neighbourhoods, full of unsuitable buildings and other structures,

like Kotež, Banjica, Jajinci, Altina (near Zemun), Medaković 3, Kaluđerica and Mirijevo can be seen throughout the city. Furthermore, some entire areas like Voždovac, Vračar and even Dedinje have increased due to the illegal building additions by 'faux' contractors, a trend which was impossible to stop all at once. This trend was able to go on due to impunity, giving the locals the 'green light' to do the same. It was the grave consequence of the state and the city's relaxed attitudes towards the critical social migration issue.

Another example of inappropriate construction is the Pink TV's building. The building grew under the influence of the previous (autocratic) ruler and was used as their main propaganda machine. Strangely enough, after the fall of Milošević, Pink continued to work and to grow, it was business as usual. Those now in charge located it on the best plot of land in Dedinje's residential neighbourhood and built a huge, utterly unsuitable in both form and in size building without the necessary permissions. Later on, with the help of persons with influence, the particular building received all the necessary construction permissions. Even worse, it became a model for future construction of raw, doubtful aesthetics, a display of arrogance.

Nevertheless, let's revert back to the relevant methods of urban regeneration offered. According to Prilenska,¹ the methods are the *Experience city* founding on the cultural and architectural heritage, the *Creative city* founding on the arts and finally the *Flagship 'mega' projects*. Both the *Experience* and *Creative cities* can be recognised as the main tools or factors used to brand a city, while the *Flagship mega projects* seem to be démodé. The international experience recognises that a strategy based just on one mega project is in the periods of economic crisis not opportune, as its purpose and expenses cannot be certainly defined.

The fashionable landscape and how to achieve it?

An enormous and somewhat ruthless struggle is currently taking place in the cities of Western Europe and the US as a result of the 'fashionable landscaping'. *Fashionable landscape* is perceived as the highest mark of excellence giving the city an image of success and is the final goal in the city branding.

The two main branches² towards the primarily goal of achieving a better urban image are the *spatial* and *non-spatial* ones. The *spatial* aspect includes the classical redevelopment or upgrading of the city landscape and of the infrastructure, while the *non-spatial* aspects focus according to Kavaratzis on the *structure* and *behaviour*.

The *structure* contains the community network, the public participation and the public-private partnerships. The *behaviour* deals more with the financial incentives, the service provision and most important, the event organisation. At that point we approach the creative aspect and incorporate the culture and

the arts. The final result of the various stages of city branding is certainly the improvement of the urban tourism, which depends on the previously stated factors. This means that the final scope of our goal is to achieve definitively the economic layer of urban regeneration, i.e. the economic regeneration.

The secondary approach implies the direct promotion or advertising, while the tertiary one relies on the word of mouth, reinforced by media, which is rather uncontrollable. The third one is extremely important in Belgrade's case, because the spontaneous and relatively fast upgrade of the city's image after 2000 relies in fact upon the word of mouth, the positive recommendations incl. the recommendations posted in the social network sites. The target group for the flagship strategy "cool nightlife" in Belgrade's brand is young, flexible and constantly on move from place to place.

The *creative cities* show a high concentration of creative economic outcome and rely on having a lot of creative groups present (human resources), and can overlap with those in the *experienced cities*, but they can also stand alone in a relicted area, devoid of any architectural heritage, as it is the case of Savamala presented in this paper. Nevertheless, *experience cities* can stagnate if there isn't enough 'life' in them (for example, the Strahinjića Bana Street, treated in this paper too). The best results for city branding come through the combination of both: *creative* and *experienced*.

Three case studies of branded neighbourhoods in Belgrade after 2000

Belgrade's successful branding story is unique and rare and comes about without the help of the strategic marketing, clever politics or intentions. All of Kavaratizis' previous mentioned characteristics, point out that this is closely linked to the non-spatial models of city branding: *structure* and *behaviour*. It involves all the impact of the human resources, the role played by the behaviour of the public, the social networks, the word of mouth marketing, the advertising and the events organisation by public-privat partnership and/or the agencies involved. The transparency is a necessity for the urban regeneration, for the purpose of rebranding a city, or for achieving a fashionable urban landscaping. In the *creative city* paradigm the fashionable urban landscaping strengthens the city's competitive advantage, while in the *experience city* paradigm the urban quality is a key attraction factor. The *flagship project* approach is seen as an old-fashioned method, but remains rather significant.

The experience city: Strahinjića Bana Street

One of the reasons of Belgrade's turbulent history is the location on the confluence of the rivers Sava and Danube, regarded as a focal point in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, the point of East-West meeting in the psychological and geographical sense. Belgrade possesses as an old European city a cultural heritage, famous for the important historic roles it has played: the core of the



Fig. 1
Strahinjića Bana Street, Dorćol, Jewish neighbourhood.
(<http://www.nadlanu.com/ostalo/adresar/kafici/Kafic-Insomnia.d-1650.161.html>)

prehistoric Vinča culture, a border stronghold of the Roman empire and a place, where several cultures and religions mixed during the five centuries of Ottoman rule and afterwards, as the border to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Therefore, those passing through and the turbulent changes that occurred traced indeed the main characteristic of this interesting and loaded spot. The fact that there has never been a period of more than 30 years between wars says a lot about Belgrade's history and explains all its characteristics and the drama that has made the city what it is today.

Belgrade's Jewish neighbourhood, Dorćol, with its traditional, mainly 19th century academician and neo-styles architecture, is a popular place today for both the city's inhabitants and the tourists. The experiences and memories of the past strongly impact the atmosphere. The Strahinjića Bana Street is ironically referred as the *Silicon Valley* because of the negative, but at the same time popular association with the type of young women who frequent the local bars, cafés and restaurants. It has become a trend setting spot where the new, post-war 'high' society consisting of profiteers and dubious business people in their expensive cars come to play after dark. The girls, however, are not prostitutes in the traditional sense, but are rather dependant on the wealthy businessmen, becoming their short-term companions, girlfriends or in some cases even wives. This sociological phenomenon is the result of the poverty of the eastern European countries, where it became very quickly a kind of business for women, showing the depressive and gloomy side of the society.

Dorćol with its target group of wealthy 'nouveau riche', but sometimes dangerous patrons is totally different from the other *creative city* case Savamala. Despite being famous for its beautiful architectural heritage and its status as the historical city core, deprived and neglected at the turn of the century, it still managed to produce a unique and interesting place for the 'easy going' day and nightlife. The post-transitional society explodes refreshed by the liberal capitalism with its ideas promoting the *easy life of golden youth* as already seen in Cuba in the 1950s, in Big Gatsby's New York of the 1930s or in Moscow of Beigbeder's novels of the late 1990s.

The tourism flourished in this period, because every post-war visitor wanted to enjoy and to take a photo of the extremely showy cars and the crowds of beautiful women in Strahinjića Bana Street, and than to see some counterparts, such as the sad remains in Kneza Miloša Street, left after the bombing in 1999.

Bayreuth's post-war image of Europe from the same year is, unfortunately, one of the sad aspects of the Belgrade brand that everyone wants to see, which is a phenomenon reminding the decadence at the end of the Roman Empire. The war-tourism has become trendy all over Europe and was a 'fashionable' way to spend one's time, visiting sharp and dangerous places like Chechnya or the Middle East. The smell, the feeling of insecurity and the novelty of a place yet to be explored also adds spice to Belgrade's image.

Due to the huge impoverishment of the people it has become nowadays rather tasteless to spend time sitting in cafés. The Strahinjića Bana Street is losing slowly its significance. The Sava river raft restaurants and nightclubs and even *Beton hala*, a former industrial facility adapted to accommodate trendy restaurants, have all dealt a final blow to Strahinjića Bana's image. Its reputation of a nightlife place has moved on to other areas of the city. Neither the significance nor the importance of its cultural heritage was enough to save the street. It seems the *experience city model of city branding* alone is not enough as a trigger to revitalise a neighbourhood.

The creative city: Belgrade's Savamala

Belgrade's Savamala area is elected as a case study for the *creative city model* because it's a rare phenomenon: it shows how sometimes a huge gap can be overleaped: a poor area, with a lack of valuable architectural heritage is increasing to an extremely attractive tourist spot, due solely to the creative industries presence. An important fact is its social framework and its creativity happening even under the poor economic conditions. The district, which is one of Belgrade's oldest neighbourhoods and the previous industrial port, officially opened its doors to welcome the tourists last year. Savamala (in Serbian 'Little Sava') presents rare remains of cultural heritage by some Ottoman relicts and historical buildings from the 19th and early 20th century. A lot of historical buildings were completely destroyed in the WW II, first by the Germans in 1941 and once again by the allied forces in 1944.

Savamala's dramatic and martyred history as well as the remaining, yet deteriorated architecture is what attracts people to the area. Perhaps we can compare it to East Berlin after 1989. Built as an industrial port on the Sava River during the Ottoman rule, it establishes in the 19th century as a trade and market centre, well-known for its talented craftsmen. The port experiences dramatic historical ups and downs. Many of the visitors have today the opportunity to hear interesting stories and myths and to become acquainted with Savamala's creative and cultural image. The *non-spatial* type of branding can easily be noticed here. The current most popular Belgrade tour is particularly focused on the cultural spots which sprung up over the last decade and which are based on the promotion of the creative industries: the Cultural Centre Grad, the Mikser house, the jazz and nightclubs and the designer collections presented in creative hubs contribute to the rebirth of



Fig. 2, 3, 4
Savamala neighbourhood.
(www.goethe.de/ins/cs/bel/prj/uic/prj/slu/enindex.htm)

the formerly deprived neighbourhood. The cultural events and places happen spontaneously the last decade and create a cultural hub with a rather interesting and alternative approach. The target group: hipsters, low income 20-somethings, as well as trendy, middle aged professionals give the area a new age urban spirit, far from the spirit of Strahinjica Bana Street at the early 1990s.

The economically and socially disadvantaged Savamala had a bad reputation to shelter the city's prostitutes and criminals. Many buildings were and are still vacant. Karađođeva Street, formerly one of Belgrade's most glamorous streets, is still serving today as one of the main traffic arteries used by semis and other transport vehicles, creating incredible noise and air pollution.

The prospect of some parts of Belgrade to become "creative districts or hubs", business and tourist attractions, surprised even the most imaginative urban planners. The individual and cultural initiatives, such as the Cultural Centre Grad, the Mikser Festival, or the Design Incubator Nova Iskra were the real forerunners on this new path. Throughout their unconventional 'step by step' acting and the renunciation of any plans or public financial support, the individual activities succeeded in resisting and overcoming all obstacles. Certain individuals, like the architects Nemanja Petrović and Nina Mitranic from the Savski Venac community, to which a part of Savamala belongs, helped supporting the process.

The cultural and design-led regeneration has reached, without any initial strategic prospective, results of high quality. That being said, there are still many unresolved issues of property ownership due to the inefficient local courts (one example being denationalisation). Savamala's future prospects, however, are unpredictable. The experience from the late 1990s onwards has shown that the combination of authorities of little influence and of powerful tycoons supported by even more powerful politicians will leave too little space left over for the social and cultural re-development of Savamala, despite the

fantastic efforts of the people with vision, whose spontaneous actions have been breathing life in the neighbourhood. It seems that a number of Serbian tycoons as well as several war profiteers and people engaged in shady business have, in secret, become property owners in Savamala. They have purchased property at extremely low prices and are now waiting for the future gentrification of the entire area, to make profit. The economists say that the limited public resources, the urgent needed investments in the infrastructure and the current financial crisis have contributed to the collapse of the real estate market in Serbia as well as to the sudden halt of investments after April 2010. Still, Serbia's tycoons have already managed to secure successfully great investments in this area.

Savamala sits today restless between the former and the current political climate, each struggling for supremacy. Both offer good conditions and alternative forms and approaches on how to revitalise the city's quarter but only on 'short-term lease' to those individual enthusiasts who dare to take the plunge.

The flagship project: Belgrade on the water³

The Serbian government launched in collaboration with an investment fund from Dubai the *flagship mega project* "Belgrade on the Water" presented to the public in 2014 and introduced by a huge media campaign. The urban renewal project aims to create a new business hub in Belgrade, with the intention of giving some hope to the people in times of economic difficulties and a disaster-stricken country. About 1.5 million m² are to be built up within the framework of the project. What makes the project so unique is that the new buildings are situated right along the banks of Sava, the area referred to by the *Sava amphitheatre*. The extremely desirable location has gone in the past through several unsuccessful renewal attempts. The first step to be overcome is to clear the land and to prepare it for the urban development. Thanks to a loan from the Kuwait Fund amounting to €25 million, it will become possible to complete the works on the new, relocated railway station. The investors hope, the 'overly ambitious' considering Serbia's current situation project will be implemented within five to six construction phases. The first phase consists of building a huge shopping mall and a tower. Mohamed Alabbar, the investor famous for the skyscraper Burj Khalifa in Dubai, has estimated the investment volume on €2.5 to 2.8 billion.

Fig. 5

Flagship projects: Belgrade on the water.



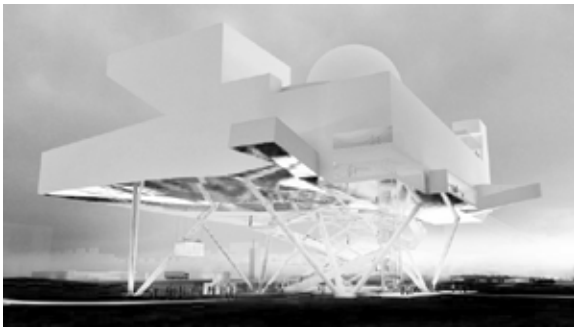


Fig. 6, 7
Flagship projects: Belgrade on the water.

The project proposed by foreign architects without any local impact has provoked a lot of negative public attention. Both the public and the architectural professionals are opposed to the project. The self-satisfied vibe of those who presented this project, not chosen from an open, international competition, but rather imposed and elected by politicians, provoked general disapproval from the public. The purpose of the development project is to create a multi-functional complex with luxury hotels, trade and business premises and exclusive apartments overlooking the Sava River. The disapproval of the public continues to grow, as the general opinion is that this type of development is inappropriate and unnecessary, considering the country's terrible social situation. Some brave enough to step forward institutions and local NGOs like the Ministry of Regional Development and the Architect's Society objected very publicly. Their main concerns being: the absence of decisions made locally, the absence of transparency in the decision-making process and the urban and architectural concept worked out without the launch of an international competition or the participation of the local architects.

One of the arguments for this type of investment, which represents a possible way to a successful city branding, is that the Serbian capital boasts a very favourable and well connected geographic position in South-Eastern Europe. However, even an expensive flagship strategy has the possibility of misleading, especially when those who present the main triggers for such a development evade both the public and the professional community by failing to fully engage and inform the locals in the process.

There are more flagship projects on hold in Belgrade today: the new *Beton hala renewal project* and the *Centre for the promotion of science* project in New Belgrade, both elected after competing in large international competitions. Also, several brownfield locations receive (still in the project phase) a new image: the *New Mill* near Mostar Bridge, the *Luka Beograd* and the Danube River regeneration project. Neither of these flagship projects received as high marketing boost as the *Belgrade on the water*.

The stakeholders in the urban regeneration process, local agencies: URA

After two decades of urban regeneration experience in Europe, several conclusions can be made which help us to empower this method in order to achieve cultural sustainability and to promote the city branding and the city's competitiveness:

- A ministry or at least an agency responsible for urban regeneration⁴ must be established in order to create and regulate procedures.
- A strategic plan of the redevelopment areas and the incorporation of the gentrification and regeneration into legislation.
- The culture design-led regeneration presents successful and relatively quick results.
- The main concepts we focus on are primarily sustainable designs of high quality supporting the urban identity.

By the new and improved models, known as the Renaissance Process, happening now in Great Britain, we can highlight the general guidelines, which are commonly used today global:

- The public-private partnership is a smart and successful way of organising the regeneration process.
- A master plan is needed for all public regeneration projects.
- All the regeneration projects must be the subject of public, national or international design competitions.
- A National Urban Design Framework must be established with key design principles integrated into the planning guidelines.
- The local architectural centres and communities must be involved on a national level to promote urban regeneration projects and to disseminate information, engaging the public.

The experience tells us that the influence of the so-called "active protection of the cultural heritage" is crucial. This includes respecting heritage and building around it, in such a way that fits in with the life of a city and/or its regeneration process. The changing of the function and the interpolation of the old urban fabric and its mighty and prominent architecture is a process meant to draw the capital into the neglected areas, making them desirable and justifiable.

The author of this paper formed in 2003 one of the first NGOs in Serbia which concerned itself with urban issues. The Association for Urban Reconstruction (URA) focused on establishing the collaboration between the City Hall and the University of Belgrade with its experts and the investors and sponsors. It was founded following the European model, including a well focused team of experts, ready to provide know-how.

The URA was created to be flexible, a small organisation consisting of post graduate professionals (with the aim of avoiding length and drawn-out red tape) and invited experts to solve specific issues in accordance with their particular

field of expertise. The URA's structure could not fall as a non-profit organisation a victim to corruption. The URA was initially organised to be the promoter of city branding and the initiator of the urban regeneration. Their experts were meant to provide plans and projects for urban renewal. Their methods were formed in accordance with successful and well documented case studies and models from all over the globe. They were to invite possible investors and other organisations to help finance the renewal of particular areas of the City of Belgrade. They were created as an open, transparent association, one that was considered an incorrupt trigger for the urban regeneration process. Unfortunately, this model was never implemented in our society. After several unsuccessful attempts, it seems that this type of organisation would serve only to disrupt the status quo: trigger – federal government – private investors – urban regeneration process.

Conclusion

For a healthy society it is important to educate future stakeholders to lead and promote urban regeneration projects. The principles of city branding observed in this paper, the *Experience city*, the *Creative City* and the *Flagship projects* can be used in order to promote regeneration projects. The advantages and disadvantages as well as the potentials and possibilities are shown in a table. We can conclude that each of the several principles mentioned has more or less potential and good and not so good characteristics. We can suggest they be mixed and overlapped in order to better each individual method, creating one that has more drive and is more efficient. The competition between the European cities has never been so fierce. We cannot rely on spontaneity and natural processes, believing in good-fortune. In order to become a city that can compete with the other great cities of Europe we have to use all the tools we have available at our disposal.

We must take full responsibility in this matter as well, by making all information accessible for the public and to hire local professionals.⁵ Only a well prepared organisation, competing through international architectural competitions can provide the best possible designs, which are crucial to the urban regeneration process.

The fact that the public-private partnerships or the NGOs, such as the URA, which are most needed in Serbia's urban regeneration, have to become part of the framework of recommended guidelines in this process is an indication for the still somehow chaotic situation in the country. So many activities analysed in this paper were done on an ad hoc basis is a proof that the complex urban regeneration is not under control as it should be. The mixed combination of social unreset, economic disaster and political transitions which began in the 1990s and still continue today, have resulted in a serious lack of strategy, discipline and total disregard of the rules. Belgrade's *city branding* happened as a result of luck or spontaneity and not within the framework of rules and

regulations and certainly without a strategy. An important tool in urban regeneration is the expertise of the local professionals and the implementation of the international one. As for us, the professionals, it is up to us to implement proven and new strategies and to persist, despite the less than desirable current climate.

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- 1 Prilenska, Viktorija: City Branding as a Tool for Urban Regeneration: Towards a Theoretical Framework, in: *Architecture and Urban Planning*, 2012/6 pp. 12-16.
 - 2 Kavaratzis, Ashworth: City Branding: an Affective assertion of identity or a transitory marketing trick?, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 2005, No 96, pp. 506-514.
 - 3 <https://www.wieninternational.at/.../belgrade-on-water>.
 - 4 The NGO called the *Agency for Urban Regeneration* (URA) began operating in July 2004 under No. 6903, Reg. No. 2494 and protected as 'intellectual property;', under the leadership of the Author of this paper. It was the first NGO to focus on urban issues in Serbia.
 - 5 Dr Keith Dinnie: *City Branding: Theory and Cases*; www.amazon.co.uk.

Urban regeneration tools (city branding) in Belgrade after the democratic change in 2000 – social frame

Milena Vukmirović

Belgrade: The quest for the desired city image

A Theoretical background

Cities and regions need to attract the development “players”¹ for achieving a better position in the global hierarchy of cities. Harvey² describes the situation as a *transition from managerial to entrepreneurial* activities of the cities and regions with the intent to find new forms of competitive capitalism. Under these conditions the marketing and its tools become important part of the developmental strategies, serving the promotion and placing of the city’s potentials in the global economies.

The city branding represents a segment of the strategic marketing that aims to promote the image of the city, its products and tourism, and to attract the investments. Thus, the place marketing grows to a key urban development aspect.³ It could be seen on the other side as a social process that achieves the needs and desires of the people by the creation and exchange of products and values.⁴ This research focuses on the spatial domain and the elements of the urban environment that could contribute to the image creation.

The competitive identity of the city

The product branding concept is accepted and applied by companies, destinations, and more recently by places, cities and regions.⁵ One of the causes is seen in the expanding of the market of places and their culture, reputation, services and investments on a global level. This creates a competitive arena for the cities in order to attract the visitors, investors and future citizens who tend to find *a harmonious place where various aspects of the benefits, economic development and political stability can meet their individual needs and requirements.*⁶

The change of the focus from the product integrity to companies and people behind the brand leads to the identification of the particular components of brand: the *identity* and the *image*. The city brand is the presentation of the *city identity*, which defines the favourable *urban image*.⁷ Branding means on the other side the establishing of a link between the brand and the consumer by reflecting the physical and psychological needs of the citizens and visitors. Branding is a starting point for place marketing and a framework for managing the urban image. Certain strategies, approaches and concepts of product and corporate marketing and branding are of relevance. Simon Anholt introduces the term *competitive identity* as a precise explanation of the application of the elements of marketing and branding to the state, region or city. To understand the concept of the urban image⁸ it is necessary to understand the concept of identity and the ways it establishes. Considering this, the *cities have to provide a pleasant, prosperous and sustainable life for its citizens, visitors, neighbours and business partners, and it will contribute to recognizing a city around the world*.⁹

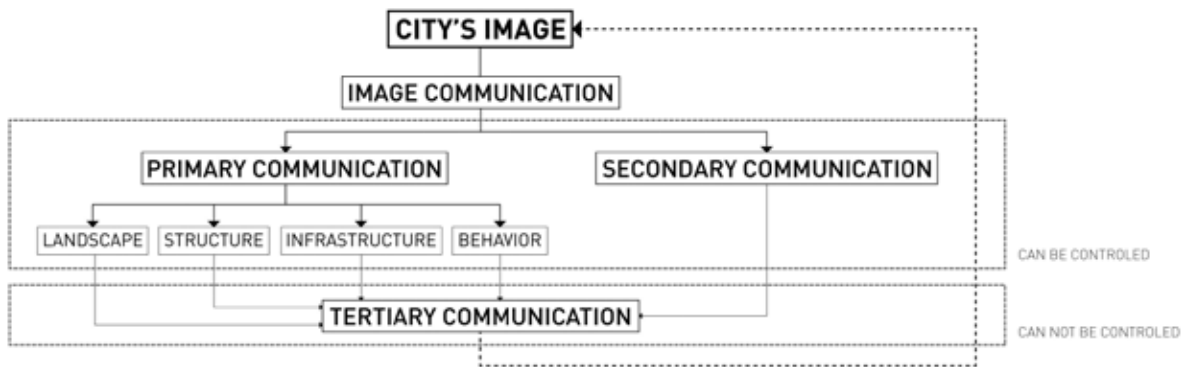


Fig. 1
The theoretical framework of place branding. (Vukmirović)

The components of the city brand are in this sense two: *the city identity* and the *city image*. While the *identity* explains the self-perception and self-definition (Who we are?), the *image* explains the attitude of others about us or our attitude about others (Who and what they are?).

The cities have individual shapes, contents and meanings. The people understand the cities on the basis of the individual reception of the urban shape. The people give meaning to a place or construct it in mind by three processes: the planned interventions, the ways they use certain places and the different forms of representation of the city. The acquisition of the information is a mental process which forms the *image* of the city and which serves as the basis for further interaction with the environment.

The identity-image communication model

The model “identity-communication”¹⁰ is characterized by a pragmatic approach, a clear display of the identity inseparability, the communications and

CITY IDENTITY-IMAGE COMMUNICATION MODEL

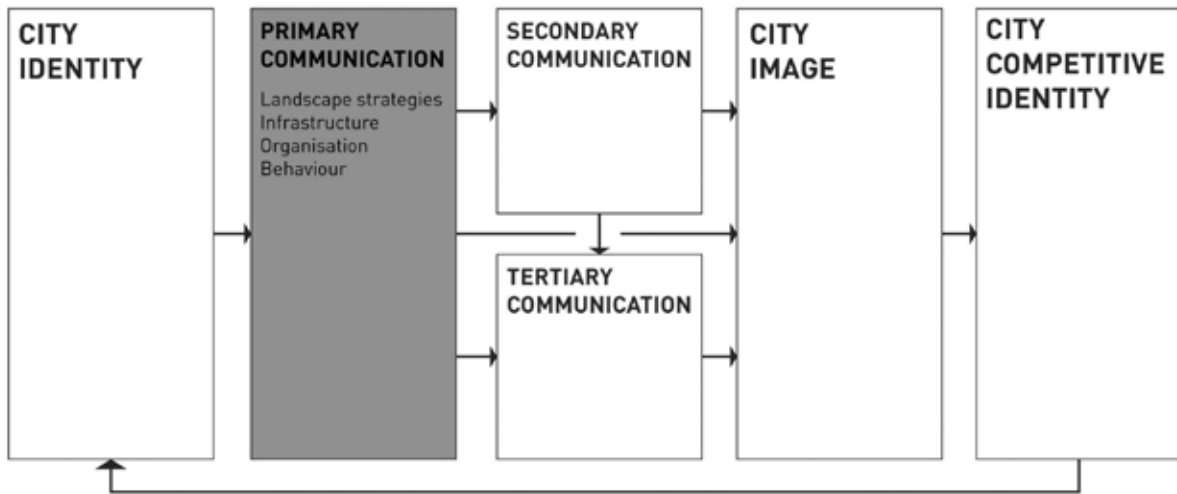


Fig. 2
The city identity-image communication model.
(Vukmirović)

the image in providing competitive advantages and in describing the key role of a municipal communication system. The communication is the three-fold bridge between the identity, the image and the population. It stresses the fact that all the activities are performed in the name of the inhabitants and that the final goal is the life quality improving.

The model points out the importance of the identity and the communication, but also the change of treatment of these elements from functional to strategic ones. Observing the city communication as a three-fold system encompasses *the primary, the secondary and the tertiary communications*. The *primary communication* encompasses the communication effects of the city activities. It is divided into four broader areas of intervention: *the landscape strategies, the infrastructure projects, the organizational and administrative structure and the city's behaviour*. The *landscape strategies* include the urban design including the open spaces and the architectural features. The art in open public spaces can be also considered part of the cityscaping and has a strong communicative effect. The *infrastructure* concerns the city's accessibility, but also certain facilities, such as cultural and conference centers etc. The *organisation* means the administrative structure, the way of public participation in the decision-making and the forms of public-private partnerships. The management of the city marketing and branding by the authorities falls in this category too. The *behaviour* includes the city services available, the number and type of organized events and the way the authorities try to get stakeholders to invest in the city. The *secondary communication* contents the formal intentional communication: the well-known marketing instruments of in-door and out-door branding, the public relations, the graphic design etc. The *tertiary communication* is based on the word of mouth and word of mouse. It is connected to the previous two modes of communication by an interrupted line and those participating in the marketing process cannot influence it. *The entire process of branding and the*

*other two types of communicating the image aim to encourage and strengthen positively the tertiary communication.*¹¹ This especially applies to the population groups, which are the most important target audience in the city branding and the most important participants in the place marketing.

Kavaratzis¹² starts from the premise that all the dealing with the city takes place by the perception and the image. In accordance with this it becomes necessary to plan the image and to place it on the market. On the other side, there is an opinion that *everything a city consists of, everything that takes place in the city and is done by the city, communicates messages about the city's image.*¹³ The model of the city image communication and Karavatzis opinion show that the urban design and development are decisive factors for the city's imaging.

The new role of urban design

Considering the perspectives of the European urban system, Gospodini observes five key factors: the different economic foundation and the skilled human capital, the high technology services and educational institutions, the developed infrastructure, the high quality urban environment and the institutional capacity to define the development goals. On this basis the urban design takes a more important position in the economic development. In the past the quality of the urban environment represented *the result* of the economic growth, in contrast to the present, when it is taken as *a prerequisite* for an economic development.¹⁴ The main task of the local government is in this sense to establish spatial conditions attracting businesses and people. The sites and cities are asked to improve their attractiveness¹⁵ and the image¹⁶ in order to achieve development.

The tendency to identify the urban design with the urban management coincides with the return to the city planning aesthetics observed since the 1970s. This is seen as a part of the commodification of the culture, which has led to the situation in which *urban places and architectural forms become consumer items or packed environments that simulate the logic of promotion and flow of goods and capital.*¹⁷ The urban design is seen as *a visual cities' improvement* in order to promote the city, to increase its competitiveness and participation in the global markets.

Since the urban design appears in the 1980s along with the trends to urban marketing, a critical response is generated, when reducing the urban design to an aesthetic of the venture.¹⁸ Two errors are noticed that has to be corrected: The first relates to the fact that the urban design is not limited to improving the visual quality of the environment. The second adjustment refers to the treatment of the urban design as an urban management tool. In addition to the use of urban design for increasing the revenue and for the purpose of goods exchange, it is an instrument that contributes to serve all the citizens and not just a particular group.

The right to the city

The right to the city is according to Lefebvre¹⁹ the right to a transformed and renewed urban life. Following Lefebvre's concept of the right to the city, Harvey starts with Park's quotation that *the city is the human's most consistent and most successful attempt to make the world according to the man's wishes. But if the city is the world which is created by humans, it is the world in which they are henceforth condemned to live. Thus man is making the city remade himself, indirectly, and without a clear understanding of the nature of his work.*²⁰ Harvey uses the quote to require the dependence of the city on *what kind of people we want to be, what kind of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish, what everyday life we want, what kinds of technologies we deem appropriate, what aesthetic values we hold*²¹. His vision of the *right to the city* refers to a commitment to some kind of shaping power over the processes of urbanization and the ways cities are built and reshaped.²²

This is very important for the cities' development because in the case of an omission we obtain the cities as beautiful, but fortified fragments, of gated communities and privatized public spaces kept under constant surveillance. This leads to a serious problem because it becomes harder to maintain the ideals of urban identity, citizenship and belonging, already threatened by the neoliberal ethic. And if they are neglected, that will undermine the foundation of a positive city image. Considering this, the new role of urban design should be treated with caution, because it *implies bouts of urban restructuring through "creative destruction"*²³, which almost always has a class dimension.

The city competitive identity project

In the context of the communication of traditional and contemporary values, the city is primarily a phenomenon of identity in the domain of culture, whereas, of course, the administrative, economic and touristic character belongs to this domain. Accordingly, the identity is viewed as a project that has the pretension to mark a group of people, in this case the citizens of a particular city.

Since the experience of spending has become a complex and emotional one and since the global exchange of technology, capital and labour establishes a real chance for "immaterial labour" and the intellectual capital to become financially measurable resources, brands become phenomena of neoliberal capitalism.²⁴ Thus city brands or their competitive identities may be not only a source of identity rather than differentiation and identification, continuity and collectivity.²⁵ *The city competitive identity project must be conceived, designed and implemented as an identity system that takes into account the tradition of cultural heritage, natural beauty, current services and existing identities of the actual residents of the city*²⁶. Such an identity system forms a symbolic communication program that is intended to reflect the entire community, but accounts with individual identities as well.

Balmer's and Grey's model of identity-communication and Karavatzis's model of city image communication can be connected to a new hybrid model of city identity communication. The model shows different elements of generating the city image and its competitive identity. It encompasses general aspects, but also those that belong to the sphere of the physical production of symbolic i.e. identity contents. The urban design and architecture function in this framework as a materialisation of the relationship between the capital and the interventions in the urban environment.

The strategy, substance and symbolic actions

In order to analyse the contemporary identity contents placed within the domain of the primary communication there is a need to consider the framework developed by Simon Anholt, titled as the concept of strategy plus substance plus symbolic actions. Anholt presented it as *a classic 'three-legged tool': an approach that cannot stand up unless all three conditions are met.*²⁷ This framework is made *because policies and ideas alone, even if effectively implemented, are not sufficient to persuade foreign publics to part with their existing prejudices and perceptions, which in the case of city images may prove exceptionally resilient to change.* Therefore, as Anholt highlights, *the substance must be coupled with strategy and frequent symbolic actions if it is to result in an enhanced image* as well to generate the city's competitive identity.²⁸

Observed separately, the *strategy* refers to the findings about what city is and where it stands today as well as where and how it wants to move to. It also needs to cover desires of a wide range of different city actors into a more or less single direction and to find a strategic goal that is both inspiring and feasible. The *substance* refers to the effective execution of the strategy in by new economic, legal, political, social, cultural and educational activities, which will bring about the desired progress. The *symbolic actions* are finally a particular species of substance that happens to have an intrinsic communicative power. They are important components of the city story and its media.

Bearing in mind the nature of allocated parts, Anholt has identified five possible bad scenarios, depending on their absence in the city development:

- Strategy + Substance – Symbolic Actions = Anonymity
- Substance – Strategy + Symbolic Actions = Incoherence
- Strategy – Substance – Symbolic Actions = Spin
- Strategy – Substance + Symbolic Actions = Propaganda
- Symbolic Actions – Substance – Strategy = Failure.²⁹

By following the established methodological framework and having in mind the character of the current period, five priority urban design and architectural projects were analysed and interpreted as an indicator of Belgrade's efforts to build its competitive identity.

B Belgrade case study

As some other capital cities that once belonged to the Socialistic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia³⁰, Belgrade suffers under identity problems. The city has the status of a capital for many years although the changing territorial boundaries and names.³¹ The turbulent period of the national states establishing and its final outcome occur at a time when the national community culture and the state-level economy somewhat disappear from the global stage.³² This coincides with the period when the urban image and reputation start becoming more powerful components in the global competition of the cities.

Belgrade has a multiple role and significance in the Republic of Serbia. It belongs to the category MEGA4 of the European areas of growth and development. A quarter of the population of Serbia live in Belgrade on 7.4% of the territory of Serbia.³³ Belgrade has the highest concentration of scientific, intellectual, cultural and service facilities, developed infrastructure and of resources in the field of the information technologies, communications, creative industries and public services. The city has a very important geo-strategic position on the River Danube Corridor 7 and the Corridor 10. The location is of importance on the intra-regional, regional as well as on the interregional level.³⁴ The conditions for integrating the city of Belgrade in the the European metropolitan network are very promising.

The planning and strategy documents – strategy

The discontinuity in almost all domains, the suffered image and the challenges dictated by the global trends demand a fast, but wise response and the establishing of an appropriate framework of strategies and plans for the future. The beginning is set with the adoption of the Master Plan of Belgrade 2021³⁵ made by the Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade in 2003. The four

Fig. 3
The Flagship Project located at the confluence of Sava and Danube. (Vukmirović)

FLAGSHIP PROJECTS LOCATED AT THE CONFLUENCE OF THE SAVA AND DANUBE



actualisations since 2003³⁶ reflect *the steps of maintenance of the urban plans under the Law on Planning and Construction and the changing needs of the Republic of Serbia and the city of Belgrade.*³⁷ The second document of importance is the Regional Plan for the Administrative Territory of the City of Belgrade adopted in 2004³⁸. The Plan states as a main goal the protection, spatial planning and development of the city in correlation with its metropolitan area on the principles of the sustainable development. It is expected that the implementation of the plan *would increase the attractiveness of the city and provide the conditions for reaching the standards of the European capitals.*³⁹ The last reference developmental document is The City of Belgrade Development Strategy. The Strategy has been adopted in March 2011 with the basic goal *to find the best manners to raise the City of Belgrade on a higher level, the level of the big European cities, by a modern economy and advanced technology, to help it become a capital in which the citizens will live prosperously, safely, and in a healthy environment.*⁴⁰

Within the objectives and the strategic priorities, the task is to strengthen the city's position in the constellation of the European capitals, i.e. to enhance the economic and cultural structures, to regulate the urban and rural areas according to the contemporary ecological and aesthetic standards, to integrate the natural and cultural goods in its territory and to highlight the important markers of identity.

The Strategy defines the basic recommendations for strengthening Belgrade's identity as a criterion for the economic development and especially for the tourism, as well as the affiliation of the citizens to the territory they live on. Considering the actual tendencies, the city's identity is marked mainly by the central urban zone, and in absolute terms, the position of Belgrade on the mouth of Sava and Danube. But in the future *the emphasis will be on the restoration of the existing urban structures, especially the central parts, their compactness, identity, mixed uses, green areas, river banks, as well as facilities and complexes of capital value. The natural and cultural heritage will have a special role in this, and the city will try to draw maximum value from this part of its capital, thus competing in a special manner with the European capitals.*⁴¹ The strengthening of the competitiveness is seen as a fundamental goal as well. It has to be achieved among others by the activation of dormant resources as well as the mobilization of the local capital, inactive so far.⁴²

As the first document of this kind, the Strategy defines the priorities for the period 2011-2016.⁴³ After observing a great number of projects in their sense as markers of the city identity and as a form of the city's primary communication, we studied five on-going projects defined in the strategy as topics of priority: the *Beko Master Plan*, the *City on Water*, the *Ada Bridge*, the *Beton Hall* and the *Belgrade Waterfront*. The projects belong to the "natural core" of the city - the confluence of Sava and Danube, recognised as the basic symbol of Belgrade's European identity.

Perceived as integrated projects for the presentation of the cultural landscapes, they would help in the promotion of the identity in the context of the current communication of the European Regions. In addition to the priority projects, the strategic documents included operational measures and tasks that need to be undertaken and controlled in order to achieve the objectives and the positive effects of the *primary communication*:⁴⁴ the stable political will directed towards a sustainable physical development,⁴⁵ the promotion of the city's identity,⁴⁶ the forcing of development catalysts,⁴⁷ the establishing of new or the emphasising of existing City attractions⁴⁸ and the promotion of Belgrade as a creative city.⁴⁹

Besides the established operational measures and tasks, the principles of the urban structure transformation include: the consideration of the market conditions and the new land ownership status, the controlled and planned support of the private housing construction, the assigned priority for restoration of the urban subcentres, the planned treatment of the whole inhabited municipal territory, the renovation of the central districts by the preservation of their traditional image and residential functions interlinked with business activities and the strict control of the construction of



Fig. 4
The location of the Beko Master plan.
(Google Earth)



Fig. 5
The location of the Beko Master plan.

large shopping and business centres, which would be always subjected to the criteria of setting, identity and quality of the environment. These measures, tasks and principles are important, because they serve as a benchmark of Belgrade's *primary communication* quality, as well as its *competitive identity* implementation.

Review of the actual development projects – substance and symbolic actions

The Beko Master Plan is an urban regeneration proposal for a multifunctional complex replacing the former “Beko” textile factory in the immediate vicinity of the Belgrade Fortress. It is located about 500 meters away from the city centre and on top of a cultural axis that connects some of Belgrade's most important destinations. Designed by Zaha Hadid Architects, the project is conceived as a mark of the continuance of Belgrade's “modernist” movement, which was abruptly discontinued in the 1980s.

The project started in 2007, when the “Beko” property was sold to the Greek company Lamda Development.⁵⁰ The Centre for Urban Development Planning (CEP) launched in November 2008 the initiative to work over the Detailed Regulation Plan of the entire city block owned by the Property Development.⁵¹ CEP started the plan changes based on the opinion of the relevant public institutions requested by the Department for Urban Development of the municipality.⁵² The public was informed about the activities for the first time in December 2009, although the public interest was determined as a primary factor. The draft plan was put on a public display in the summer 2011 and was adopted in March 2012. The former master plan for the Beko area from 1969, which defined a recreational area on the disputed site, ceased to be valid.



Fig. 6
Urban regeneration proposal by
Zaha Hadid Architects.
(ZHA)

The project of the Beko complex was first time presented as *the city's new and happening centre* at the Belgrade Design Week in 2012. It foresees the covering of 94,000 square meters and includes edge residential spaces, galleries, offices, a five-star hotel, a state-of-art congress centre, retail spaces and a department store, etc., *that will infuse a completely new life to the historical quarter of Dorcol* and form a destination point on the direction between the Belgrade Port, Beton Halla and Savamala.

The basics for the project can be found in the Master Plan of Belgrade 2021, where the block is modified in a city centre and which states that the earlier detailed plan is not mandatory unless the changes are in accordance with the plan. In addition, it can be detected in the Development Strategy of the City of Belgrade as well, as one of the priority projects defined as the "Belgrade brownfields" (Ada Huja, the Shipyard, "Beton" hall, etc.).

The initiative "Who build the city?" has actively monitoring and reacting on the particular decisions made by the city authorities, but their public participation and action didn't achieve any effects. The most of the critics concerned the location choice and the integration in the surrounding. On their round table Megdan around Kalemegdan, the initiative draw the attention on the limited time for the citizens involvement in the planning process and on a series of activities and decisions of the public institutions that are against the public interest. The general conclusion of this event was that *the problems were not in contempt of procedures and norms, but in their deregulation and relativism, as well as the lack of transparency behind the certain decisions.*⁵³

The public opinion about this project is in general divided. It varies from the excitement and the highlighting of the avant-garde design of the well known star-architects, to the complete disapproval of the proposed solution and the criticism that this is one of their prominent worse solutions. The positive opinions follow mainly the logic of the neoliberal urbanism and the argumentation that the project would bring Belgrade a financial investment of



Fig. 7-9
Urban regeneration proposal by Zaha Hadid Architects.
(ZHA)

€ 200 million, would stimulate the current local architectural practice, would invest in the central part of the city and remove some dilapidated buildings from the close environment. The negative critics refer on the other side to the inappropriateness of the modern structure in the historic area, the inadequate dimension of the complex in relation to the Belgrade Fortress, the treatment of the block rather than the entire immediate environment, the endangered view axes of the city, the traffic problems as well as the cost effectiveness of the venture.

Following the explained analytical framework defined by the *competitive identity communication model* and Anholt's 3-segment tool, we can conclude that the project has its *primary communication* in the domains of the *organisation* and *behaviour*. It is positive in the sense of the efficient administration apparatus to meet the demands of the investors, and negative in the aspect of the treatment of the public interest and citizen participation. A *landscape strategy* is missing because the development is still in its project phase and could be characterised only as a *secondary communication* for the city's identity in future. The symbolic action can be seen in the character of the project and its positioning on one of the most important locations in the city. Considering the above, the *Beko Master Plan* could be currently marked as *propaganda*, because it is based on a strategic and planning document and is a symbolic action, but still misses some main parts of the substance.

The City on Water – Belgrade Port project concerns the right bank of the Danube River where the Port of Belgrade is currently located. The project is designed in collaboration of the architects Daniel Libeskind and Jan Gehl.⁵⁴ It was presented to the public as *the first significant step in activating the great potential Belgrade, which stems from its rivers and as a contribution to Belgrade's transformation to a European capital with a unique and recognizable identity.*⁵⁵

The idea for the improvement of the site and its development as the new centre was initially defined in the first version of the Spatial Plan for Belgrade 2021,⁵⁶ but didn't include the Port of Belgrade. The Spatial Plan has provided a public professional survey for the location carried out by the Urban Institute of Belgrade in the form of an invited competition for five public professional institutions: the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Belgrade, the Association of Urban Planners of Belgrade, the Architectural Association of Belgrade, the Academy of Architecture and the Architect's Club. The teams delivered in December 2006 five visions for the future transformation of the 470 hectares large territory including the area of the Port of Belgrade.

The Urban Institute of Belgrade continued with a Programme for the Development of Ada Huja including the areas alongside the Danube right bank. The program was followed by changes and amendments of the Spatial Plan.⁵⁷

The Belgrade Port Company, which since has been privatized, started in 2008 own activities for finding the best solution for the area. In the course



Fig. 10
Proposal presented by the team of the Association of the Urban Planners of Belgrade.



Fig. 11
The project "City on Water" by Gehl Architects connectivity study. (Belgrade Port Company)

of the activities a series of workshops were held in Copenhagen, Belgrade, Thessaloniki, New York and Zurich, joined by representatives of the Daniel Libeskind Studio and Gehl Architects. The *vision for the Danube waterfront for upgrading the quality of the public spaces in Belgrade* of Gehl Architects was presented in the Belgrade Chamber of Commerce in February 2009, while Daniel Libeskind held a lecture titled *The Vision of Belgrade Waterfront*⁵⁸ at the University of Belgrade in March 2009. A final presentation of the project was arranged by the Belgrade Land Development Public Agency at the Real Estate and Investment Fair in Cannes in 2009. The Belgrade Port Company has characterised this as *a great opportunity to present the project and Belgrade's potential to the international public.*⁵⁹

The common vision of the collaborated designers generates a strategic basis for the development of the new urban centre that would contain an *attractive public space network that gives priority to pedestrians and cyclists, a revitalised riverbank with public spaces that will improve the appearance and significance not only of the location, but of the entire Belgrade, a continuous green area along the entire location conceived as a new public park, functions and facilities in an urban space that creates conditions for overlapping various activities, dynamic atmosphere and openness for different user groups, a variety of*



Fig. 12
The project "City on Water" by Daniel Libeskind Studio urban design. (Belgrade Port Company)

*districts designed in line with the mixed-use principle, an urban density and architectural accomplishments which would improve Belgrade's appearance and significance.*⁶⁰ The plan envisages the construction of residential and commercial buildings, objects for cultural facilities, a congress centre, a school, a nursery and a hotel. The main landmark of the area would be a 250 meters high skyscraper, symbolising the meeting of the two rivers.

The City Parliament adopted a Detailed Regulation Plan for an area of 470 hectares in Ada Huja in accordance with the Spatial Program for the territory in December 2012. For zone A of 95 hectares the following is planned: *a radical transformation of the area from predominantly commercial purposes to central functions, i.e. an extension of the existing central zone of the City to the Danube's riverbank, the spatial and functional integration of the area into the urban fabric by constructing a new transportation and infrastructure network, the development of integrated uses of the urban centre, and the repairing, improving and protecting of the environment as well as the creation of conditions for achieving the environmental standards of the new "city waterfront" according to the principles of sustainable development.*⁶¹

However, despite the high quality approach which was in line with the contemporary town planning principles, the main goal of the project and its owner was to offer *big investment possibilities to everyone interested in investing in the location.*⁶² The main subject of attention of the media and the public was the controversial privatization of the Port of Belgrade and not the quality of the project. Although a large number of planning prerequisites for the continuation of the project were determined, an unresolved situation with the ownership of land and the significantly reduced interests of the new government elected in May 2014 currently put aside the project. Since it is not actual *it cannot be classified* into any of the Anholt's categories, but it could be characterised as a solid base for a successful urban development.

The Ada Bridge is a segment of the Inner City Semi-Ring Road (ICSRR) directed around the city, the central parts of New Belgrade and Zemun. It could be found in the first version of the Belgrade Spatial Plan for 2021.⁶³ It is marked as one of the priority projects of the City of Belgrade Development Strategy defined as an *inner main road semi ring, stage I, with a bridge across Ada Ciganlija*. For the purpose of the project, the Urban Institute of Belgrade developed a Plan of Detailed Regulation that was adopted in September 2007.



Fig. 13, 14
The Ada Bridge. (Arhitektura)

In accordance with the Belgrade Spatial Plan for 2021, an international competition for a design proposal was launched in 2004. Belgrade's authorities sought to get with this competition a bridge as a landmark and not just a poor exclusively engineering solution. The design of the Ponting Company Maribor, made by Viktor Markelj and Peter Gabrijelčič, was selected from the eleven competition contributions. The awarded proposal was finalized in 2006. The contractor consortium POOR-SCT-DSD started the construction works in 2008 and the bridge was open for traffic by 1st January 2012.

The 207 m high pylon, erected to enable two asymmetrical spans to cross the river by means of 80 steel backstay cables, defines the image of the bridge. *The Ada Bridge is 920 m long, with a span of 375 metres. The carriageway is 45 metres wide, with six lanes for road vehicles, two light rail railway tracks, and two pedestrian and cycling paths.*⁶⁴ In accordance with its technical and construction specifics, this is the largest bridge in the world suspended by just one pylon.

Several reputable media and professional journals presented the bridge in a positive light, emphasising its technical achievements, uniqueness and importance as a recognizable symbol of the city. A similar opinion is shared by the citizens of Belgrade, which is confirmed by their massive participation in the survey about the name of the bridge, organised on 13th and 14th August 2011. During the opening days about 13.000 people were surveyed.⁶⁵ About 3.350 of them proposed the name "Ada Bridge". Among the suggestions was the "Harp", then "Most of Patriarch Pavle," "Most of Zoran Djindjic", "Giraffe", "Fan", "Andrićev Bridge" and other names. The official name "Bridge across Ada" was finally adopted on 15th December 2011.⁶⁶

However, the financial aspect of the project was strongly criticized by the public. The initial investment planned was € 161 million, but in 2010 the amount increased to € 450 million. The main question was whether Belgrade needed such a bridge, or a more simple and cheaper proposal designed by local

engineers. Some professional critics occurred on the other side in the early stages of the project, linked to a public letter of nine experts published on 18th January 2006 in daily newspapers.⁶⁷ They pointed out the physical danger and urban ineligibility of threading the future main traffic artery next to the city core and evaluated the project as an *enormously expensive and most dysfunctional bridge at the wrong place*. The decision of the city authorities was classified as an *absolutely unacceptable improvisation*.

Although this criticism is justified to some extent, it may be considered from the aspect of the city *identity communication model* as a successful achievement. It belongs to the city's primary communication in the domain of the three segments *infrastructure, organisation and behaviour* and satisfies all three elements of Anholt's framework.

The background for the *International architectural competition to design the Beton Hall Waterfront Centre in Belgrade* could be found in the Belgrade Spatial Plan for 2021 and the City of Belgrade Development Strategy in the domain of Belgrade's brownfields, the revitalisation of Kosancicev Venac and the rehabilitation of Savamala. The main objective of the competition was the creation of *a new access point from the capital's riverfront to its historic core and a contemporary architectural anchor point for a vibrant pedestrian zone in one of the oldest and continuously inhabited urban parts*.⁶⁸ The competition was announced in February 2011 and the results were presented to the public in June 2011.



Fig. 15
The Cloud project designed by Sou Fujimoto Architects.

The jury selected from the 135 submitted proposals five projects and awarded two equal first prizes, two equal third prizes and one honourable mention. The project Cloud designed by Sou Fujimoto Architects attracted the attention of both the domestic and the international public because of its attractive appearance and innovative approach in achieving the connection between the riverfront and Kalemegdan.

The jury has characterised Fujimoto's proposal as *brave with the highest emblematic potential among all of Beton Hala entries* and as an *iconic structure which skilfully blurs the difference between the urban and architectural scales and spaces*. The proposal is innovative in several aspects: *it creates a complex dialogue with the historic assemblage of Kalemegdan Hill, it juxtaposes respectfully its cutting-edge 21st century space against the historically layered context, the platform spaces and the suspended flux of ramps, which offer a novel type of public spaces and spatial configurations of encounter and surprise*.⁶⁹

The work on the detailed plan of Beton Hall and the connection of the riverbank with Kalemengdan started in 2012 in accordance with the competition proposal. Except of some statements of the former city authorities it is not officially known at what stage the plan development is. The public opinion is divided into those who like the project, because of its strong character and innovativeness, and those who do not like the project because it disturbs the historical part of the city.

Following the *competitive identity communication* framework and Anholt's 3-segment tool, it can be concluded that the project has its *primary communication* in the domain of behaviour as a part of substance that could be analysed. A *landscape strategy* is missing because the development is still in project phase and could be characterised only as a *secondary communication* of the city's future identity. The symbolic action is very strong because of the iconic shape of the project and its representative location. Considering the above, *Beton Hall Cloud* could be currently marked as *propaganda*, because it is based on strategic documents, it is a symbolic action, but is still missing main parts of the substance – it is not realised yet.

The Belgrade Waterfront or *Belgrade on Water* is a new version of the vision for the renewal and development of the costal area along the Sava River, which covers two spatial, geomorphological and administrative units divided by the River, on a total area of 177.27 ha.⁷⁰ The area has been the subject of a series of development initiatives in previous periods. The area was considered on the international competition in the 1980s for the centre of New Belgrade, while in the 1990s it was performed in the competition for the Sava Amphitheatre and the project Europolis.⁷¹

Considering the previous initiatives and the strategic character of the location, the area is listed as a development area in all three strategic-planning documents mentioned above: as Sava Amphitheatre and part of New Belgrade's centre in the Spatial Plan for Belgrade 2021 and the development of the Sava waterfront in the Belgrade City Development Strategy. Based on these documents the Urban Institute of Belgrade started the preparation of an urban study that was supposed to precede the announcement of an international competition for the Sava Amphitheatre.

However, the idea has been changed after the 2012 elections for the national and municipal governments which classified during the election campaign the

Fig. 16
The presentation of the Belgrade Waterfront to the domestic public by the investor Mohamed Alabbar, the Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic and the Major Sinisa Mali.
(Khaleej Times)





Fig. 17
The renewed outlook of the “Geozavod” building; the Belgrade Waterfront Gallery. (Belgrade Waterfront)

project as a priority.⁷² By noting that this project couldn't be financed only by public funds and loans, which was considered as the main obstacle for the earlier unrealised visions, the actual Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic has directed all his efforts to find a potential investor for the project.

After a series of urban concepts that were appearing in the media during 2013, a Belgrade Waterfront Master Plan was presented in Dubai in March 2014 by Mohamed Alabbar, the director of the newly established company and potential investor “Eagle Hills”.⁷³ The master plan was presented to the domestic public at the renovated building of the Institute of Geophysics, known as “Geozavod”, which became the showroom of the project in June 2014.

The project web page announced that Belgrade Waterfront would take the *urban renewal to new heights - a future smart city that combines commerce, culture and community*.⁷⁴ The master plan envisions the construction of offices and luxury apartment buildings, eight hotels, a shopping mall and a 200m high tower as the main symbol of the area and of Belgrade as well. The investor's view is *a truly mixed-use environment that will usher in a new era of prosperity the Serbian capital*.⁷⁵

Seen as an initiative that will *create jobs and growth and turn Belgrade into a business hub for the Western Balkans*⁷⁶ the project was given by the government the status of one of national importance, which allowed the acceleration of the process of defining the framework for its implementation. In a period of several months the Spatial Plan for Belgrade 2021 has been changed and the Spatial Plan for the Development of the coastal area of Belgrade's riverside was adopted for the Belgrade Waterfront project.

Since these processes have been a novelty in the urban development practice in Serbia, the project encountered a sharp criticism by both the professionals and the public. The citizens gathered using the legitimate tools around the initiative “Ne da(vi)mo Beograd!”.⁷⁷ They organized a series of activities and performances to point out the future consequences of the practices known as “investor's urbanism”, as well as to prevent the modification and adoption of the existing plans. They criticized the abolition of the public evaluation of the site conducted in the form of competition, the unknown authorship behind the proposed solution and the inexistence of a precise economic framework that determines the price of enterprise and provides its benefits. The professional



Fig. 18, 19
A future vision of the Belgrade Waterfront.
(Belgrade Waterfront)

community shared similar thoughts, but focused on the consequences that will occur during and after the realization of the project in the domains of the quality of living, gentrification, urban appearance of the capital, participation, continuity of urban development, etc. In general, both indicated that the project seriously is endangering the public interest.

Considering the *competitive identity communication* model and Anholt's 3-segment tool the project has its *primary communication* only in the domains of *organisation* and *behaviour* as a part of substance that could be analysed. The *behaviour* can be characterised as reflected positively in the administration apparatus when meeting the demands of the investors. The *organisation* can be seen on the other side as negative concerning the treatment of the public interest and participation. The *landscape strategy* is missing because the development is still in a project phase and can be characterised only as *secondary communication* of the city's future identity. Except the size of the project and its strategic position and considering that the project author is still unknown as well as the average quality of the architectural and urban design, the project can not be characterized as a symbolic action. In accordance with this, the plan can be currently marked as *spin*, because it is based on a strategic and planning document, but is still missing main parts of the substance as well as a symbolic action.

Conclusion

The analysis of the five on-going projects shows, that just the Ada Bridge project can be characterized as a successful achievement. The Beko Master Plan and Beton Hall can be classified as propaganda, the Belgrade Waterfront



as spin and the City on Water can not be related to any one of the Anholt's categories, because it is not an on-going project. Except the Ada Bridge, the indicated status of the other projects can be changed, because they are on-going projects that are able to be improved and realised. However, their current status and the perceivable weaknesses can be treated as recommendations for the upcoming project phases.

The results show that the urbanism of Belgrade greatly steps into the neoliberal trends, which is not in accordance with the relevant planning documents and causes their frequent changes. Another feature of these documents is the lack of long-term visions, which can be identified in the plans of a large number of European cities, like the Le Grand Paris project, the Future Helsinki project, etc. With regard to the fact that the current projects are mainly aiming to solve inherited problems, it can be said that in the future, the city of Belgrade will generate its image and competitive identity in a contradictive and inconsistent manner.

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- 38 Regional Spatial Plan for the Administrative Territory of the City of Belgrade has developed and revised in 2009 in line with the Law on Planning and Construction and the Statute of the City.
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- 40 City of Belgrade Development Strategy, <http://www.beograd.rs/download.php/documents/SRGBpredlog.pdf>
- 41 Ibid. p. 27.
- 42 Ibid. pp. 20-21.
- 43 Ibid. pp. 109-146. Among them, there are nine priority projects in the field of urban development and identity.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 a) Urban renewal and rational use of the existing urban structures through improvement of quality, compactness, density, transformation of obsolete industrial and utility facilities into modern urban facilities; b) Preservation and promotion of the existing free, natural developed and spontaneously created green zones which comprise unexpected attractive landscapes, especially the environmentally valuable parts near the banks of the river Sava and the Danube as a balance against future highly urbanised waterfront parts of the city settlements. The position of Belgrade, natural diversity and cultural values are a base for development of tourism and promotion of the identity of the City.
- 46 a) Promotion of the original identity of individual settlements, from central town municipalities to border rural settlements, with its development and harmonisation in line with the common character of the metropolitan Belgrade; b) Identification of characteristic local “icons”, natural and man-made symbols, urban and rural areas of Belgrade; c) Articulation and completion of physical structures on the left bank of the Danube; d) Emphasising the richness of various architectural forms and types of urban tissues as heritage from various periods, recording and promotion of the modern architecture in Belgrade, as well as the architecture from the second part of XX century.
- 47 a) Identifying possible larger projects of the City and starting creating feasibility studies for the most realistic ones; b) Utilisation of the insufficiently and inefficiently used city land, by rehabilitation and urbanization of brownfield locations and especially industrial and utility waterfront zones.
- 48 a) Development and promotion of Belgrade as a contemporary urban structure with a preserved natural centre; b) Promotion of the face of the City and promotion of new architecture; c) Organisation of international competitions and conferences.
- 49 a) Support of the City to individual and creative productions and projects which will help the City and its integral parts develop their own identity; b) Strengthening the recognisable architectural image and providing international architects with the possibility to participate in tenders for capital locations and facilities in the City of Belgrade.
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- 65 Bridge over the River Sava in the City of Belgrade Project, <http://www.savabridge.com/progress.htm>
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- 68 Beton Hala Waterfront Center, <http://www.betonhala.com/2011/>
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- 71 Đukić, Aleksandra/Milena Vukmirović/Eva Vaništa Lazarević: *The planning framework, projects, competititon proposals and visions for the regulation of the Sava amphitheater* in *Construction*, 68, No. 3/4, 2014, pp. 103-120 (In Serbian: *Плански оквир, пројекти, конкурсна решења и визије за уређење Савског амфитеатра*).
- 72 As an important guest of the political campaign, Rudolph Giuliani, former mayor of New York, has visited Belgrade and stressed the importance of improving the Saba’s coastal area as well.
- 73 Eagle Hills has agreed to put up the €3 billion (\$4.08 billion) cost of the scheme but the terms have not been settled and it is unclear how much the Serbia government will contribute in funds. (Agencies), *UAE firm to develop Belgrade Waterfront project* in *Khaleej Times*, 28th June 2014, http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?xfile=data/uaebusiness/2014/June/uaebusiness_June392.xml§ion=uaebusiness
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- 75 Ibid.
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- 77 A doubled meaning: “Don’t drown Belgrade!” and “Don’t give Belgrade!”

Nikola Samardžić

Belgrade 1714-2014: Utopianism and uricide

The first war between Austria and Turkey began in 1714 and ended with the establishment of the Austrian rule in Belgrade and northern Serbia, which lasted until 1739. In 2014 the memories of the beginnings of the Baroque Belgrade associated with the period of Austrian governance have fallen into the shadow of the WW I Centennial. The actual memory and the value distortion related to the mutual historical failure that leded Austria and Serbia to the opposing sides in the unfortunate conflict could be of particular importance in this matter. A whole of the cultural history of Belgrade during the last three centuries could be considered in the almost paradoxical continuity of discontinuity of wars, devastation, irrational decisions and unfulfilled visions. Belgrade was a central point in the wars between Austria and the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century that was reshaping also its cultural background. Belgrade became during the 19th century the most important benefit for the Serbian national revolution, 1804-1830, and a cultural challenge for the revolutionary backward peasant society, faced with the dilemma of modernization.¹

Belgrade's utopia was the belief that a regulated and cultural community could be established along the mythical "East-West" border in a secure distance from the European civilization, in a poor rural environment, and under the obsession of the nationalist agenda. The refusal of the European integration and the rule of law in recent times underline additionally the utopian character of this belief. That usually leded to a self-destruction and on the micro-level to wars, occupations, chaotic migrations, poverty, and also urban disorder, mismanagement of the public domain, arrogance and arbitrariness by both institutions and individuals. The low urbanization level was on the other side the result of a poor industrial development. The Western Balkans remained through a century limited to trade with basic goods, with a weak and vulnerable economy, closely related to the state and to privileged groups, instead to a business-orientated urban society. The low living standards

encouraged the survival of the traditional strata of economic and social power and the nomenclature. The domestic economic structure dictated the state of economic culture, as the primary commodities, and, in the second half of the 20th century, the low rated industrial products tended to dominate the export trade. The external parameters of the urban development remained extremely unfavourable, as the public and commodity transport, the communications, the housing supply, the health care, and the educational and cultural services.²

The term *urbicide* refers among other examples to the destruction of cities by the Yugoslav People's Army, by the police and by the paramilitary units during the Yugoslav conflict 1991-1999. The cities as peaceful, pacific and inherently tolerant communities, in terms of ethnic and religious relations, were attacked to a greater or lesser extent by all the armed units deployed in the former Yugoslavia. And while the NATO intervention was focused on *urbicide* forces on the Serbian side, the cities have suffered again, in massive destruction, fear and social decomposition, while the Serbian regime conducted additional internal political, ideological and economic pressures. The former Yugoslavian cities were also a subject of a social and ideological hatred, a massive and uncontrolled immigration, a quiet but also self-destructive emigration of educated classes, an ethnic cleansing, an acculturation, a political, ideological and turbo-cultural terror, an autarchic economy or a hyper-inflation.³ The urban planning, the institutions and the cultural development were under these circumstances impossible to release. Inter alia, the small and medium-sized businesses also severely suffered as, otherwise, the driving forces of European urban civilization during the past half-millennium. A tendency in negligence, arbitrariness and the general weakness of institutions was evident during the first decade of the 21st century.

“The conjunction of ‘city’ and ‘civilization’, famously theorized by Max Weber, poses the city as a place of civility, civics and other formations of urban culture, and the non-urban as disordered, chaotic and violent. Urbicide, in this context, is framed not only as violence against the city but also violence foreign to the city. And accordingly, accounts of urbicide easily intersected with accounts of primordial ethnic hatreds or religious conflicts in the Balkans, each also deemed alien to the city”.⁴

Belgrade is a European capital that suffered most of destructions, migrations, economy fractures and identity crises during the last two centuries. The history of the modern Belgrade is a chronicle of common, often anonymous, and in the eyes of the “official”, “big” history, “small” people’s efforts to survive. Belgrade was carried by a current of



Fig. 1
The mayor Branko Pesic on the “Gazela” Bridge, 1970.
(Archive Samardžić)

alienated, estranged decisions: of its own, national government, of aggressor countries and even of allied countries. The consequences usually lasted longer than the previous processes that led to their appearance. The modern Belgrade history is a parallel reality of ethnic diversity, archaic, autarchic multiculturalism and pressurized assimilation. The assimilation was forced in forms that fostered ethnic misapprehensions and conflicts. Belgrade has received some European basics only during the brief period of the Austrian rule, 1718-1739: proper, regular streets, institutions buildings, solid family city houses, functional infrastructure. However the baroque Belgrade largely disappeared during the following wars between Austria and Turkey and in the period of the Ottoman provincial government disintegration in the late 18th and early 19th century. After the national revolution period, when Belgrade regained outlines of a European city being the Serbian and the Yugoslav capital, the city enjoyed only three periods of relatively peaceful development: from the “keys delivery” by the Turkish garrison in 1867 until the beginning of WW I in 1914, between 1918 and 1941 when Belgrade managed to continue establishing the shapes of its European identity, and from 1944 until the beginnings of the Yugoslav disintegration in 1991. The first and third period lasted 47 years each, and second one only 22 years.



Fig. 2
The construction of the “Gazela” Bridge.
(Archive Samardžić)

The antithesis of the fascinating development of Belgrade after WW II was its ideological degradation based on ruralization, a side effect of the intensive development and the militarization.⁵ The first mayor of the post-war Belgrade was Mihailo Stolarić, the “Carpenter” in front of the National Liberation Committee of the city, 1944-1947. The chairman of the administrative board from 1947 to 1951 was certain Ninko Petrović, a member of the Executive Committee of the Left Agrarian Party. Đurica Jojkić, born in the village of Turija near Srbobran, administered in two terms between 1951 and 1961. Miloš Minić, born in village Preljina near Čačak in central Serbia, better known as the latter Minister of Foreign Affairs, was the mayor from 1955 to 1957. Minić was previously the Public Prosecutor of Serbia in the process against general Dragoljub Mihailović who was sentenced to death in 1946 by a firing squad, and also with a permanent loss of civil and political rights as well as the seizure of all assets. The fifth mayor of Belgrade was Milijan Neoričić from 1961 to 1965, who was a high school graduate from Užice. Branko Pešić, was the President of the City of Belgrade during the important period of major construction enterprises and mass immigration between 1965 and 1974. He graduated from the high school and the college political school “Đuro Đaković” and was also better

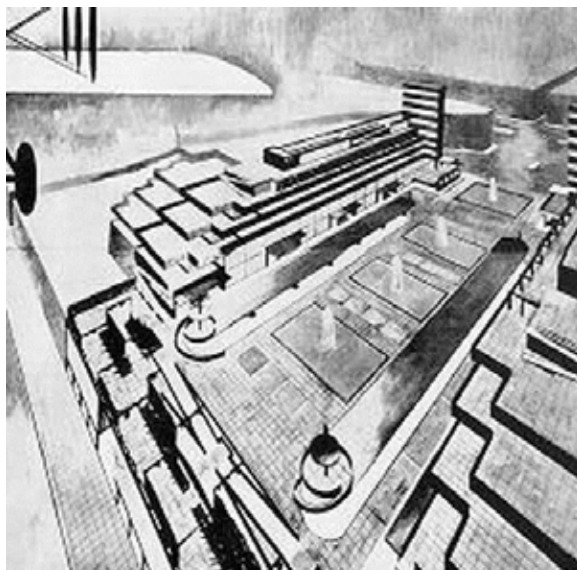
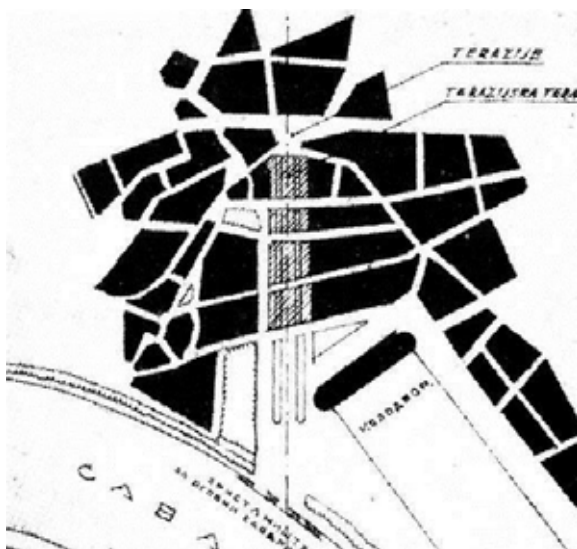
known as a boxer than an expert in urbanism. Under his administration the main highway route which serves the entire passenger and the cargo traffic through Serbia, connecting Europe and the Middle East, with the loops Mostar and Autokomanda, has definitely separated the residential urban zones from the urban core. One of the members of his cabinet was the latter Serbian president and warlord Slobodan Milošević.

Živorad Kovačević was the Belgrade mayor from 1974 to 1982. During his tenure the Conference Center Sava intended for the CSCE (OSCE) conference in 1978 and the first post-war luxury hotel Intercontinental were built. However, with that period the first major corruption affairs in socialist Yugoslavia, “Obradović” and “Belgrade-engineering”, are related, although Kovačević denied his involvement. Bogdan Bogdanović, the famous architect and mayor 1982-1986, has based his vision of public transport based on the Soviet trams and trolleybuses as the “path to the 21st century”, primarily by extending tram lines to New Belgrade.

The militarization of Belgrade taking place from 1903 to 1914, and once again after 1944, was closely related to the ruling ideologies, but also to immigration, seen as a potential human reservoir for the army and the police. Belgrade began to be conceived and organized as a military camp and as headquarter of ideological terror and violence after 1944. The Yugoslav president, party chief and army supreme commander Josip Broz Tito has relied on Novi Beograd as a loyal military and police reserve. Similarly was behaving Slobodan Milošević in the early 1990s, when he was moving into conflict with Slovenia and Croatia. However, thanks to the generation shift, Novi Belgrade was becoming to transform into a location of democratic resistance during the following years. Otherwise, the military barracks and the strong police forces were housed in the urban core of each Yugoslav city. In this sense Belgrade was not an exception.⁶

Novi Beograd has been probably designed as a military barracks area from which the armed

Fig. 3, 4
The urban concept for the reconstruction of Terazije Square by Dobrovic. (Archive Samardžić)



occupants order to defend at every opportunity that does not necessitate a true mobilization. One of the key figures responsible for the new militaristic image and spirit of Belgrade was Nikola Dobrović, the first post-war director of the Urban Planning Institute and chief architect of the city.⁷ Upon his decision the central city area Terazije, a charming and elegant prewar urban ensemble with fountains, chandeliers, etc., was cleaned on the eve of May Day parade in 1947, and turned into a military training ground “under the dictate of modern life.”⁸

Dobrović has also offered the basics of the urban structure and the construction plan of New Belgrade. His most personal touch, which also marked the new militaristic concept of the city, was the General Staff building. “A large complex in the center of Belgrade, known as the General Staff, where the Federal Ministry of Defense and the Yugoslav army headquarters moved to, became immediately accepted as the anthological work of the Yugoslav architecture; when the country broke up, it got even more prominent position in the history of Serbia’s modernism. But, although its canonical status has never been disputed, it seems that the building still avoids easy classification and its interpretation encourages controversy. Built between 1954 and 1963, during the time heavy burdened by ideological shades of the specific Yugoslav communist path, Dobrović’s General Staff allowed many readings ranging from the denunciation of the project as an expression of the ruling ideology to the interpretations that attributed it a more autonomous expression of architectural value. After the fall of the communism, this ambiguity became untenable: the building and its architect were too important to be disrespected, but the associations to the previous system were no longer welcome.”⁹ The General Staff was partially destroyed in the 1999 NATO intervention. The ideological particularities of this unfortunate event probably were not accidental, nor illogical. The former Yugoslav army and the even allegedly pro-democratic governments after 2000 sought to preserve the ruins as a reminder of the conflict with NATO, and an eloquent self-speaking symbol of the anti-Americanism.



Fig. 5
The newly accomplished building complex of the General Staff.
(Archive Samardžić)



Fig. 6
The complex of the General Staff after the destruction during the NATO intervention, 1999.
(Archive Samardžić)

Belgrade has been the subject of countless urban and architectural failures, becoming a conglomerate of stylistic and aesthetic controversies, a cacophony of disordered rights and interests. The city is additionally burdened by joining the predominantly rural settlements and conglomerates Barajevo, Grocka, Lazarevac, Mladenovac, Sopot, Surčin and Obrenovac.

The slums in the immediate surroundings of the city core provide the best architectural examples of the described situation with their temporary facilities or construction failures. The Sava Congress Center and the Hotel Intercontinental, beautiful and functional symbols of the modernization in the 1970s, have a visual connection to both the Sava River and the spectacular panorama of Belgrade, and, somewhat closer than that, at the wild unhygienic settlement colloquially known as “Korea”, that arose on the part of the former concentration camp at the site of the pre-war fairground. The famous open market Kalenić pijaca, a symbol of the orderly civil life in a relative prosperity, languishes for decades as the area of filth, of unregulated trade and of traffic chaos. It is located just in the immediate sight of the Belgrade’s Directorate for Construction in the same Njegoševa Street that connects the market from the south-western side with the municipality of Vračar, one of the central and most expensive city communities. In the neighboring districts, regardless of the narrow, dirty streets, vicinity of slums and the lack of any adequate infrastructure, during the recent years the property prices, they have been reaching astronomical levels. This contrasted clearly from the local economic and social potential. The *urbicide* witnesses and the actors are construction sites themselves. They are the evidentiary polygons of the tycoon arbitrariness, the corrupt institutions, the neglecting of the urban hygiene and the freedom of movement and safety at work.



Fig. 7
The location of the settlement colloquially known as “Korea”.
(Google Earth)



Fig. 8
The Kalenic market. (Archive Samardžić)

The uricide in Belgrade is fed by the mentalities and the logic of incompleteness: unfulfilled urban development plans, vane political promises and abandoned projects. The international and regional isolation, random migrations, the corruption and

the poverty have contributed to the destruction of the urban environment: casinos, betting, kiosks, squalid fast food and bakeries. Belgrade has been re-Orientalized, similarly to what has happened after the Austrian rule 1718-1739.

In Belgrade the authorities are everywhere, while lawlessness is pervasive as well. The administrative buildings, the ministries and the remaining state administration are scattered by 200 points in the center of Belgrade and Novi Beograd. The terror of the officials armed with official cars, sirens and police escort is part of a daily scenario, including occasional dignitaries from abroad.

The urban development of Belgrade is revealing challenges and traumas both from the recent history and, as well, from the long term conjecture and mentality: poverty, sharp social, cultural and ideological differences, inheritance and influence of nationalism, socialism and political religion, undeveloped or inappropriately developed infrastructure. All these problems are related both to the failure of utopianism and particularities of urbicide. The urbicide was a systemic pressure on the city to be deprived of its most important quality, individualism, free thought, political courage and resistance to all kind of extremism. All the shortcomings of the contemporary Belgrade, the inadequate solutions or the lack of them in the urban development, the maintenance and building of infrastructure, the cultural and social policies framework, can be discerned from both the historical perspective and the analyses of the current condition. They can be related to the shortcomings of the middle class, the citizenry, and their deficient involvement in the processes of transition, democratization, emancipation of rule, of law and of market liberalization. The important question is to what extent the Serbian intellectual elite challenged in the last two centuries the significance, sometimes even on the moral basis, of all mentioned modernization processes. The relative poverty and the negligible public influence of citizenry are partly the result of the incapability of the local humanistic sciences to become one of the means for the problem solving. The absence of a "middle class" in the transition process and at the top of the political decision-making correlate probably with the weakness or absence of institutions, including the institutions of culture: the temporary closed National museum and Museum of contemporary art, no Opera house, the bankrupted cinemas etc. The insufficient economic potential of the middle class particularly affects the stability and effectiveness of the institutions.

The urbicide in the former Yugoslavia started during the upcoming era of the intensified globalization, considered to be the largest spontaneous social experiment in the human history. For the first time the most of the planet's inhabitants live in the cities. This process took place in the past few decades. With its intensity and controversies, the globalization has imposed important, therefore sensitive, and sometimes painful issues. Whether the world is urbanized, or cities ruralized? Are the immigration and the multiculturalism challenging the right to direct the future urban and social development mainly on the basis of the genuine historical cultural heritage? Does the cities'

authentic “spirit” or “urban spirit” mutates since it is composed of the people themselves, their habits, customs, value systems, and not just of the history, the inherited culture and institutions?

After the fall of communism in Eastern Europe the middle class was generally considered as a desirable mediator between the public policies, the ideologies and their application in a wide social base. (There is the opinion that the “neoliberal era” generated the disappearance of the middle class, but such assumptions are still not convincingly documented: statism has already been a pro-totalitarian answer to the financial crisis free market challenges). It is interesting that the middle class layers become most prone to nostalgic memories of social certainty that was seemingly offered during the communist era. The Post-Cold-War nationalism has also appeared as the by-product of communism. The “Socialist Eden” has actually affected the middle class immobility and thwarted the small and middle business development, as essential forces in the democratic effort to control the state institutions and to restrain the destructive social forces for a long term.

The globalization is a challenge deprived of empirical precedent. We are also facing significant changes in Eastern and Southeastern Europe during the last 25 years and after the first decade of the European Union accession of several Eastern European Countries in 2004. The Yugoslav violent disintegration launched in Belgrade in 1991, and ended in Belgrade by the NATO intervention in 1999, led, however, to the ethnic homogenization, poverty, cultural degradation etc. Belgrade remains, not only due to its controversies, an exceptional example with significant details different to the general East-European post-totalitarian development pattern. After the political changes in 2000, Belgrade was only partially renewed and revitalized, entering in the global era with a burden of already outdated dilemmas of the previous European developments, especially ones that Serbian society didn’t manage to resolve along with the fall of the communism.

More than a “global city”, Belgrade is a rural or post-rural conglomerate characterized by visual, emotional, ideological and material traumas of wars, holocaust, poverty, lack of efficient institutions and rule of law, a micro-culture of individual irresponsibility and incompetent development solutions. The urbanity of Belgrade is above all a reflection of the middle class continual crisis. Belgrade is as a human community and culture the historical loser in all the wars and political conflicts in the 20th and at the beginning of the 21st century. In that sense the discontinuities, the social pressures and the elite manipulations were depraving the city of intellectual and moral capacities that would create its institutions and society as a reliable foundation of democracy development and rule of law. Parallel to the peaks of nationalism that in Serbia and similar systems replaced the fall of the communism, the globalization eroded the social and economic foundation of the middle class that the contemporary liberal democracy is based upon.

Two centuries of the modern history have passed by in accomplishing the war agendas that involved Serbia into the clashes both with the neighboring peoples and the states, as well as the great powers. This is the simplest explanation why the history of modern Belgrade consists of dramatic and shocking episodes of destruction and reconstruction. That is also how the liberal agenda of the legitimacy of the state authority limited by rule of law has been marginalized by religious requests for final solution in periods of traditional nationalism, communism and the most recent post-communist national agenda. The nationalism and the communism have some common characteristics, like the populism and the belief in the exclusivity and righteousness of decisions that forced upon the society's special role in the historic process. Any such final solution could not take into account the state of the infrastructure, traffic, environment, public health, sidewalks, pavements, bridges, facades, parks, museums and galleries. The caring for urban development was almost a casual incident in the pursuit of a sublime aim of the ideological, social or religious mobilization.

The emancipation of Belgrade's middle class has not contributed enough to the urban development or, generally, to the social evolution. Each urban generation was remaining deprived of the most intelligent and most sensitive members who choose to emigrate. The social sciences, however, restrain from researching the biological and, indirectly, social impact of the human heritage. Otherwise, the middle class development was a historical response to the distrust of the classic liberals, like John Stuart Mill, that the democracy and the equal political participation are possible without education and private property. The citizenry initiated the democracy development exactly because it was capable to bridge the gap between the aristocracy or the republican oligarchy and the proletariat. The underdevelopment of the democratic institutions and the absence of rule of law enabled the oligarchy in the modern history of Belgrade to involve occasionally into war adventures and social engineering. The evolutionary "sin" of Belgrade's citizenry thereby was the complicity with the ruling elite, which attempted to enforce "national" territorial policies, while promoting the social egalitarianism.

The social egalitarianism was used by Marxism since the middle of the 19th century in order to solve primarily the exclusion of the majority of the European citizenry of the time from the political decision-making process. The economic and technologic development that took place after WW II denied the Marxist scenario of the proletarian dictatorship, since the unqualified industrial workers have been gradually replaced by new professionals in the services and the other post-industrial sectors.

The surpluses of manpower previously produced by the chaotic industrialization and urbanization were, released Yugoslavia by opening the borders towards Western Europe and the USA, so the economic emigration followed the political one. The economic and political liberalization enabled new impulses

of urbanization in the middle of the 1960s. Despite their violent, sometimes rural-traditional character, the authorities were forced to reply according to the official ideology of the social egalitarianism. Therefore the Yugoslav socialism became, especially in the cities, a certain basis of their emancipation. The urbanization brought up the issues of the, since then, excluded groups of women and invalids. These things alike, new reality triggered the Serbian and the other Yugoslav nationalisms that looked at the urbanization and the social emancipation as new historical threats. It is no coincidence that exactly since the middle of the 1960s new requests appeared for a territorial reorganization of the community and new concepts of national culture, language, customs, traditions and religion were introduced. Both the Marxism and the political religion were becoming platforms for the Yugoslav break-up, and the intended return to the previous forms of social relations, to the “real communism”, or to the “traditional” models roots intended to intended to liven up “the mystical body of the nation”. The same individuals or institutions were involved often in both ideological concepts. That process, with reciprocity of two collectivisms, produced confusion in the middle class, already deprived of its important property and economic attributes.

The global world was appearing on the foundation of the Reagan-Thatcher revolution from the beginning of the 1980s. The competitive world was getting rid of the traditional and present barriers in every sense. The question is, if the citizenry, the supporter of the Belgrade’s cultural and urban climax from 1965 to 1990, was able to understand the global development while dominantly opting in favor of the obsession with territorial borders and the preservation of the autarchic society and economy.

The self-destruction of Belgrade took place in the decade of the demolition of the institutions, the imposition of the authoritarian politics and culture, the war of aggression, the international isolation, the criminalization and the economic collapse, 1991-2000. The social structure has changed. At least several tens of thousands of most educated people had fled the country, while Belgrade was receiving the majority of refugees mainly from rural parts of Yugoslavia affected by the war and the ethnic cleansing. The corruption has become the main form of business or personal relations. The residential buildings were upgraded with additional floors. Belgrade was flooded by street vendors, kiosks and dealers of currencies, gasoline or narcotics. As in the rest of Yugoslavia the uricide in Belgrade, affected by war conflicts, was a response to the urban culture generally, to the civic order and the value systems. The retaliation to Belgrade as the largest urban center in the former Yugoslavia was felt even among those who found in Belgrade their last refuge. The uricide is paradoxical. The residents of the city, whether the natives or the newcomers, destroy their own habitat. At the same time Belgrade has remained the last major urban haven in its part of the world.

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- 1 The article is part of the research project “Modernisation of the Western Balkans”
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- 3 „The attacks on Dubrovnik, the Old Bridge in Mostar and the Ferhadija Mosque in Banja Luka offered iconic representations of the violence unfolding across Croatia and Bosnia. Underlying these iconic instances of violence, however, there was a more widespread campaign against the building stock of the former Yugoslavia. In the towns of Croatia and Bosnia (and later of Kosovo) the more mundane architecture that comprises the everyday built environment (houses, shops, squares, car parks) were also a subject of widespread and deliberate destruction. Observing the destruction of such buildings a minority of observers contended that these attacks should be regarded as a distinct form of political violence. These observers - principally architects and scholars - argued that the building stock should be understood to be a target in its own right and, as such, its destruction should be irreducible to the other, extant conceptual categories being deployed to understand the violence attending the dissolution of Yugoslavia. For example, Bogdan Bogdanović, architect and former mayor of Belgrade, argued that the destruction of Vukovar was the work of ‘city haters’ who sought to extinguish urbanity by the destruction of the built environment”. Confer: Coward, Martin: *‘Urbicide’ Reconsidered*. In: *Theory & Event*. Volume 10, Issue 2, 2007, <https://muse.jhu.edu>
- 4 Herscher, Andrew: *Urbicide, Urbanism, and Urban Destruction in Kosovo*. In: *Theory & Event*. Volume 10, Issue 2, 2007, <https://muse.jhu.edu>
- 5 *Istorija Beograda. 3. Dvadeseti vek*. Prosveta: Beograd 1974, 559-683.
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- 8 Recently Terazije were affected with even more bizarre episode by raising the scenes of that area in New Belgrade. „The Thematic Park Terazije“, made up of scenes stored in one of the wastelands of New Belgrade, became the guiding example of spiritual involution in the time when an increase of simulacra provides supremacy above reality“. Confer: Bogunović, Slobodan: *Terazije na Novom Beogradu*. <http://aas.org.rs/terazije-na-novom-beogradu/>
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Angelica Stan

Urban expansion in Bucharest, after 1990: errors and benefits

Introduction

The analysis of Bucharest's development after 1990 reveals both a culturally and socially affectation of the whole city but also deep traces in the physical space, functional structure and urban morphology of the peripheral territory. Bucharest peripheries are today the mirror of a conflict state, which is worsened during the economic crisis started in 2007.

Although generically called "transition period" after the 1989, and accepted as a relatively homogenous entity in the history of spatial planning in Romania,¹ it can be brought down into several distinctive periods, defined not only by the socio-economic and political goals, but as morphological steps in the configuration of the periphery. "The key changes in the spatial planning system did not always emerge in a progressive manner, but rather as conjunctions of catalysts from a broader institutional field, such as political shifts, discourses, availability of EU funds, learning and networking processes, actual development patterns and related civil society agency".² According to Munteanu and Servillo there are five distinct episodes, corresponding to the main political shifts at the national level: 1989–1996, 1997–2000, 2001–2004, 2005–2008, and 2008–2012. Although this chronology is correct in terms of the political, macro-economic and legislative transformations that have shaped it, only a small number of periods are relevant to the phenomenon of the urban expansion of Bucharest, related to significant changes in its urban structure and peripheral tissue morphology.

The first episode (1990–2000) is marked by a general enthusiasm, but also by deep confusion due to a melting system between the communist remnants and the new capitalist elements in all domains. The former planning law was repealed and it appeared a "draft for an alternative comprehensive system based on prescriptive land-use planning at the local level with supra-local and national integrative



Fig. 1
Belsugului Road 2009, west of Bucharest (Military District - Chiajna). (Stan)
 Early urban expansion in Bucharest was based on the desire of city residents to change their way of living, the giving up indwelling in communist collective neighborhoods, in favor of new peripheral neighborhoods, much less equipped and organized than the previous.

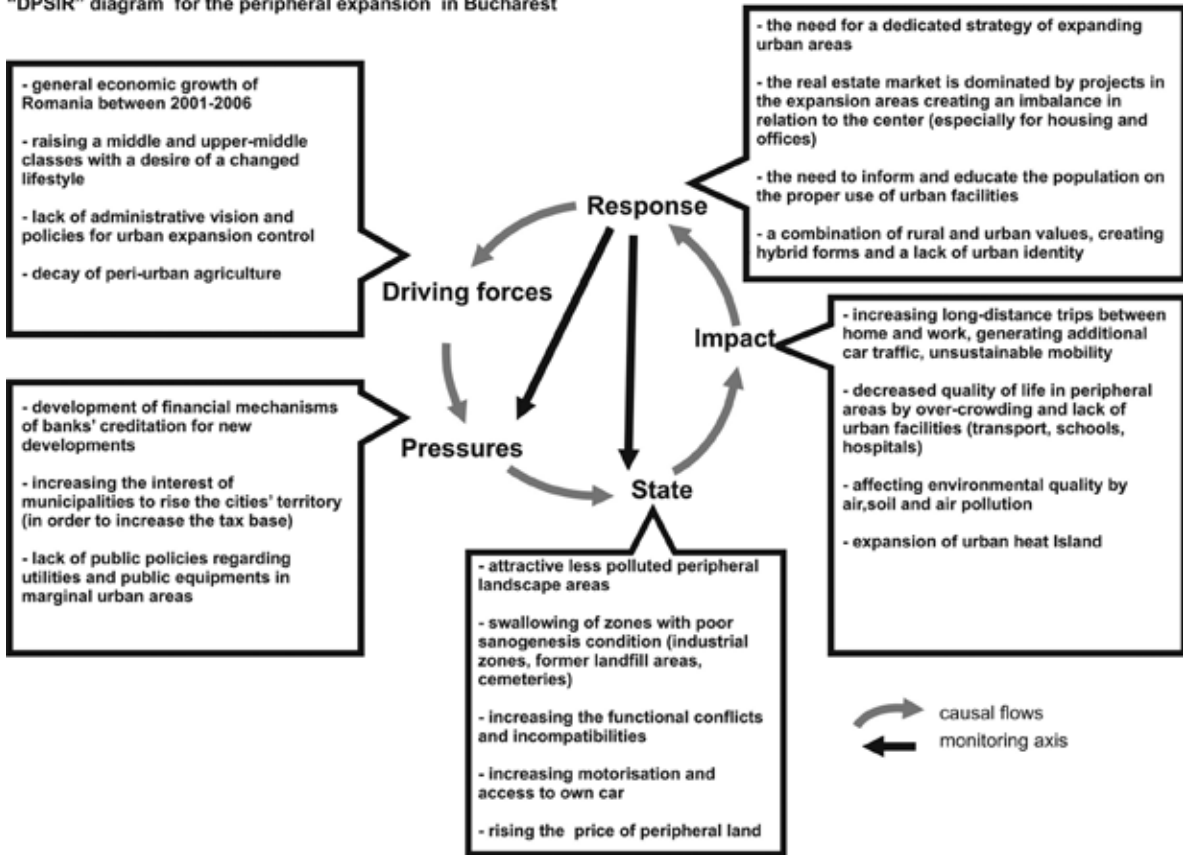
intentions”³. An important factor for the peripheral expansion is the large privatization program in this period⁴, leading to the rapid privatization of the from formerly state-owned industrial or agricultural land.

The second period (2001–2007) is marked primary by the EU candidacy and the accession in 2007. It is in the same time characterized by the strengthening of the discretionary private pressure of the real estate sectors on the inbuilt land in the marginal areas of Bucharest, having many consequences for the repolarization of the city and even for the birth of a major unbalance between the center and the periphery. The third episode (2008–2014) is characterized by an effort of overcoming the economic crisis while the urbanism is constantly amended in order to adopt better the European model and the regional development policies. The stagnation in the physical expansion of the city can be seen as an opportunity to re-consider the planning practices and as a starting point of an authentic research on the new urban forms of periphery.

Fig. 2
Urban Sprawl in West part of Bucharest, 2002 and 2014, Militari – Chiajna neighborhood. (Google Earth)



“DPSIR” diagram for the peripheral expansion in Bucharest



First Decay: 1990–2000. The Enthusiasm

The period that followed immediately after the events of 1989 meant, first of all, a very special state of mind. The hope of desire to rapid and radical changes of the Romanian society was so great, that other needs and mechanisms necessary for such a process were overshadowed. There have been numerous studies and researches on the long and difficult process “transition” from the centralized communist state economy to the market mechanisms, which affected in relatively similar ways all the former socialist countries. I will refer here only to some of the transformations that marked the urban planning and its fundamental role for the urban expansion. The analysis of this period is based on the DPSIR matrix, the methodology successfully implemented by prof. Simon Bell,⁵ which reveals several aspects presented below. The key-factors for the early urban expansion process in Bucharest could be found firstly in the legal framework for the professional practice incl. the political and administrative ones, secondly in the decreasing interest in housing blocks and the return to the village (especially by the last coming in the Capital), and thirdly in the development of real estate market mechanisms in tandem with the crediting policies.

Fig. 3
 The diagram “DPSIR” for the peripheral expansion process in Bucharest, during first and second decay (1990–2007).
 (Stan)

The expansion of Bucharest began after 1990, following the abolishment of a series of laws of the communist administration, which restricted building on land outside the city or within the limited localities established by the law for the extension of the collective housing areas or of industrial units.

The first building law was the Law No.50 from 29 July 1991, authorizing the execution of construction and certain measures to achieve housing. The law was configured after the French model, but without having from the beginning all the other related and necessary legislative acts, such as the cadaster and land registration law and the urban planning law, which appeared later⁶.

The legislative factor has introduced enough ambiguity and permissiveness, but it has gone along with the political factor, which seeks to configure appealing electoral agenda in front of a population, obviously untrained in democratic practices. Bucharest had 11 mayors starting from Ștefan Ciurel, resigning in 1990, to the today's Sorin Oprescu.⁷ Among the promises of the politicians, no one has taken into account up to 2000, the marginal areas of the city, except maybe the punctual commitments of asphaltting, public lighting and sanitation of the very poor neighborhoods at the city edges. The status quo, the economic problems, the nonexistence yet of a master plan of the city, didn't seem to concern much the authorities. There seemed to be many other things that were more important, caused by the virtue of the events after 1989 events.

One of the special moments of this decade was "The Bucharest 2000 International Planning Contest", launched in 1996 with a prestigious international jury, gathering competitors from all over the world, some of them notorious. The winning team, Meinhard von Gerkan and Jais Joachim from Germany, proposed radical and quite un-realistic interventions for the Unirii area,⁸ and thus the implementation of the result was not possible. But what this competition did was the attracting of the investors' attention to Bucharest. The "Bucharest 2000 Zone" was not ready to receive behind the "Casa Poporului" the "forest of skyscrapers", as proposed by von Gerkan (even if it was declared in 1998 a "national interest zone"). Therefore the more permissive peripheries were open for both office buildings and housing estates.

Among the most important urban projects developed in the periphery of the capital, started in that period (some still in progress), are the residential districts Cosmopolis and Henri Coanda, the commercial objects Carrefour Militari and Metro Baneasa, and the offices in Straulesti, Baneasa, Pipera and Voluntari. Some of them are still in progress.

It would be appropriate to mention here some details about the dealing with the urban context at that time. First, it was a period of a direct struggle with the inherited image of the "monstrous urban systematization" of the communist era. The term of "systematization" replaced the term of "urbanism" as an inappropriate for the communist regime one, meant all types of interventions

by political order in the rural and urban territories, especially in the central areas, by political order. Bucharest was definitely the most affected city in Romania by 'the breath' of urban reconfiguration operations, supporting massive demolitions and the destruction of the urban identity, of many heritage buildings, the demolition or relocation of churches, etc. The world of architects - because no urban planners were yet trained⁹- was itself tributary to a centralized system, whose sudden decentralization first generated disorder. The transition from the absolute monopoly of the National Projects Institutes to 'crumbling' of the profession in thousands of companies and individual offices of architecture was unprepared and chaotic. The first generation of freelancing architects, not distributed in "the field of work", as it was before 1989, didn't know anything about how to practice under the new conditions. Nor have they been performed, with the exception of some isolated cases of teachers returning from abroad, but used to perform in well-settled systems. In the very specific of the Romanian transition, no architect was properly prepared to re-act professionally.

The difficulties have been related mainly to the lack of experience in the relationships between architects and clients, architects and developers, architects and constructors, and architects and representatives of the public administration. These difficult contacts evolved in an environment that still doesn't have established legal procedures or moral. The uncontrolled urban expansion occurred through improper ways of practicing the profession, marked by greediness in the land use on one hand and by the lack of global vision for the entire city development on the other.

Another equally important factor in affecting the quality of urban practice in Romania was linked to the legislative framework for the land legal status. In 1991 the Law 18 for the Land is published in "Monitorul Oficial", to be then modified many times in the years ahead.¹⁰ The delays in resolving the properties restitution cases, the gaps and deficiencies in the application of the law itself and the constant political interventions made in many cases the urban solutions available on paper, to become inoperable due to the uncertain legal status of the land.

Second Decay: 2001–2007. The Pressure

Normally, the greed of developers was not an unbridgeable and fatal thing. It could be also a sign of the system's health how the urban land resource is measured or assessed through/by the economic interest. The desire to build *as much as the piece of owned land supports* is amended normally by clear urban regulations and administrative procedures that temper and adjust it to a tolerable level, or, in some happy cases, to an optimal level in terms of the urban land capitalization and achievement of a comfortable density.

The real estate pressure in Bucharest was one that lacked any consistent positive tones. In some cases it was even criminal, as involved in the demolition



Fig. 4
Evolution of the northern area of Bucharest adjacent to the ring-road, the land between Baneasa forest and Tunari forest, year 2004 (left) and 2008 (right) - after the construction of a part of Greenfiled Residence. (Google Earth)

of several heritage buildings. It showed all the administrative and legal weaknesses and operated in a very "Balkan manner". However, the period 2000–2007 has been one of the worst in terms of urbanism in Bucharest. It was the first stage of the implementation of the Bucharest PUG¹¹, approved in 2000 and founded by a number of key-studies and master plans, as the one for the Dambovitza River¹², for the historical center, for the northern area along the Colentina lakes, and for the protected urban zones. For the first time since the "Schita de sistematizare"¹³ in 1935, the architects' guild freely subscribed an urban development vision, trying to melt into a coherent whole a lot of the contrasts and contradictions. The PUG 2000 attempted a reconciliation of all: the followers of the "horizontal city" (therefore adapts of the eternal little Paris confined to its territorial limits historically), and the more energetic advocates of the rapid vertical lifting (even beyond local seismic conditions), or the more fanatics for keeping intact the city's ecological resources. But, "when the government ordered new spatial plans to frame the emerging developments"¹⁴, these plans proved mostly disconnected from the reality of land ownership, the financial capacity and priorities of the public sector. There integration between the different sections of the plans was limited, denoting a strong silo-mentality and a lack of cross sector cooperation.¹⁵ Many real estate projects launched in this period led to the extension of the city boundaries on abandoned industrial areas and agricultural land in the very proximity of the Colentina lakes, or near the forests around the city.

The most common morphological pattern in this period was the dense and compact development of the plots, often on parcels with very elongated proportions in relation to the access from the public road. Especially in the sphere of residential development, small blocks of flats assembly between P + 4 and P + 6 floors that target the most efficient use of land resources have been multiplied. The largest stake for the sale of these units was not the architectural concept, often imported directly from the investor, but the relationship with the landscape, speculating as much as possible with its qualities.¹⁶

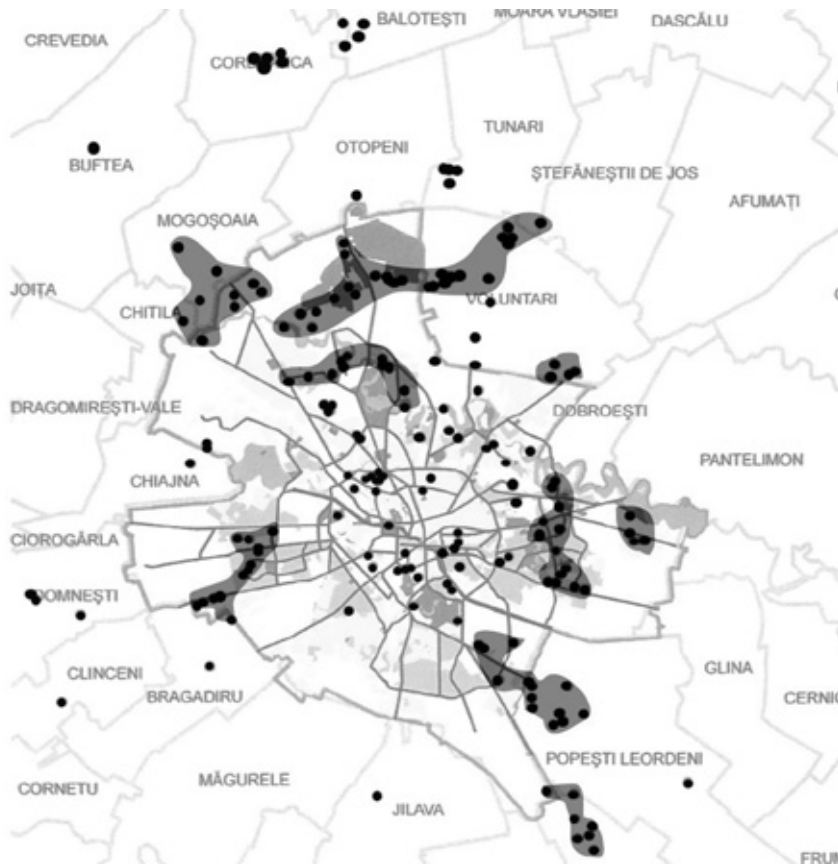


Fig. 5
Distribution of number approved zoning plans/year in the 2008-2013 decay. The downward trend is clearly visible and is due to a synergic effect between the impact of the economic crisis and the new constrains in the submitting-approval process. (Stan)

Third Decay: 2008–2014. The effort

The year of crisis 2008, felt first in the real estate sector: the international financial blockade was matched by new measures of credits limiting imposed by the National Bank of Romania. Thus, many developers have stopped projects hoping for a return of land values, and, after a time, some began to cut down the profit margins, in order to be able to sell. The effect chain affected the real estate agencies, producers and distributors of building materials, the furniture manufacturers and interior designers, but also the electrical and electronics, and last, but not least, the architects and planners from the private sector,¹⁷ “The general image is that of a system characterized by an overwhelming amount of contradictory planning strategies and instruments, which are the effects of several reform periods, and the persistence of exemption-driven planning practices in favor of private developers and lobbies of interests”.¹⁸

For the development of the Capital, the crisis period has meant a new management team of the municipality with Sorin Oprescu as the new mayor. Several large-scale urban projects (some disputed) appeared as a part of his agenda, aiming to improve the city traffic, to de-congest some districts around

the central area and to build infrastructure for the certain city's strategic development poles. Not literally presented in this agenda was the problem of the uncontrolled urban expansion. It was reached indirectly, because the attention of the municipality was directed only to solving the problems within the existing urban tissue.

The weakening of the real estate pressure and the relative maturity of the administration concerning the adapted urban development plans, have made possible several important strategic documents guiding the city evolution. The awareness about the need for an integrated vision for the development of the city and the need for an integrated management of the metropolitan scale of Bucharest characterize these documents. The start of the new General Urban Plan of Bucharest in 2011 was one of the important moments, stating some of the city's compulsory management levels: the public space and quality of life, the urban identity, the business opportunities and economic development, the sustainable development, and the regional relationships.

The overall dynamics in the drafting of urban land regulations has been very much diminished after 2008. They came with the changes of the Urban Planning Law and the provision that forbade the initiating of Zonal Urban Plans by private developers and by limiting the land use ratio to no more than 20% from baseline. If in 2009 there were a total of 124 Zonal Urban Plans approved in Bucharest territory, in 2013 that number drops to 18 - a rate decrease of approx. 88%.

A great number of the zonal plans have been developed in Bucharest and its surrounding for central and semi-central areas. Most of those made in peripheral areas are residential developments of various magnitudes. Certain elements of urban sprawl do occur in this period with a greatly reduced speed and have dominantly a residential character. Many peripheral objects, as schools, kindergartens and health facilities that were tackled mostly by private investments, begin suffering because of their mono-functionality. What is missing, however, are public spaces, community areas, cultural facilities, and this makes the peripheries to have yet a pauper image, deprived of identity and representation.

The period of real estate crisis, with its lower construction pressure in the peripheral areas, emphasized the problems that occurred previously by having their effects on the environment, such as "the increasing size of the urban heat island, the increased pollution, (...)"¹⁹ and on the urban functionality and on many other levels.

Fig. 6
Spatial distribution and concentration areas
of residential projects in 2010, in Bucharest and
peripheral areas.
 (Stan, after Pătroescu)



The access to European funds, including projects and public agendas for sustainable urban planning and growth, territorial cohesion, integrate landscape planning, etc. was open during this period. For the peripheral dynamics as well as for the entire planning process in Romania the “Europeanization” acted as a “vector of change not only for the national and regional administrations, but also for a vast amount of local ones”.²⁰ The benefit can be found in several urban plans and policies for new integrated and strategic approaches. It also leads to an “overwhelming amount of contradictory planning strategies and instruments, and to the endurance of the exemption-driven planning practices previously used by private developers”.²¹

Conclusions

The three decades of peripheral expansion of the Capital are equivalent to a gradual process of maturation of urban planning at the national level. It is certain, however, that during these three decades Bucharest attained the maximum of area to be urbanized up to its administrative boundaries, because there is no legal or operational agreement to cooperate with the surrounding territory.

We consider from an optimistic perspective that the driving forces of this process are also changing - both the macro-economic factors, as well as the local ones. They change the direction and act in order to increase the global awareness about the dynamics of the peripheral expansion. The sustainability paradigm is more than ever supporting against any interventions and the new European documents insist on an increased attention and more efficient actions against any forms of waste of urban environment and militate for an ethical way of planning, which would not lead to excessive consumption of urban resources.

Conversely, from a pessimistic perspective, we might see the future of urban sprawl as a phenomenon of unconscious developed as before, aggravating at all levels the problems of the city. The lack of attention to expansion, especially when it comes amid a positive economic trend is still a trap for the local governments in Romania. Still, for Bucharest, given the lack of rigor in the assumption of consistent policies, and given some outdated mentality, corruption and the rigidity in adopting the measures in accordance with the European documents, there is a danger of continuing the unsustainable way of expansion or even lead to the abandonment of these spaces, just by missing any potential of them.

The development of information technologies is still far from being a solution to the lack of control of the expansion. But however, the possibilities to map, analyze information, to calculate accurately and simulate the spatial dynamics of the city development in different macroeconomic scenarios, creates the chance for future wiser policies. Precisely because of this point, Bucharest is now at the beginning: the new General Urban Plan aims to be such a smart tool,

able to predict the development, without restraining it and without repeating the mistakes of the past.

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- 1 Pascariu, G.: *Overview of Romanian planning evolution*, in: Proceedings of AESOP 26th Annual Congress, Ankara, METUGC 2012.
 - 2 Munteanu, M./L. Servillo: *Romanian Spatial Planning System: Post-Communist Dynamics of Change and Europeanization Processes*, in: *European Planning Studies*, 22:11, 2248-2267, DOI: 10.1080/09654313.2013.830696.
 - 3 Munteanu, Servillo, 2014.
 - 4 The 1991 Property Law reinforced private property.
 - 5 Bell, S.: *DPSIR = A problem structuring method? An exploration from the "Imagine" approach*, in: *European Journal of Operational Research*, 222(2), 2012, pp. 350–360.
 - 6 Law on Cadaster and Land no. 7/1996 (republished in 2013) and only 10 years later appear the Law. No. 350, 2001 on Spatial Planning and Urbanism.
 - 7 Until 2000, the five mayors of the capital were Viorel Oproiu (November 1990 - September 1991), Doru Viorel Panait (September 1991 - February 1992), Crin Halaicu (February 1992 - June 1996), Victor Ciorbea (June 20, 1996 - March 30, 1998), Viorel Lis (Interim -16 January 1997 - 13 November 1998), Viorel Lis (ales- 13 November 1998 - June 2000).
 - 8 One of the main squares of the central area of Bucharest.
 - 9 The Urban Planning Department was to come into existence in 1996.
 - 10 until 2000 it was changed by 4 times, and last modification dates from 2013 with Law 165/2013 - The law of Properties Restitution.
 - 11 General Urban Plan.
 - 12 One of the two rivers that crosses Bucharest in its central area.
 - 13 A form of General Urban Plan.
 - 14 MPWSP—Ministry for Public Works and Spatial Planning. *Reforma si Lucrarile publice in Romania ultimilor ani 1997–2000*. Universalia Bucharest 2000.
 - 15 Munteanu, Servillo, 2014, p.2255.
 - 16 Stan, A.: *Peisajul periferiilor urbane. Revitalizarea peisageră a zonelor periferice*. Ed. Ion Mincu București 2009.
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 - 18 Munteanu & Servillo, 2014.
 - 19 Pătroescu, M./G.Vintilă/G. Cocoș: A model of geoecological analysis of a city sample with a view to its ecological restructuring, *Analele Universității din București, Seria Geografie*, XLIV 1995.
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Mihai Alexandru

Urban planning through major planning documents after 1999: urban centrality between vision and reality

Two complementary ways of understanding the inner centrality of Bucharest

The issue of urban centrality can be discussed from two complementary points of view: *the first one* refers to the city-center: a place of privileged centrality with historic heritage and sentimental value is recognized and rediscovered today, albeit several alterations and moments of decline in popularity due to administrative ignorance, bad intent or growing interest in other sites of the city; *the second one*, refers to other places of centrality in the city, oscillating between planned and unplanned, between project and reality. In the urban history of Bucharest - other European cities are no exception - both instances (city-center and multi-centrality) fall under the concept of *ordering principle* applied as a measure to counteract certain urban imbalances or under the idea of *operational concept* to which is attributed a major role in guiding development based on a hierarchical thinking¹. On the other hand, a third interpretation can be found in the real fabric of the city, in its own evolution, impacting on the very fabric of the city-center.

A further difficulty in discussing the urban centrality of Bucharest comes from the fact that the city-center is a heterogeneous entity, composed of several distinctive parts such as the historic core, the central area and also several areas where centrality is more diffuse². As such, although there is no clear consensus on what is the city-center it is important to note that it is a dynamic element of the city, as highlighted in figure 1, subject to different studies.

Earlier attempts in understanding the centrality of Bucharest

One of the most important attempts to define the city-center belongs to a multi-disciplinary team that in the mid 70's tried to define the perimeter of the

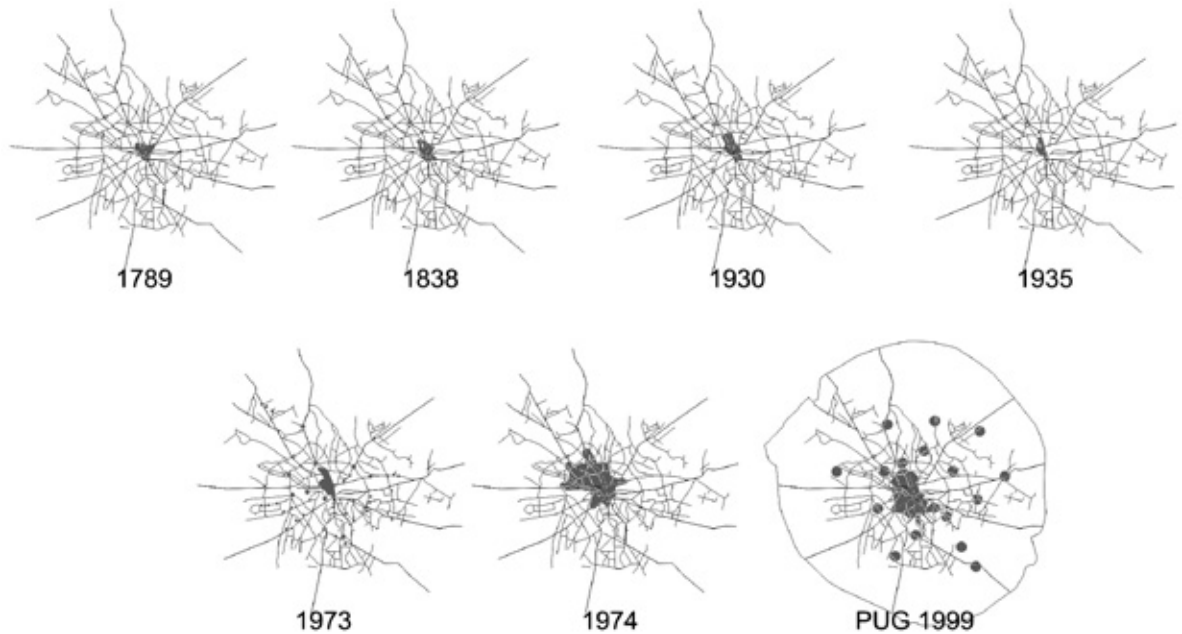


Fig. 1
The evolution of the city-center of Bucharest from 1789 to 1999. (Alexandru. The four instants, mentioned in a study (Criveanu, et al. 1976), that present the city-center, are: 1789 (~100ha); 1838 (~130ha); 1930 (~200ha); 1935 (~100ha). They are representative of the mobility of the center, as well as of a certain directionality. Afterwards, other interpretations dating from 1973 and 1974, as well as the Zonal Urban Plan from 1999, prove new stages of evolution. It is notable for the 1974 instance, a high extensiveness of the center, superior to the 1999 moment in some aspects, proving the importance of symbolic power of the center.

city-center as well as its meaning, through a scientific method of determination. Apart from establishing the perimeter as well as its value as a privileged space³ in the urban structure, the study concluded on the dynamic of the city-center later demonstrated by an investigation, done in 1973, that showed the evidence of a polycentric pattern. In this regard it remains an exemplary approach even today⁴.

Sadly, the 1977 earthquake affecting a large part of the central area, gave birth to concern and reluctance seen as a fragile fabric. The unavoidable result was that the city-center became the subject of destructive spatial, functional and social interventions; the most radical was Victoria Socialismului Boulevard⁵ cut through the old fabric in the Southern part of the city-center – an imposing spatial materialization of the ideological and political power. Although the construction was still ongoing at the dawn of the fall of the communist regime in 1989, the historic city-center maintained its representativeness in the urban structure as a place of symbolic value mainly because its valuable built heritage.

The fall of the communism and the new interest in centrality

In the decades following the fall of the communist regime, the main attitudes towards the city-center can be brought down into two: one that treats the centrality of the city-center as a content, as a quality attributed to the space itself, thus stressing on its preservation, attitude that can be assumed as a static interpretation focusing mainly on the historic city-center; the second approach focuses on understanding the city-center in a plurality of centers/or places of centrality, while arguing for its evolution and extensiveness, an attitude that can be assumed as a more dynamic focus.

Trying to capitalize on its assets, several initiatives and studies are noteworthy: between 1991 and 1992 the City Hall and the Union of Romanian Architects launched a planning competition regarding the crossroad of two historical axis – Lipscani and Moșilor; in 1995, a preparatory study aiming at the identification of the historical value and formulating protection measures is drafted at the "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture⁶, entitled "Restoration Study – the Rehabilitation of the Architectural Heritage in no.1 Architecture Reserve of Bucharest municipality"; almost in parallel, the Zonal Urban Plan⁸, drafted by „Proiect București S.A.” provides regulations for the rehabilitation and the valorification of the historical city-center, referring to a perimeter that is later on reinforced by GO 77/2001⁹, still applicable today. Even though their role in delimiting the historic city is recognized, none of the above produced operational effects as they were rapidly replaced by newer documents.

In 1995, the Union of Romanian Architects launches an international competition that aims at "identifying the possibilities of urban re-integration of a large part of the central area, that was structurally deteriorated by a radical intervention ... so that Bucharest should attain specific exigencies, pertaining to the contemporary center of an European capital"¹⁰. 235 entries, out of 665 registered initially, answered to the following aims: create a flexible, open, and adjustable environment that could favor a dynamic urban development; to identify necessary changes according the central area of an European capital; to wholly reconstruct the coherence in the central zone; the eliminate fractures and lessen the aggressions caused by the 1980-1989 urban operation. The winning entry belonging to Von Gerkan Marg was not implemented due to operational, organisational and financial problems that were much to handle for an administration that was underprepared at that stage.

General Urban Plan 1999¹¹

Later on, the city-center is subject to several other plans that add a more operational dimension, notably the General Urban Plan of Bucharest 1999¹² (ro:PUG en:GUP) together with the adjacent local planning regulation as well as a series of studies meant to fundament the identity of the city.

A crucial document for the development of Bucharest was the GUP drafted and approved in 1999, in which the idea of polycentricity was clearly stressed out; this idea was closely related to the ambition of Bucharest of becoming a European metropolis. As an urbanistic sub-objective, the plan provisioned nineteen attractive and highly accessible areas in order to channel and absorb new economic pressure in terms of companies headquarters, locational pressure for national and international corporations etc. The mentioned locations were predetermined on complex criteria and were supposed to constitute consolidated poles of the city that could ease the pressure put on the city-center and to drive development in a sustainable way. Another objective proposed by the '99 GUP was the increase with 40% of land reserved for urban representative functions in the central area of the city, including in the "Bucharest 2000" area¹³. We could say, a healing gesture for the city. The historical center is confirmed by the GUP, on its 1995 perimeter and included as a special Reference Unit with clear regulations.

It is noteworthy that the open-mindedness of the authors of the GUP, anticipating the aspiration of Bucharest to become a European capital, led to formulating ambitious objectives for the future development, putting Bucharest alongside central European capitals such as Budapest or Prague.



Fig. 2
Bucharest, the localization of
development poles proposed
through the General Urban
Plan in 1999 – a system of
19 main poles situated in
attractive locations with
complex functions in order to
ensure a metropolitan visibility.
(PUG 1999, interpretation by
Alexandru)

Among the associated studies two must be noted: The Study for the delimitation of Protected Built Areas in the municipality of Bucharest¹⁴ phases I – II (1997-1999). The document is still in effect today and refers mainly to the central area of the city but despite its regulating measures could not prevent a whole series of deregulatory interventions¹⁵ in the central area. The second one is the *Zonal Urban Plan for the Central Area of Bucharest 1999*.

The ZUP refers to the city-center itself, understood as a state of polycentrality and also as a central element in the urban structure. The Zonal Urban Plan for the Central Area of Bucharest clearly underlines the need of coherence, understood as a visual and esthetic clarity, reconciled under the idea of unity. It is notable as well the necessity to reinforce relations¹⁶ to other nuclei of centrality¹⁷ in the city. A second element is related to the fact that the development of the central area is pushed towards the south, in order to rebalance the central area at the level of the urban structure for which a number of actions are needed: infusion with centrality of the prolongation of the north-south axis (Dimitrie Cantemir Blvd. - Șerban Vodă strret) between Unirii Square and Șincai Square and the development of centrality poles in new locations in the south (Timpuri Noi square, Rahova square). A clear intention of giving certain coherence to a series of heterogeneous areas that form the central area is obvious: an idea that will be reiterated several other times throughout the history of Bucharest.



Fig. 3
The Zonal Urban Plan, 1999: proposal.
(Archive Enache)

2000-2012: the growing incoherence

Drafted between 2011-2012, the Bucharest Strategic Concept 2035¹⁸, following a multi-layered analysis as well as a complex approach involving technical consultations, focus groups interviews and online surveys, summarizes the urban development of Bucharest of the last decades, drawing the main conclusion in a rather somber tone: in 2011, Bucharest is "the result of an incoherent and unequal process of development, lacking a clear long-term vision, unsupported by territorial cooperation, unsustainable and generating multiple social imbalances, development that took inadequate advantage of its resources by ignoring its local distinctive competences"¹⁹. Apart from the lack and the delay in the administrative and managerial organization of the municipality, a series of causes have to be pointed out as main drivers that lead to this situation.

Without giving any hierarchy between them, the following can be noted:

- the change in lifestyle for many inhabitants of Bucharest²⁰, coupled with an increasing purchasing power but also with the search for better living conditions stimulated several waves of sprawl which gave rise to new core-periphery relations and a certain imbalance;
- secondly, the scale and speed of the urban expansion phenomenon after 1989, but especially after 2000 till the peak of the economic boom in 2008²¹ has led not only to a territorial imbalance, due to a fast growing periphery and a late reaction to a territory in loss of spatial cohesion but also to an increasingly large urban mass that was putting a lot of pressure on the city-center, already affected by previous interventions and thus no longer able to provide a good representation and service to farther and farther territories;
- thirdly, as an immediate consequence of the first tendency, due to the outward growth of the city, the problem of administrative borders was soon a problematic issue in ensuring a coherence and in providing services for a population installed in dispersed areas across the periphery; the surrounding territory still lacks basic equipment;
- in the fourth place, a rapid growth in the rate of car ownership²² and also in individual mobility, sustained the diffuse expansion along with a change in the patterns of localization for people and activities; the lack of anticipation of this shift in transportation, combined with a well-developed but clearly inefficient and slowly reactive public transportation led to an abrupt suffocation of the traffic system in Bucharest, further privileging peripheral movement.

Summarizing on the inner area, a lot of the proposals from the diverse documents drafted around 1999 and later on, were severely affected by speculative building and real-estate developments that also led to some strategic sites to become missed opportunities. The development existed but it was done in an uncorrelated manner, the result being a growing incoherence and a delay in the consolidation of the urban identity of Bucharest. In a report written for the Bucharest Strategic Concept 2035, professor Doina Cristea states: "the best located land resources were consumed"²³ the polycentric development of Bucharest is complex, so too are the implications of its failure, leading to the impossibility of: developing the central area, the progressive consolidation of the traditional business center in the perimeter of "Bucharest 2000"; the development of a system of urban poles for services and recreation; the 40% increase in designated area for urban representative function, including in the area "Bucharest 2000".

Considerations on the centrality of Bucharest in 2012

The effect of the aforementioned tendencies is complex but regarding our focus on centrality the following observations can be made:

The city-center

An increasing incapacity of the city-center to accomplish its multidimensional role is apparent due to several reasons: the newly built mass, diffuse, has a poor connectivity to the city-center due to the slow reaction of both public transport and route infrastructure projects and cannot justify investment in large urban or infrastructural projects; the first wave of urbanization takes place as far as tens of kilometers away from the city center generating large unoccupied land creating a spatial discontinuity, "a void of interest" for different investors and urban actors; the urban mass created as a result of the urban growth raises an issue of city-center capacity which cannot evolve at the same pace; due to the displacement of some of the population in the periphery, the commuting phenomenon is making the city-center a less accessible place, although it remains a large traffic generator.

Despite this lack of capacity in a territorial (metropolitan) context, at its own scale the historic city-center gains new interest: capitalizing on a growing tourist phenomenon, a still ongoing refurbishment program of the historic city-center begun in 2007, contributes to an overturn in its popularity, by partial pedestrianizing, car access restrictions, pavement and furniture remodeling, but most of all, turning an impoverished area in an area dedicated almost exclusively to consumption in the form of terraces, cafes, bars and nightclubs. "In the central area of Bucharest the distinctive mark of the moment seems to be the forcing of a new volumetric configuration, the incoherent dispersion of functions, the overcrowding of an already saturated old fabric"²⁴.

The so-called success of the historic city-center is nevertheless relative as at least two main risks can be identified: a process mimicking what Jane Jacobs²⁵ explained as a risk for popular areas of cities, namely a mono-functionality as a result of intense polarization of a single activity that is attracted by that specific place having as consequence the exclusion of other activities, especially dwelling²⁶ which is a basic ingredient of the city-center; a decrease in the representativeness of the city-center for the inhabitants of Bucharest, as some social exclusion is apparent as a result of the functional specialization that is not coherent with social diversity²⁷.

The emergence of new commercial centralities

In the first phase of development after the Revolution (1990-2002), as new residential areas were built in the far periphery, there was also a series of commercial areas that followed briefly, but their success was to be of short term; implanted mainly in relation to main routes access, the answer they gave to a rapid demand of services in periphery was not sustainable, neither financially nor efficient. Their specialized offer, no longer corresponded to further changes in lifestyle of inhabitants, thus around 2000²⁸ a new generation of shopping centers, commercial areas and malls were built closer to the city, sometimes in the dense urban fabric, offering a higher diversity of services.

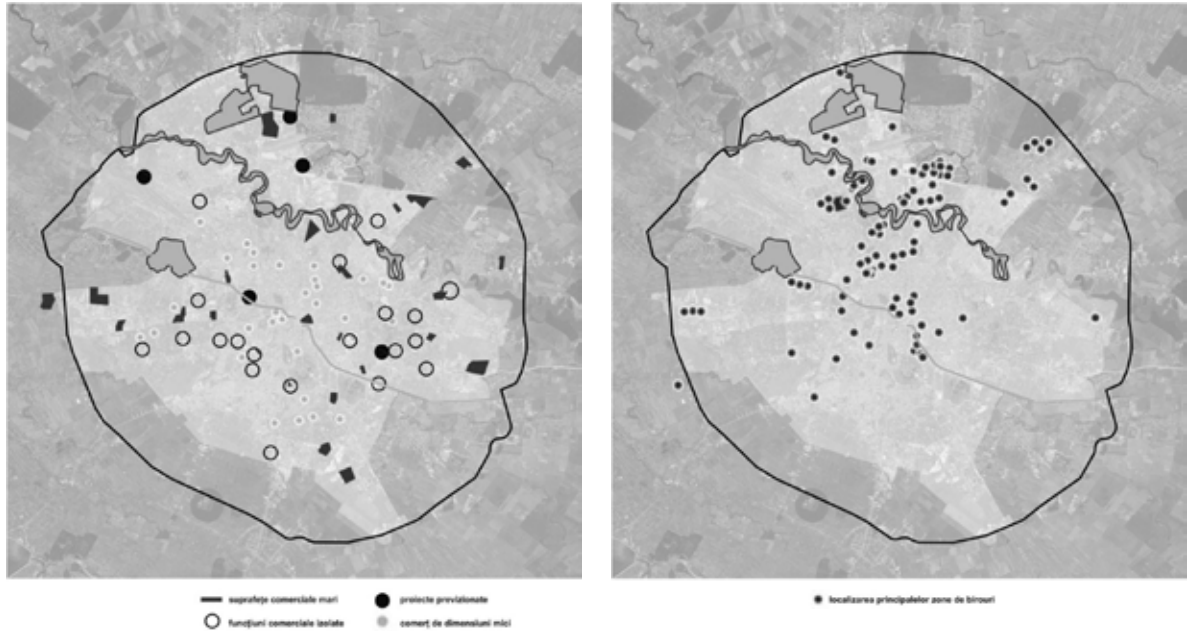


Fig. 4
Bucharest: left: large-scale commercial facilities; right: the localization of main office areas. (CSB2035, interpretation by Alexandru)

This second wave of centralities is consistent with a major shift in residential mobility characterized by both outward movement as well as new residential compounds inside the city; generally based on reconquering unbuilt land, refunctionalising older communist buildings (Circul Foamei) or reconverting industrial facilities etc. New changes in lifestyle and a certain shopping culture as well as a construction boom that multiplied office spaces in the northern central strip of the city, led to the multiplication of malls and shopping centers around the end of the period.

A third generation of mainly commercial centralities is concentrated in the post-real-estate period where the urban expansion, affected by the crisis, slowed down and, for a while, so did consumerism. If for 1-2 years some facilities were built more from inertia rather than from a visionary plan, it is interesting to see that the emplacement is usually favoring areas that were left behind by the previous extensive development, closer to the dense fabric of the city and offering a better mix of activities, including time spending facilities such as indoor sports. As such, Băneasa Shopping Center, Afi Palace Cotroceni, Sun Plaza and more recently Promenada Mall are taking advantage of certain opportunities created by the development pattern of the city.

Nevertheless, resuming on the development of commercial centralities, several downsides can be highlighted:

- with very few exceptions they privilege car accessibility without a special regard to public transportation, mainly demonstrated by their bad connectivity to the public transportation network; as results from some interviews with two mall manager (classified) in some cases car access is privileged even to pedestrian access;

- there is no particular intention to create a relation to the urban environment, to a certain urban culture, in most cases the surrounding area being physically separated from the city through large parking areas or large facilities; some timid cases of arranged public spaces are apparent but their quality remains poor;
- some cases testify the need to be reinforced with later investment in nearby office buildings or residential compounds that take advantage of the increase in land value usually generated by the insertion of the mall or commercial area but also provide a clientele for the commercial facilities as well, especially during daytime;
- concern with architectural value and visual identity exists but is generally secondary to other aspects such as location, indoor facilities etc. Some iconic elements can be nevertheless identified;
- apart from an increase in land value, there is no apparent development around, neither in the functionality of urban space, nor in functional or physical upgrade of the surrounding area, thus the commercial centralities remain largely isolated elements in the city;
- a certain lagging behind in the refinement of the offer and the level of urban integration in comparison to other western european capitals must be underlined;
- Apart from the large-scale commercial centralities, a recent appreciation of small-scale retail is identifiable, favoring proximity and a certain local urbanity.

Judged from the point of view of their dynamic, although a balanced spatial distribution of large-scale commercial centralities is apparent, a certain imbalance can be noted between older and newer centralities with regard to the level of refinement (functional, architectural etc).

Tertiary centralities

In the case of Bucharest the propensity of office spaces²⁹ to agglomerate is not very evident; three major patterns of localisation can be identified: the first one, tends to favor the central area of the city with its extension towards the Northern part, thus accentuating a certain historical North-South imbalance; the re-use of former industrial areas, entered in a state of decline; in the third place some areas of consolidation of office buildings are emerging without leading for the moment to the concretisation of a CBD or a business area.

As far as it concerns the first category, the central area of Bucharest is a preferential location for office spaces but apart from Victoria Square and other secondary spots no coherent integrated development exists. Generally speaking the central area offers good accessibility, good visibility and prestigious location for business development but the urban fabric, due to its historical value as well as to its already high density offers only punctual opportunities.

The second category is widely spread, the former industrial locations, especially in the North and West are favored locations, although it has to be pointed out the fact that the level of dispersion of office buildings does not take advantage of the advantages of proximity and agglomeration; their relative or high dispersion is in fact visible and leads to a growing incoherence to which largely unfinished office buildings, stopped as an effect of the economic crisis, are adding. Industrial platforms such as Pipera, Semapark etc., although similar in their past configuration and activity are valued differently by office buildings: while Semapark is being developed according to a coherent plan, Pipera is clearly the result of a speculative development, non-related with the urban context: high density, mono-functionality, total absence of public spaces, vacant or untamed lands, the lack of landscape arrangements etc., but above all the missed opportunity to make an integrated urban development project that could turn the former industrial platform into an emblematic project.

In conclusion, a critical aspect regarding the development of Bucharest is the lack of coagulation in consolidated poles while pressure rises on the central area; as professor Cristea states: the regeneration and the protection through a raise in coherence of the central area have to be done in parallel with the development of new multimodal of business and commercial poles, that can furthermore contribute to the XXI century representative image of Bucharest.

Fig. 5
Bucharest: functional intensity and diversity.
(CSB2035, interpretation by Alexandru)



The overall intra-urban centrality

Another, more efficient way to measure centrality is by taking into account the level of diversity, density, hierarchy and intensity of activities. As it can be seen in figure 5, at the overall level, Bucharest is characterized by a higher degree of centrality in its central area and some extensions, especially to the North but also by some older centralities that have been reinforced recently due to an intensification in service and commercial activity of the city; places such as Obor, Piața Sudului, Piața Victoriei as well as places that are usually centers of diverse neighborhoods, have gained in centrality over the last years, maintaining an important place in the urban structure.

Places invested with highly specialized functions, or very rare functions such as the National Arena (in the eastern part of the city) are also gaining a certain interest materialized in the development of surrounding places.

A further layer that has to be taken into account is the symbolic intensity of places, which, although a subjective criteria, can offer an important view on the current centrality of Bucharest. Here two different aspects are considered: public space and its use; the presence of heritage elements and/or emblematic buildings or sites.

Public space, apart from its recent popularity, in terms of arrangement but also in terms of use, can prove a useful criteria for delimitation between commercial centralities and the central area of Bucharest: while it is more prevalent in the city-center and contributes to its urbanity, in the case of malls or shopping-centers it is lacking almost completely, thus inhibiting the diffusion of centrality in the surrounding area. A recent wave of events, temporary activities, seasonal, monthly or weekly as well as marches are transforming the intensity in use of public spaces, thus contributing to the empowering of symbolization of the spaces themselves.

Based on the perception, dependent upon the number of symbolized elements as well as on their importance, different layers of intensiveness are classifiable, thus making evident the places of centrality. From this point of view the central area, with its extension to the North, possessor of a large number of monuments and heritage buildings and protected areas, constitutes a privileged place of great symbolic importance. The city center "seen from a symbolic perspective, is the surface with the best representation, that condenses the image of the city in the conscience of its inhabitants, having the highest socio-cultural prestige and maximum public notoriety"³⁰

Bucharest Strategic Concept 2035

As a response to the thirteen years of rather incoherent development, in which most of the proposed poles were not confirmed or simply underdeveloped, CSB2035 is proposing a different approach: a combination between strategic areas and strategic nodes and connections. Conceived as a backbone for development, the strategic areas are designated according to the needs of development of the city, insisting on specific operation that are needed. The poles³¹ are meant to give the incentive of development while good connectivity is judged not only in a good articulation of railway, metro and a conciliation of pedestrian and car traffic but also through stressing on the key role of Dâmbovița river³² as a backbone of development and of cohesive integration of the development areas. An integrated policy especially designed for the city-center is thought in continuity to previous measures while taking into account



Fig. 6
Bucharest: the evidence and the intensity of public spaces.
(CSB2035, interpretation by Alexandru)

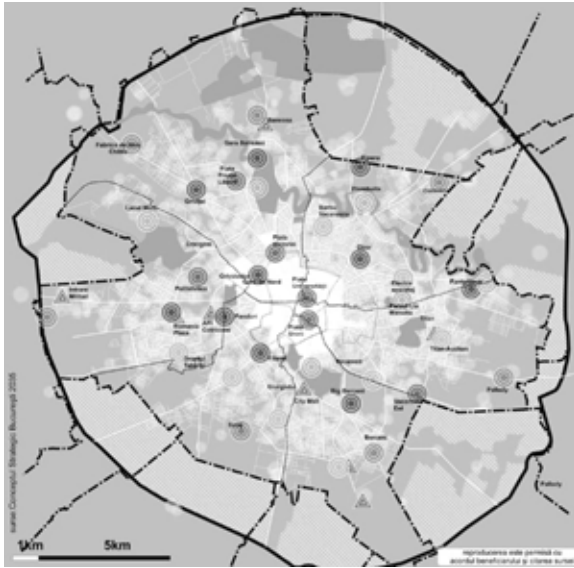


Fig. 7
The system of centralities. (www.csb2035.ro)

a more acupuncture strategy so as to ensure both an operational success and a guiding vision. An important element is that CSB2035 was drafted in order to set the guidelines for the next GUP (currently in progress) a gesture of continuity that Bucharest lacked in the recent decades.

Conclusion

The inner centrality of the city is in a constant progression in a rather paradoxical way: while centralities are programmed, although not backed-up by efficient implementation mechanisms, a different, more organic, process occurs: some places in the city gain their own centrality due to their attractiveness but also due to market mechanisms that favor different opportunities. While these two processes go almost in parallel, an increase in the overall attractiveness of the city is gained which further leads to an increase in centrality of the city-center. New centralities, although in a dispersed manner, are still in a premature state of development can, nevertheless, be capitalized by further intelligent planning and turned into a city-center that is better articulated with the rest of the city. The history of Bucharest's recent evolution is in some sort the story of the evolution of centrality that, ultimately, turns a city into a metropolis.

- 1 The city-center or certain areas of centrality are superior to their counterparts.
- 2 Harhoiu, Dana, *Bucharest, A City Between Orient and Occident*, București, Simetria&Arcub, 2001.
- 3 the complex criteria in delimitation included: age of the fabric, architectural value, hierarchy of functions, quantitative and qualitative dimensions, temporal, aesthetic and symbolic dimensions.
- 4 See articles in *Arhitectura Magazine* of the epoch like: Cristea Doina, et al. 1976. "Unele aspecte metodologice, istorice și social-psihologice legate de studiul centrului orașului București (II)" in revista *Arhitectura*, nr.6/ 1976, pp. 47-52; Derer, Peter, et al. 1973. "Unele observații privind centrul capitalei". în revista *Arhitectura*. nr. 4/143, pp. 110-118; Criveanu Șerban et al. "Unele aspecte metodologice istorice și social-psihologice legate de studiul centrului București(I)" in *Arhitectura Magazine* no. 4/161, 1976, 19-23. 21.
- 5 We must note here the large-scale project of Victoria Socialismului east-west Boulevard leading to the House of People that was cut through the historical fabric in the 80's, involving demolitions on cca 450ha of land, only partially rebuilt afterwards, with a large negative impact on the southern evolution of the city-center.

- 6 History and Theory of Architecture Cathedra of Ion Mincu Institute of Architecture.
7 Restoration Study – the rehabilitation of the Architectural Heritage in the Architecture
Reserve no.1, Bucharest.
- 8 Zonal Urban Plan (ZUP) with the attached local planning regulation is an urban planning
instrument providing specific regulations to specific parts of the city, while responding
and detailing the provisions of the GUP (General Urban Plan).
- 9 Government Ordinance "Ordonanța nr.77/2001 Privind reabilitarea și revitalizarea centru-
lui istoric București" published 01.09.2001.
- 10 Tureanu, Ileana et al. (eds), *Bucharest 2000, International Urban Planning Competition*,
București, Ed.Simetria, 2000. 21.
- 11 The General Urban Plan (ro: PUG) was approved in 2000 by the Municipal Council of
Bucharest, but was progressively deregulated through thousands of Zonal Urban Plans
and Detailed Urban Plans drafted afterwards, a fact made possible by a fragile legislation
and by a immense pressure from the real-estate sector whose intent was mainly specula-
tive and was not channeled in the development areas proposed in the GUP 99. See Urbis
'90, *Plan Urbanistic General(General Urban Plan)*, unpublished study, București, 1999,
consulted in the Urbis'90 archive.
- 12 In Romania the General Urban Plan (ro: PUG) in short GUP has a directive character and
includes operational regulations, thus being the legal basis for implementing develop-
ment programs and actions.
- 13 Tureanu, 2000.
- 14 Studiu pentru Delimitarea zonelor construite protejate din Municipiul București.
15 Many of the interventions are of speculative kind aiming at increasing the FAR (floor area
ratio) or the functional destination and sometimes demolishing or altering monuments.
16 Victoriei Square-Lascăr Catargiu between Dacia bldv. and Victoria Square; the Griviței –
Ștefan Furtună axis between North Station and Victoria Square; completion of Unirii bldv.;
Buzești – Berzei axis, between the Dâmbovița River and Victoria Square; Moșilor axis.
17 Victoria Square, North Station, Obor, Alba Iulia Square.
- 18 CCPEC/UAIUM, *Strategia de dezvoltare integrată a municipiului București și a teritoriului
său de susținere și influență* (Conceptul Strategic București 2035, *București, 2012*), (docu-
ment is available online at [URL: <http://www.csb2035.ro/>]).
- 19 Ianăși Liviu / Mihai Alexandru, *Bucharest Strategic Concept 2035 Presentation Book*,
București, Ed.Universitară Ion Mincu, 2014. 49.
- 20 According to the preliminary results in the National Census in 2011, compared to 2002,
the population of Bucharest decreases with 12,9%, part of this decrease being explained
through the residential migration from Bucharest to Ilfov county (the surrounding county
of Bucharest) in which a 21,36% increase in calculated in the same time span. The more
dramatic increase is in the number of dwellings, reaching almost 39,89% compared to the
2002 census.
- 21 Bucharest Strategic Concept 2035 notes a spatial growth of 25% of the pre-existing
urban mass, the majority in very disperse or tentacular patterns. See: www.csb2035.ro
and Ianăși Liviu / Mihai Alexandru, *Bucharest Strategic Concept 2035 Presentation Book*,
București, Ed.Universitară Ion Mincu, 2014.
- 22 JICA (Japanese International Cooperation Agency) after noticing the tenfold increase in
car ownership rate compared to 1989, estimated a further increase of 50%.
- 23 Doina Cristea is the main author of the GUP 1999 and also consultant for CSB2035, pro-
fessor PhD at Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urban Planning of Bucharest. See.
www.csb2035.ro
- 24 Cristea Doina, "In quest of a metropolis image" in *Urbanismul Serie Nouă* magazine, no.3,
September 2009, 82.
- 25 The Death and Life of American Cities, 1961.
- 26 "The city-center of Bucharest lost most of its dwelling activity between 2007 and 2012" –
CSB2035.
- 27 In 2011 when the process of refurbishment was still slow, a sociological survey indicates
only 32% of the inhabitants are using the city-center.
- 28 The period between 2002 and 2008 is also called by some specialists the *real-estate*
period.
- 29 As a consequence of the economic crisis, the Bucharest Strategic Concept 2035 was iden-
tifying a rate of 17% innoccupancy of office floor spaces in 2011. See: www.csb2035.ro and
Ianăși / Alexandru, 2014.
- 30 Criveanu Șerban et al. "Unele aspecte metodologice istorice și social-psihologice legate de

- studiul centrului București(I)” in *Arhitectura Magazine* no. 4/161, 1976, 19-23. 21.
- 31 The poles implantation areas are decided based on good accessibility, available land, proximity to dens urban fabric, estimated impact on surrounding areas – lever effect - , in order to balance the city-development towards the southern part, clearly affected by social exclusion and by underdevelopment.
 - 32 Dâmbovița, the main river of Bucharest, crosses the city-center at its southern part, presents a large potential due do the presence of some public facilities and also large unbuilt plots.

Yani Valkanov

Suburbanisation in Sofia: changing the spatial structure of a post-communist city¹

Introduction

The suburbanisation has been one of the most important processes shaping the structure of the cities in the industrial countries and a subject of considerable debate. Less is known, however, about the similar trend in the cities of the transitional countries in Central and Eastern Europe. The most countries of the region began massive transformations of their societies after 1989, with an immense impact especially on the capital cities. Some new social and spatial trends are readily observable: an initial residential and commercial suburbanisation, a commercialisation, a growing differentiation between the different urban areas.² Sýkora argues that the post-communist development of the capital cities should be generalised into a model of a post-communist city, which, unlike other urban models should be dynamic, rather than equilibrium-based.³ He poses five topics for the future research of the migration flows into and out of cities: *the population growth or decline, the internal migration patterns, the inner city neighbourhoods, the future of the housing estates, the socio-spatial disparity, polarisation and segregation.*⁴

This paper investigates the changes in the distribution of population within the territory of the city of Sofia and Sofia Municipality from 1992 to 2001, with the general purpose of drawing a picture of the suburbanisation. The distribution of population within the metropolitan region is an important characteristic of the urban structure and any significant population redistribution indicates a spatial restructuring. The main hypothesis debated here is that after 1989, Sofia experienced initial suburbanisation trends and changes in the urban spatial structure, caused by the transformations and the transition from a *socialist* to a *market* city. The paper begins with an analysis of the socialist cities' spatial structure. A comparison is made between the population density profiles of the *socialist* and the *market* cities used as a basis for generalising



Fig. 1
Sofia within its wider
geographical region.
(Atlas of Sofia)

the transformation process. The analysis of the population redistribution within the territory of the Sofia Municipality is based on the population data from 1992 and 2001. Finally, some conclusions are drawn about the nature and causes of suburbanisation in Sofia and attempts are made to hypothesise about the future.

The Socialist city's spatial structure

A general model of a socialist city's spatial structure was suggested by French and Hamilton, identifying several concentric zones from the centre to the periphery of a typical socialist city: the historic core; the inner commercial, housing and industrial areas from the capitalist period, the socialist zone of transition, the early socialist housing and the integrated socialist residential districts, and finally the countryside with the satellite towns and villages.⁵ Although French and Hamilton's concentric model may resemble Burgess's concentric one, the socialist cities has some important features, quite distinctive from their Western ones.

Due to the lack of land market and differential land rent the *utilisation and commercialisation of city centres was low*. There were no incentives to redevelop the city centres and, as a result, little physical and land-use changes were observed there, except for some representative buildings. The centres preserved, to a considerable extent, their residential functions.⁶ The socialist cities preserved a *significant proportion of industrial areas in inner cities*. The overwhelmingly industrial character was preserved and the transition to a service-oriented city progressed slowly.⁷ The industrial land took up 15–0 % of the total built-up area, compared to only 5–8 % in the West European cities.⁸ Large part of the industrial land was located close to the city centres.⁹ The *high-rise housing estates on the periphery* were substantially larger than analogous estates in the capitalist cities. They were relatively heterogeneous in terms of the socio-economic resident's status.¹⁰ Socialist cities showed a *sharp contrast between the compact high-density core city and the outer suburban ring*. Socialist cities were, in general, more compact and dense as compared with Western European and especially with North American ones, with little or no suburbanisation taking place.¹¹ The settlements in the suburban belt preserved their rural character.¹²

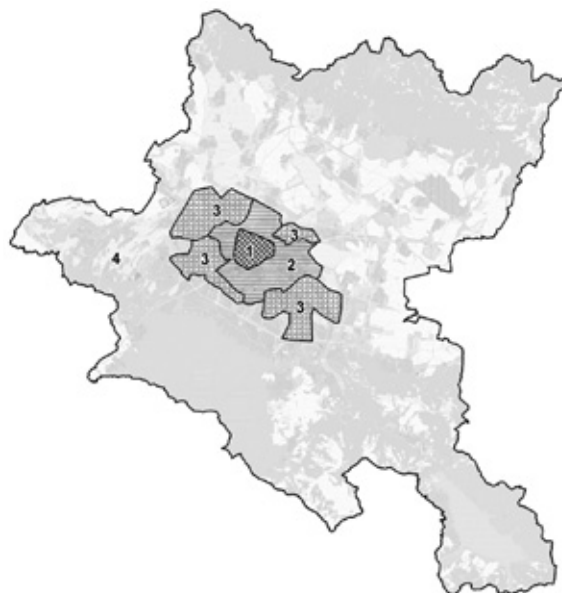


Fig. 2
Sofia Municipality, macro spatial structure.
(Archive Valkanov)

Bertaud provided population density profiles of various European cities, measured by concentric circles of 1 kilometre from the centre to the periphery.¹³ Most of the Central and Eastern European cities had high residential densities in the city centre, which fall off in the inner city areas due to the large proportion of industrial spaces and low-density pre-war housing, then rise up in the ring of socialist housing estates, and drop off rapidly again in the suburban zone. Of course, there are differences among the cities reflecting their topographic conditions, cultural traditions and pre-socialist patterns. However, despite these variations, the cities' spatial structures are generally consistent with the above described model of population density distribution.

Bertaud and Renaud attribute the specific features of the socialist cities' spatial structure to the absence of land markets, which has impaired the ability to allocate and recycle urban land.¹⁴ In the socialist cities, where no land and real estate markets were allowed to exist and all development decisions were taken through an administrative-command process, once land was allocated, it was almost never recycled. In the absence of price signals, there were no incentives to redevelop already built-up areas. It was administratively easier to meet the

land demand by extending at the periphery than to redevelop areas in use. A spatial outcome of the failure to recycle land was the existence of industrial belts in the inner areas. Usually developed before World War II, most of these industrial zones have never been recycled. As cities grew outwards they became under-utilised '*bottlenecks*' with rusting factories and warehouses, old railway infrastructure and enclaves of '*dead land*' within the urban fabric.¹⁵

The post-communist transformations

The main outcomes from the transformation process after 1989, which influenced the urban development, were the re-establishment of land and the real estate markets, the emergence of a large number of private actors operating and the opening of the urban environment to the international economic forces.¹⁶ It is reasonable to expect that the functioning of land and real estate markets would produce changes in the urban spatial structure and a population redistribution, which would lead to gradual change of the densities curve.

Although the land and real estate markets have been quickly established, they are still underdeveloped in the region.¹⁷ Due to the fall of the real incomes and the lack of a well-developed credit system, the most households are too constrained financially to participate actively in the market and to make the expected adjustments in the population densities. Nevertheless, the period after the fall of communism witnessed some visible changes in the spatial structures of the cities. Sýkora summarises the most important trends and processes:¹⁸ The residential function is rapidly declining and there is a *sharp commercialisation of city centre*. The most common mechanisms for commercialisation are: the change from residential to commercial use within the existing building stock, the displacement of the existing residential buildings by new commercial ones and an the intensification through in-fills and additions. As the supply of sites suitable for commercial development in the



Fig. 3
New luxurious condominiums
replaced old 2-story houses in
the inner city districts.
(Google Earth)

city centre rapidly declined, a *commercialisation and gentrification in inner city areas* starts since the mid-1990s. The large new office and retail projects have decentralised away from the historical core towards inner city locations with good accessibility. Older buildings have been redeveloped and transformed into office spaces and luxury housings for higher income residents and foreigners. New residential buildings with condominium apartments are being constructed on vacant plots. However, the process is highly selective, affecting only certain neighbourhoods with higher quality and socio-economic status. The residential *suburbanisation in the outer zone* takes two forms: the individual developments within the villages and the emergence of new residential districts attached to them. However, the residential suburbanisation has been slow, limited by the low purchasing power of the population. Nevertheless, the process significantly changed the socio-economic status of the suburban zone, which



Fig. 4
An old house in Lozenetz, one of the most expensive neighbourhoods in Sofia, awaiting demolition. (Google Earth)



Fig. 5
Lozenetz is pointed out as an example of overdevelopment that completely changed the character of the once quiet neighbourhood. (Google Earth)



Fig. 6
New housing construction with dubious quality in the inner city neighbourhood Reduta. (Google Earth)

now has two contrasting population groups: the rich and better-educated newcomers and the lower-income, less-educated indigenous inhabitants. The commercial suburbanisation has consequences on the outer areas as well. New shopping centres and stores, warehousing and distribution facilities and increasingly office developments, have mushroomed along the major highways and important transport intersections.

There are some signs of differentiation in the large panel housing estates too. Those with a relatively higher quality of infrastructure, a better accessibility and a more balanced social mix have maintained their status and attracted some investments in new construction on vacant plots. Others, with lower quality of living environment and higher concentration of manual workers and less educated residents have begun to decline.

These are general trends observed in a lot of the Central and Eastern Europe cities. Tosics, for example, documents the dramatic fall (30.1 %) in population living in the centre of Budapest from 1980 to 1998.¹⁹ During the same period the population of the outer districts grew by 5.6 %, although the total population of the city declined by 9.6 %. Before going on to analyse the processes in Sofia, a brief information about the historical development of the city and its spatial structure will be provided.

The spatial structure of Sofia

Sofia is situated in the southern part of a small plain (*Sofiysko Pole*) surrounded by the mountains of *Stara Planina* in the north and of *Lyulin, Vitosha, Plana, Lozen* in the south. The southern periphery of the city reaches the foothills of *Vitosha*, which has a National Park status and has played an important role in Sofia's development as a favourite place for sports and entertainment. The



territory of the municipality covers an area of 1311 square kilometres and includes the city of Sofia and 37 smaller settlements.

Four concentric zones, typical of most socialist cities, can be identified in the spatial structure of Sofia: the *city centre* is the area with the highest built-up and population density and includes the main administrative, representative and cultural buildings. The centre has preserved to a considerable extent its residential function. Since 1989 there has been an increasing tendency for commercialisation. The most parts of the *inner city* were built up and incorporated into the city in the period between the World Wars. A large proportion of the built-up area consists of industrial land use, especially in the northern part. There is a substantial disparity in the quality of the living environment between the northern and southern areas, which dates back to the period between the Wars and was not eliminated during the socialist period. Most of the northern districts have a derelict infrastructure and housing stock and exhibit bad ecological conditions, due to many industrial zones and the lack of green areas. There was mass housing construction in some of the inner city neighbourhoods, however most of it was implemented in the early 1960s with traditional construction methods. The overwhelming part of Sofia's *socialist housing estates* is concentrated in four clusters on the periphery of the compact city. Some of the housing estates were developed on the territories of existing settlements, which were absorbed into the urban fabric with the growth of the city and transformed into standard residential estates. The largest and emblematic ones are *Lyulin* (115.000 inhabitants) and *Mladost* (100.000

Fig. 7
Modern residential and
commercial developments in
the largest panel housing estate
of Lyulin. (Google Earth)

inhabitants), built on previously undeveloped land. The planning concept of the socialist residential estates was based on the modernistic spatial hierarchy based on the catchment areas of the respective services. The purpose of this spatial hierarchy was to maintain effective public service provision and high-quality living environment. Unfortunately, this concept was only partially implemented. The lack of funds prevented the completion of many elements of public service provision, the inner infrastructure and the public gardens in some of the housing estates, especially those built in the 1980s. The lack of essential services and employment opportunities led to the deterioration of the living environment and the transformation of some estates into *bedroom towns*. Some of the settlements in the *suburban ring*, situated in close proximity to the compact city immediately beyond the housing estates, have a status of administrative parts of the City of Sofia. Others are independent settlements within the Sofia Municipality. Most of them have preserved their traditional rural character, but there are pockets of condominiums and blocks of flats. As in the compact city, there is a noticeable difference between the southern and the northern territories of the suburban ring. The southern ones, situated at the slopes of *Vitosha*, are significantly more attractive. Some of the settlements and neighbourhoods in this zone have become in the recent years favourite places for the new rich. The northern parts are considerably less attractive, because of their nearness to the more unappealing northern parts of the city and the huge industrial complex of *Kremikovtzi*, stretching over a territory of about 1120 hectares.

Analyses and interpretations of the population data

The population of the *city centre* has decreased by more than 50.000 people, or nearly 30 %. The introduction of the market economy created a strong need for new office spaces. In the early 1990s the demand was satisfied mainly by the transformation of residential properties into offices through minor reconstruction. However, such premises usually lack the necessary facilities and infrastructure for office use. By the late 1990s the construction of new offices in the city centre through demolition of old buildings began.

The population of the *inner city* as a whole has considerably increased by 10.9 %, but the growth is unevenly distributed. The population growth of the southern areas exceeds 30 %, while the population of the western and northern parts has slightly declined. The disparity brought about after 1989 a noticeable disproportion in the operation of the emerging real estate market. Because of their pleasant environment and high status, some southern districts have become one of the most attractive and most of the new housing construction is being concentrated there.²⁰ By contrast, in the northern *inner city* areas there is virtually no new housing construction and the housing prices are among the lowest in the city. The area northeast of the centre, although situated in a relatively unattractive part of the city, has experienced considerable population growth of 12.4 %. Probably, part of the explanation

has something to do with the fact that there is a high concentration of Roma population with traditionally high birth rates. Moreover, the reconstruction of the central railway station and the construction of new transport links with the city centre in the mid-1990s considerably enhanced the attractiveness of the area. The population decline in the south-eastern area is due to the commercialisation of this part of the city, which has become a secondary business node.

The large *panel housing estates* as a whole exhibit a slightly larger population decline of 1.6%, than the total population decline of 1.3%. The emigration from the panel housing is, to a certain extent, offset by the immigration in newly built condominiums on vacant plots. Nevertheless, the intensity of the spatial



Fig. 8
Modern residential building
among the decaying socialist
panel blocks in Lyulin.
(Google Earth)



Fig. 9
New residential building on
restitution land in between the
panel blocks in Mladost.
(Google Earth)

restructuring process is modest, when compared with inner city areas. There is one notable exception, however. The housing estates *Ovcha Kupel 1* and *2* in the southwestern part of the city, has experienced a population growth of 17.7 %. The reason for this serious growth is probably attributable to the fact that these housing estates are situated in the immediate proximity to *Gorna Banya*, one of the most attractive suburban areas at the foot of the mountain. Many vacant plots and the lower land prices are conducive to new construction of condominiums and individual detached houses here. In all other panel housing estates no intensive spatial processes are observed. As yet, there isn't a serious social restructuring either. The huge part of the population of the housing estates consists of 'socialist middle class', which is financially too weak. Most of the transactions involve minor adjustments in social status and/or life cycle – substitution of a larger flat for a smaller one or vice versa, moving into another housing estate and so forth.

Much more intensive socio-spatial processes are taking place in the *suburban zone*, which exhibits 12.3 % population growth as a whole. The three exceptions are the eastern and northeastern parts of the municipality, which slightly decline should be explained with their proximity to the airport and to the huge heavy-industrial complex of *Kremikovtzi* – a major contaminator in the region. The population growth in the other territorial units in the northern part of the suburban ring varies from 0.9 to 4.8 % and increases from east to west with the distance from *Kremikovtzi*. The suburbanisation process in the southern parts of the outer ring is significantly more pronounced both in terms of quantity and in terms of qualitative changes in the socio-spatial structure. Most of the territorial units in that area exhibit population growth of more than 20 %. The traditional rural character of many of the settlements is gradually changing. Large "castles" of the new rich, with tennis courts and swimming pools, spring up among the old village houses. The process of socio-spatial transformation is most pronounced in *Knyajevo*, *Boyana*, *Kinotzentara*, *Dragalevtzi* and *Simeonovo*, as well as in the villa zones among them, which has become emblematic of the new suburban landscape in post-communist Sofia. These high-status neighbourhoods have practically merged, forming a suburban agglomeration belt at the foot of *Vitosha*.

Sofia's suburbanisation in the context of the other post-communist capitals

The spatial restructuring processes, analysed above, correspond with similar trends observed in other post-communist capitals.²¹ The transformation results in a gradual flattening of the density curve of the "socialist city" and changes towards that of the 'market city'. The suburbanisation process should be considered in the context of these general transformations. From this point of view, the suburbanisation in the post-communist cities exhibits certain different characteristics than the similar process in the cities of Western Europe and North America.



Fig. 10, 11
A modern residential
development in the southern
suburb of Boyana.
(Google Earth)

First, it is a consequence of the transformation process. The socialist cities' distorted spatial structure is inefficient from the perspective of an evolving market economy. The lack of adequate commercial space in the city centre, the low utilisation of the inner city and the excessive domination of the central city over the metropolitan region are sources of many local and regional imbalances and inefficiencies. Thus, the current changes in Sofia could be looked upon as a process of balancing the urban spatial structure and making it more suitable for the requirements of the modern market economy. From this perspective, some suburbanisation might, to a certain extent, produce more efficient balance between the city and its hinterland. Some settlements in the outer zone of Sofia, for example, have attracted better-educated population with higher incomes, thus enhancing their economic viability. The problem is, however, that such settlements are situated almost exclusively in the southern part of the suburban zone, which is a base for another spatial imbalance.

Second, the suburbanisation in Sofia is a far less pronounced and universal phenomenon than in the Western cities. In spite of the observed trends, the process of spatial restructuring is relatively slow. In fact, the spatial macro-structure of Sofia hasn't substantially and dramatically changed since 1992. The suburban zone's relative share of the total population of the Municipality has increased from 14.0 to 15.9 %. The share of the large panel housing estates has decreased by only 0.3 %, and more than a half of the total municipality population still lives there. Even the city centre, where the physical and functional changes have been most visible, has decreased its share of the total population by slightly more than 4 %.

Third, often the primary motive for moving to the suburbs is the escaping from the panel apartments, not from the city. After many years of 'collective' living in high-rise panel blocks, now there is an increased demand for more spacious living in individual houses and condominiums. Sometimes this demand could only be satisfied in the suburbs rather than in the city, where it would be prohibitively expensive. Tosics argues that in many cases the motives for



Fig. 12, 13
A suburban gated community in Pancharevo. (Google Earth)

suburbanisation are not the 'push' of the negative conditions in the core city, nor the 'pull' of the positive features of the suburbs, but certain expectations for the quality and size of the dwellings.²²

Future directions and policy implications

The fact that Sofia's suburbanisation is a relatively limited phenomenon doesn't mean that it doesn't have negative effects nor that it will not intensify in the future. The commercial decentralisation is increasingly promoting a car-oriented lifestyle. With the real income growth this process will tend to gain momentum as well as the negative effects associated with it. Some of these effects are observable in Sofia today: The intensive development on the southern periphery has incurred the criticism of many activists and environmentalists for the spoiling of large amounts of green areas of great importance for the city and for the natural habitat. So far, Sofia's suburbanisation has no serious negative social consequences. The escape of the most affluent people into the suburbs doesn't pose serious problems as long as the main part of the population lives in the city. However, this may change in future.

There are several possible factors that might contribute to the future intensification of the suburbanisation trends. With the advancement of the transformation towards a 'market city', the suburbanisation trends will be increasingly driven by the factors and causes determining the suburbanisation in the Western cities. With the growth in real income of the middle class, increasingly more people would be willing and able to leave the panel housing estates, in quest of a more attractive living environment in the suburbs. This



could lead to social imbalances.

The decay of the panel housing estates is the other factor that could accelerate suburbanisation. A significant part of the panel housing, built in the late 1960s and 1970s, is at the end of its lifespan and the first signs of serious structural defects are already observable. The panel housing accounts for 46.4 % of the total housing stock in Sofia and a considerable part of it will fall into disuse in 20 – 30 years' time.²³ In the lack of reconstruction and renewal, this would result in a new housing construction on the urban fringe and in the suburbs.

The third factor has to do with the commercial decentralisation. The experience indicates that the green-field developments are preferred by most investors. The existence of large industrial areas in key locations in the inner city is a liability because the redevelopment of a large industrial area is costly and requires public investments. However, it is also an opportunity because, after the conversion, it allows for a response to the future demand for office and retail space in the inner city, and a reversal of the process of commercial decentralisation.

The suburbanisation and commercial decentralisation are some of the key new aspects that have been taken into account in the new Master Plan of Sofia that will shape the future of the city into the 21st century. The allocation of land for future residential developments in the suburban zone and for commercial developments on the urban fringe is expected to enhance the economic viability and competitiveness of the city, by increasing the residential choice and making the city more attractive for investments. A significant emphasis is placed on

Fig. 14, 15
Suburban developments on the southern fringe of Sofia: Satellite images in 2003 and 2014. (Google Earth – Historical Imagery)



the reconstruction of the panel housing estates and the redevelopment of the inner city industrial areas. This could slow down the suburbanisation trends in the future and the array of the social and environmental costs on the society.

Conclusions

The spatial structure of the capitals in Central and Eastern Europe has been deeply influenced by almost half-a-century totalitarian government and command economy, which has resulted in a specific population density profile. The transformations after 1989 have resulted in several new trends observable in most of the cities in the region: the commercialisation of city centres, the gentrification in the inner cities and the suburbanisation in the outer zones. All these trends indicate processes of population redistribution within the urban territory and a general direction towards flattening of the population density profile. However, the intensity of the transition towards the “market city” considerably varies and has produced a differentiation of the single urban areas.

The suburbanisation in the post-communist cities has some different characteristics and underlying causes from the corresponding process in the Western European and North American cities. It is less pronounced and still doesn't generate serious social problems. In fact, it brings about some economic revitalisation of the outer urban regions, which have been for long over-dominated by the central cities. The suburbanisation problem in most of the cities in Central and Eastern Europe is not the suburbanisation *per se*, but its uneven spatial incidence over the territory of the urban region, which is a source of other spatial imbalances. However, as the transition progresses, the suburbanisation trends and their negative effects on the society and nature, are likely to intensify considerably, unless the massive public investments are made in the panel housing estates and the inner city industrial areas.

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The urbanism of Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia - analogies, influences and differentiations

The understanding of urbanism as the production, processing and application of ideas about the organisation and the design of the urban space leads to the basic question of this publication: Is it possible to detect some uniform ideas in the urbanism of Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia (further on *capitals*)? The decision to compare the urbanism of the *capitals* requires in this sense for some arguments concerning its uniformity as object of research. It means to identify the links between the practiced urbanism and to point out equal ideas as marks of the uniformity. Though urban settlements contain in general ambivalent characteristics and contradictive phenomenon, the differences need to be pointed out in the course of the argumentation too. The assumption that the urbanism of the *capitals* shows semantic links is based on some frame conditions, offering arguments for a cultural unification: The primary factor for the similarity of the urbanism of the *capitals* is the regional neighborhood as a factor for co-existence and interferences. The secondary factor is the comparable urban history. Both factors are a precondition for a similar urban shape organization and a cultural heritage in its broad sense. Some historical facts offer convincing arguments for the analogy of the *capitals* and, respectively, their differentiation from the Central and Western European ones and examination as related objects of research: the Ottoman rule as the pre-modern period, the infiltration of the capitalist economy and the delayed nation building, the European cultural influences, dominating since the 19th century and finally the unstable geopolitical order of the region, which reflects on the principles of urbanism. This review is carried on chronologically and points out the approximation and dissociation of the ideas in the urbanism of the *capitals* phase-wise.

The largeness and unity of the Ottoman Empire is a decisive condition for the free internal movement of the cultural flows and the repetition of proceedings in organizing the settlements. It is best materialized in the inherited urban

patterns and the repeated architectural elements from the ottoman period. The organization of the ottoman settlements follows the principles of the Islamic city. Its basic structural element is the "mahala" as a relative autonomous settlement unit, formed to ethnical and family communities, and the topographic specifics of the location. Another characteristic is the missing public places in the European sense. These marks define the urban patterns of Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia until the eve of the independence and their nomination as capital cities. The urban patterns from the ottoman period are a heritage, which makes the *capitals* comparable and distinguishes them from the art of organizing the western European cities. In contrast to the retarded and motionless organisation of the ottoman settlements, the European urbanism practice is progressing very fast to an intellectual discipline in the 19th century. The big step forward is caused by the industrial revolution and the problems of the urban growth, but it cannot be seen separately from the European traditions of settlement organisation, continuously changing and developing over centuries. Its influence on the south-eastern European societies is promoted by their social and cultural change as a result of the infiltration of the capitalist economy, as well as of internal processes of modernisation, starting around 1800, but held up by the still standing ottoman system. The rise of the capitalist economy is the precondition for the formation of the local bourgeoisie, which is no more content with the retarded pre-modern urban milieu. The bigger the gap between the European urbanism and the immobile ottoman settlements organisation, the more the European life style and urbanism do establish themselves as ideals for the young South-Eastern European bourgeoisie.

It is obvious that the heritage from the ottoman past cannot be used as an argument to classify the three capitals definitely and at once into a uniform cultural system. On one side there are the same principles of settlements organisation as a mark of the uniformity. The differences in the geopolitical location between Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria cause on the other side different speeds of the infiltration of the European urban lifestyle. The splitting of the Serbians and Romanians between the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian empires provokes direct border crossing interferences, which is possible for the Bulgarians just relatively.

The modernisation of the *capitals* in the second half of the 19th century is not just the result of the functional and the economic needs, but of a political aspiration. The newly nominated capitals are the symbols of the stormy national prosperity, liberating from the complex of backwardness. The European urbanism comes to application because of the lack of own experience, but it is also an expression of a political wish for equality. The reorganisation of the ottoman street patterns and the elimination of the "mahala"-units reflect the self-confidence of the local bourgeois public. The total reorganisation of Belgrade and Sofia manifests a uniformity of ideas and proceedings concerning their definitive way of acting and speed of realisation. Even if in both cases the urban plans are respecting some of the main historically hold street

directions, the attempts can be principally defined as total reconstructions. The interpretation of the Vienna's ring-road in Sofia can be interpreted as a political declaration too. Despite of the quite different topographic conditions and the consequently different urban patterns, the urbanism of the Belgrade and Sofia shows a semantic uniformity of political and artistic aims. It is the size of Bucharest not allowing that generous reorganisation. But the political wish for swift modernisation and the creation of public spaces for a dynamic bourgeois society is manifested by carrying out of representative boulevards and places through the labyrinth of the pre-modern street patterns. The monumental buildings and sculptures that define the new spaces present the establishing of a new nation on the European scene. The design of the public parks and gardens in the *capitals* is not a little political. The representative green spaces reflect the systematic spatial concepts of the time and compensate the inhomogeneous urban shape.

The inherited urban patterns from the ottoman period are more or less resistant realities. They confront the implemented European urbanism with specific problems and require for specific solutions. The contrast causes fractured urban shapes which can rather be described as conglomerates of urban and architectural elements, correlating on different ways. In this sense the shape of the *capitals* cannot be compared with the homogenous European ones, developed in a long-term continuous way. The implementation of the European urbanism is a common external factor for the redesign of the *capitals* around 1900. The possible scales of intervention are dictated by the different sizes of the cities. In Belgrade and Sofia the phases and the dimensions of implementation are once again very similar: The first step of planning and reorganisation refers the territories inside the former fortification tranches and is consequently confronted with inherited patterns from the ottoman period. Not until after the modernisation of the territory of the ottoman settlement the urbanism reacts on the growing population and starts extending the urban territories. The chosen way to stick the European models with the ottoman heritage creates consequently ambivalences already in the beginning. The ambivalences of the urban shape in Bucharest, where the new boulevards are cut into the inherited "mahala"-patterns leads to distinct contradictions too. The contrast between the grandiose boulevards and the multitude of unregulated secondary streets is extreme. The high speed of the *capitals'* changes and the attempt to progress by much too great leaps happen approximately in the same period and cause the specific fractured urban images, which is a mark of the analogy of the urbanism practice too.

The ideological aspects of urbanism emerge with the safeguarding of the unity of nation and state and the establishing of modern capital cities. The growth of the *capitals* after WW I cause social problems, which cannot be solved with the urban design practice of the 19th century and the corresponding instruments of planning. The shift from the more detailed regulation plan to the structural development plan follows with delay compared to the European

practice, but establishes between the two world wars as an effective planning instrument. The lack of own planning traditions is compensated with the acceptance of the cosmopolite ideals of the modernist urbanism. The period is the first “golden age” of Belgrade’s development to a modern metropolis. The birth of the idea of the town extension between Belgrade and Zemun, the later New Belgrade, is as evidence for the generosity and the high level of the urbanism. Romania’s geopolitical extension after WW I is a precondition for the accumulation of financial potential and the growth and modernization of Bucharest. It is the period of the intellectualization of the urbanism. The newly designed boulevards in Bucharest are an expression of a functioning modern society. The implementation of Sofia’s modernist planning in the eve of the WW II is a delayed step for solving the problems resulting from the unprecedented growth, but the contents and the discussions it causes have a fruitful influence on the attitude to urbanism of both professionals and citizens. The use of the green rings and wedges structuring the urban composition of the *capitals* is an evidence for the acceptance of the modernist methods of planning. The international modernism reaches in the *capitals* an enormous guiding role and implicates the idea of the spatial organisation as part of the attitude of the mind-set. South-Eastern Europe doesn’t play just the role of a recipient, but participates creatively in the international scene. The history of the *Congres International d’Architecture Modern (CIAM)* shows the active role of the Yugoslav and Romanian architects in the establishment of the urban and regional planning as scientific disciplines. Another sign of approximation of the ideas in the *capitals’* urbanism is the tendency that the discipline is changing from a pure technocratic work to an object of public interest.

The urbanism of the *capitals* experiences after the WW II contradictive phases of approximation and dissociation, strongly influenced by the geopolitical orientation of the countries. The changing external political linking and the differences of the socialist systems of Yugoslavia, Romania and Bulgaria reflect the principles of planning and design. The Belgrade urbanism and architecture orientates from the very beginning to the modernist pre-war traditions and goes in distance to the postulates of the “socialist realism”. The struggle for modernisation and political representation of the capital of the federated nations, revivals ideas from the revolutionary modernist period of the 1920s: the creation of an ideal, socialist New Belgrade, outside the inherited settlement. The period is a second golden age of the city’s urban development. The urbanism of Bucharest and Sofia is, in opposite, definitely under pressure to orient to the Soviet system of the “socialist realism” ideas and is winning, after a short and nebulous post-war period a strong ideological positioning. The interventions in Bucharest are fortunately fragmented, resp. outside the compact part of the city and do not affect principally its pre-war urban image. Even if the heritage from the “socialist realism” of Sofia is, in comparison to other capitals of Eastern Europe, little too, its precarious location changes the urban core of the city fundamentally in a discontinuous way and fractures the city’s image. The period of the “socialist realism” of Romania and Bulgaria

does not last for long. The prompt revival of the modernist ideas in the second half of the 1950s is a sign for the strangeness of the forced principles of the totalitarian urbanism of the Stalinist era. After a period of dissociation of the urbanism of Bucharest and Sofia from the modernist attempts and from the Belgrade's urban design direction, the orientation to the international ideas of the post-war modernism introduces once more a phase of approximation.

The urbanism of the *capitals* shows between the late 1950s and the 1970s definitely a similarity of ideas. It is oriented to the rapid realisation of the political aim for a higher living standard, materialised predominantly in the complex housing developments. New Belgrade is gradually taking shape and is internationally acknowledged as an important document of the European modernist urbanism and architecture. The housing complexes in Bucharest and Sofia from that period are an expression of the revival of the rationality of the modernistic urbanism. Some of the earlier examples are on a par with examples in the western world. The design of the ensemble around the City Hall in Bucharest is a unique case of continuous urban development with the means of the modernist design. Some causal connections between the urbanism practiced in the *capitals* cannot be refused, but the approximation of the ideas is caused primary by the orientation to the international scene and shows its typical characteristics: Firstly, the segregation of the basic functions is carried out with a great deal of consistency. Secondly, the postulate of the maximization of urban functional units, resulting in the typical "coarse grain" urban structures, is also evident. Thirdly, the hierarchy of the urban system corresponds to the modernist urban model. The problems this produces later on are not unknown to the post-war western urbanism too: the mono-functional distribution of the territory encourages the thinking in schemes and the "coarse grain" structure of the urban model gives by necessity birth to the idea of the major structural change. However, the disassociation from this simplified way of thinking and the illusions of the modernist urbanism begins earlier in the West and the change is carried on in a more continuous way. The spirit of voluntarism in the *capitals* blocks, however, the organic urban development and generates contradictions that didn't surface until after 1989.

The period of the "late socialism" beginning in the 1970s brings once again different politics of planning the *capitals* and leads finally to a total dissociation of the ideals. The urbanism of Bucharest goes own ways and forces the total reassembling of the city's compact urban part not changed too much until that time. The design orientates to the representative patterns of the totalitarian urbanism combined with the post-modern search for a national architectural style. The interventions create clearly defined spaces by homogenous, "scenic" architectural frames and "left-over" structures behind them. The ambitious top-down attempt results in excessively oversized urban spaces and a contradictory urban morphology. The urbanism of Belgrade comes after an unlucky city's administrative reorganization in the 1970s in an incessant decline. It loses the quality and the generosity of the modernist planning of the 1960s and is

limited to smaller scaled, unsystematic interventions. The urbanism of Sofia is characterized by rising contradictions between the un-reflected persistent application of the conventional modernist patterns in the peripheral housing complexes and the policy for preservation of the historical urban parts. The preservation idea is an expression of the postmodern orientation to the genius loci and has indirectly a positive effect on the urbanism. The decision to protect the historic ensembles and to develop pedestrian zones brings the inherited urban patterns and building structures in the light of the public and the legislative power. On this way Sofia keeps pace with international tendencies. The preservation policy underlines differences and gives the urbanism a multifarious image. The delayed revival of totalitarian design patterns since the 1970s concerns single architectural objects and doesn't influence too much Sofia's urbanism in that time.

The fragmentation of the urbanism systems, the professional dis-orientation and the accompanying global influences meet the planning theory and practice in the *capitals* in 1989 unprepared. In fact, the crises of the urbanism in the *capitals* roots back to the 1970s and goes conform with the global crises of the modernism, but is strengthened by the rising gap between the fast extensive growth with its low urban milieu quality and the real expectations of the population. The socialist main stream urbanism limits the possibilities for individual and specifically local expressions. Contrary to Western Europe, where individual and local positioning is able to develop, the standing out of the ideology against the reality offers little chances to individual characteristics. The dialectic succession of emergence and decay is generally typical for every cultural main-stream, but in the *capitals* it has specific dimensions. The decay of the modernist urbanism isn't confronted here with continuously rising critics and experimental searches like in Western Europe and the break is therefore very categorical. The prompt decline of the socialist systems in 1989 distracts the orientation of the experts, because the former ideas are not replaced continuously by new ones and situate the actors in the chaos of the diffuse, global value imaginations of the post-modern time.

The efficient modernization impulses until the 1970s, which seemed to be buried under the ash of the late socialism systems and their ambitions, revive after the geopolitical changes and offer the societies a hopeful expectation of a pluralistic experience. The comparable social and political changes in the *capitals* create similar circumstances and provoke consequently comparable transformations of the urban shapes. The urbanism of the *capitals* follows since the 1990s the way of plurality and there is a considerable degree of conformity or coincidence with the global tendencies. The global, external influences belong in general to the nature of urbanism and are clearly traceable in the history and deeply coded in the attitude of mind of South-Eastern Europe. The specifics result here once again from the speed of change. Escaping abruptly from the unhappy alliance between the deductive modernist thinking and the voluntarism of the communist ideology, the *capitals* are already heading in the

current urban transformations for a new contradiction: on the one hand, the hurried attempt to establish simultaneity with the global urban tendencies, and on the other the return to the historically past and buried, but seemingly sane pre-war world. The contradictory attitude creates disturbing contrasts and strengthens the fractured image of the *capitals*. The image is strengthened by the exhaustion of the public institutions and the pressure of the investor's planning, typical for the neoliberal political spirit. The contradictions seem today inevitable and it seems that in the near future the development of the *capitals* cannot be based on the concept of a balanced quality, because the ambivalences are part of their identity. But the development of the last two centuries shows that the *capitals* are able to combine numerous contradictory expressions, resulting from various stages of syntheses. In the same time they so accumulate effective integration strategies, making them capable of development and viable.

Abstracts

Harald Heppner

Capital city as national vision at the Serbs, Bulgarians and Romanians

The category “Capital City” bases on two different ideas: it means to be a demand of order and a central locality for a politico-territorial organisation placed in a bigger urban context, and it seems to be an irreplaceable stipulation for a nation. While the need of a state centre as a system of territorial power has got a tradition of millenniums, the nation in its modern sense and its believe to need a capital city goes back to not more than about one and a half centuries. For understanding that a capital city becomes a national project the process of nation building has not got so much priority than the question of the life system of a pre-national society and why the capital city was taken as a vision and from where? The main subject for explaining how the capital city was growing up at the Serbs, the Bulgarians and the Romanians concern the questions which were the preconditions for the vision: how long did it take time for realizing the project and which problems existed from the beginning by establishing the capital city?

When we study the situation of the Serbs, the Bulgarians and the Romanians, we must take in consideration that the preconditions of these three ‘national areas’ for designing capital cities were quite different, although for all them, there were no chances to build an own capital city till the 19th century. In the long period from the late middle ages to the ‘national era’ these three groups had to live in front of two types of capital cities – the residences of empires or global authorities, like Constantinople, Vienna, Venice, Rome, Moscow and then St. Petersburg, and the centres of half nationally organized more or less colonial states or/and empires, like London, Paris, Madrid, Lisbon or Amsterdam. The ‘national areas’ were divided between the different politico-cultural zones of the Austrian, Ottoman Empire and Venetian Empires where other people dominated and where a modern city centre did exist only partly: Venice and Vienna were outside of South Eastern Europe and their political systems were aristocratic respectively dynastic, Vienna remained till the middle of the 19th century as a large fortress, during Constantinople although representing a metropolis missed main elements of modernity at least since the 16th century. Therefore the Serbs and the Bulgarians had to ‘invent’ their own capital cities, while the Romanians living in Wallachia and Moldavia had not only to decide if they should modernize their regional centres Bucarest and Jassy, but also unify to a common national state.

Mirjana Roter Blagojević

The modernization and urban transformation of Belgrade in the 19th and early 20th century

The main goal of the paper is to highlight some important issues connected with the urban modernization of Belgrade around 1900. The focus is on the political, social and cultural changes and the urban transformation of the city from a Levantine to a European one.

After the establishing of the Serbian Principality in the early 19th century the influences of the European culture and academic architecture start coming in, but an Ottoman way of living is still quite obvious. The process of social and cultural changes is characterized by the emancipation from the Oriental influences and the adaptation of the western social and cultural values. The changes are supported by the Austrian Empire and many Serbs, born and/or educated there, come to Serbia.

The transformation of the settlement surrounded by a trench is introduced by the plan of Josimović, 1867, which proposes the exchange of the Levantine morphology by a regular orthogonal grid of streets following the models of Vienna and Budapest. The transformation and growth of Belgrade gathers speed after the proclamation of the Kingdom, 1882, as a result of the foreign investments, coming mostly from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The construction of the railway network, connecting Serbia with its neighboring countries is of particular importance. The turn of the century is marked by intensive constructions works.

The European influences in architecture and urbanism are quite strong in the early 20th century, best expressed by the Master Plan of Belgrade from 1912 made by the French architect Chambon. He proposes an orthogonal street network and numerous diagonal directions, introducing the spirit of the 19th century French urbanism. He draws in the Haussmann scales a circular boulevard, clearly dividing the urbanized area from its periphery and proposes the formation of eleven monumental ensembles with imposing public buildings. However, the Master Plan doesn't consider the problems of the inherited urban patterns and those of the poor infrastructure. This is the reason the city authorities are criticized by the Belgrade engineers and architects for their inadequate planning approach. Some of these problems are solved after the WW I, but many are still present today.

Monica Sebestyen

Urban image and national representation: Bucharest in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century

The paper aims to investigate the preoccupation for the urban aesthetic in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century in Bucharest, focusing mainly on the creation of the boulevards and squares and on the erection of public monuments. These interventions that shaped the modern capital city are linked to the broader context of the nation building process.

After the unification and independence in the 19th century, Bucharest becomes the capital of both Moldavia and Wallachia. The population is rapidly growing and the construction activities reach an unprecedented scale. In this context, for the first time in Romania, the preoccupation for the urban aesthetic appears. The avenues no longer have only a functional purpose, but they become important public spaces that define the image of the city and that also represent the nation. It is a defining period in the city's evolution, when the city gains its urban character and the main boulevards and squares are shaped. This transformation is common to many other European capitals, that undergone through similar processes, many of them following the Parisian example.

The sculptures in the newly formed squares also contribute to this new image. The apparition of the public sculpture in Romania coincides with the rise of the nationalism and the creation of the national state. It was a common practice in the countries which gained independence during the 19th century to place statues of national heroes in the public squares. The public space is transformed in what Eric Hobsbawm calls "an open-air museum of national history as seen through great men". The role of these sculptures is to foster the national feeling in a century in which each new nation was struggling to affirm its identity. At the same time, they are also having a visual function, to dominate the newly created boulevards and squares of the city which is entering the modernity.

Following these directions, the paper investigates further the complex relation between urban aesthetic and national representation.

Andreea Udrea

The first urban plans of Bucharest in the rise of the 20th century

The start of the Romanian planning is blended in the cultural modernity at the beginning of the twentieth century and accurately mirrored the waves of modernisation that shaped Bucharest's society from the beginning of the industrialisation to the period between the wars. This article presents the suite of events around the first urban plans of Bucharest: The Bucharest Urban Plan, 1921, elaborated by C. Sfințescu and The Guiding Urban Plan, 1935, conceived by T. Rădulescu, I. Davidescu, R. Bolomey, D. Marcu and G.M. Cantacuzino. The Bucharest urban planning is seen as a sequence of stages: The preparation stage in the first decade of the 20th century - with the General Urban Plan 1906 as the first attempt to set a common goal for the city's development, marked by the activity of A. Davidescu, the forerunner of the Romanian urban planning. The layout and start in the 1910-1920s with the General Urban Plan of C. Sfințescu approved in 1921, marking the intellectualising of the Romanian urban planning and the early maturity in the 1930s with the Guiding Urban Plan, 1935. The plan was in the focus of the planning debate starting 1928 till long after its approval. The following elements highlight a comprehensive overview of Bucharest urban planning at the beginning of the 20th century:

- the progress and acknowledgement of the fundamental differences between urban plans and street alignment plans;
- the gradual transition of urban planning towards the social welfare;
- the uncontrolled territorial expansion acknowledged as the major urban problem;
- the limited budgets for great urban projects;
- the hierarchy in the transportation system, leap from the network to the system;
- the need for a certified specialist to authorize an urban plan, international if possible;
- the urban plans contained an implementation strategy with juridical, financial and administrative actions;
- the success of the plan depended on detailed laws and codes for construction activities;
- the urban plan was the ultimate mission of urban planning and a desired opportunity for planners.

Maria Duda

Shifts. A brief history of public plazas in central Bucharest

In basic terminology, shift is defined as both (ex)change and movement; on one hand implying a configuration change in a concrete way, as manifested in a formal, constructive and functional manner, and on another hand, on an abstract level of interpretation, a mutation in the perceptive significance of an object or place, a transition of symbols.

When we look at the urban relationship between Bucharest's central public plazas throughout their evolution, we identify shifts both as material modification of limits, and as displacement or interchange of points of interest. This paper focuses on the five central plazas form, their interdependencies and roles within the city, and also follow them individually, looking at the transitional replacements between singular built elements and representative buildings: how the change in one of them triggers the shift in all the others.

Following the aforementioned brief definitions, we inventory designs and transformations of central public plazas, having taken part 1846-2013, in five chronological chapters: 19th century introduction of modern city regulations and the shaping of central Bucharest, (1846-1911), the beginning of the domestic urban theories and the welcoming of the modernism, (1911-1944), the communism and the screening off of former values, (1945-1989), transitioning, in between searching for identity reviving and catching up on the missed years, (1989-1997), the re-establishing the role of the public space, (1997-2013).

With criteria branched out into two main partitions: physical ones - formal shape, functions, use, representative buildings, and ideological ones - political, symbolical, theoretical, we shall analyse the consequences of design choices onto the city's morphology and the urban user's habits.

In the end, the article constitutes a basis for a better understanding of the current status of the central public plazas of Bucharest, resulted from the commented series of intentions and interventions.

Hristo Ganchev, Grigor Doytchinov

Sofia before World War II: urban design as a cultural implication

The European urbanization reaches Sofia not until after the liberation in 1878. The inherited urban shape from the Ottoman period is not the result of a conscious organization of the settlement, but an adaptation to the existing topographical, social and economic circumstances. The first changes in the urban way of life follow the phenomenon of the National Revival, which is in the European context a delayed transition from the middle to the modern ages, combining the Renaissance, the Age of Enlightenment and the bourgeois revolution in the same time.

The national independence marks the beginning of Sofia's Europeanizing. The redesigning after the nomination as capital city has the character of a cultural implication. The establishing of the urban planning institutions is an important part of the constitution of the modern administration system and marks the beginning of the methodological proceeding in the settlement's regulation. The lack of academically educated local experts encourages the work of a great number of foreign ones. The influences of the European urbanism and the acceptance of the European urban models are an expression of the aspiration of the intellectual strata to change Sofia's oriental shape to a modern European one. Sofia's initial urban design is a significant example of this period and a reference point in the countries modernization.

Sofia's urban reordering happens in phases: the total reordering and the abrupt change of the city's image until 1900, and the urban extension between 1900 and 1918. Sofia's ring-road is an emblematic example of both, the implication of Western-European models and the reflection on the specific topography. The ring-road system of Sofia is despite of some differences closely related to the Vienna's Ringstrasse. The second ring-road realised at the end of the 19th century marks the finish of this very important urban development phase. The extreme population growth after WW I bear new problems and provoke new planning ideas. Sofia's plan from 1938 is recognised to be the beginning of the modernistic urbanism in Buzlgaria.

Miruna Stroe

Bucharest's urban planning instruments during the communist regime: systematization sketches, plans, projects and interventions

The article deals with the urbanism of Bucharest through the use of the “systematization sketch” as an urban planning tool, from 1959 to 1989 change. The “sketches” were implemented to overcome the delays in urban planning throughout the country, but were in fact a means of quickly imposing political decisions.

The sketches comprised planning and economic strategies valid for 10 to 15 years, relating to the five-year plans, as opposed to the previous general urban plans, strategically conceived for a 25-year interval. The sketches were less detailed and relied on subsequent urban detailing projects, which were sometimes no longer completed. The law requested that the design process start with an economic profile of the town development and a five year assessment of the necessary investments, thus having urban planning once more comply with the centralized economic system. As the projects for each town were to be developed in the regional planning institutes, the design process was slightly decentralized. The Bucharest sketches were designed in the Proiect București institute.

The research focuses on the systematization sketches for Bucharest from two perspectives: the perspective of the practicing professionals, based on articles in the journal *Arhitectura R.P.R* (later *Arhitectura*) and in the specialized literature, and the political discussions on the urban plans, found in the National Archives of Romania. The decision mechanism, the subjects for discussion and the general dynamic of the meetings between political leaders and experts can all be understood by reading these documents.

When discussing the systematization sketch for Bucharest in 1965, Ceaușescu was opposing the demolitions proposed by the architects to make way for new ensembles. He was interested in seeing the systematization sketch for Bucharest transformed into a “directive scheme”, like the *Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région de Paris, 1965*. The subtleties of planning methods are not well understood by the political leader, he just employs a void “professional” terminology. After the 1977 disastrous earthquake, his attitude changed radically and he became a champion of demolitions and reconstruction. The conjunction between urban development and the five-year plans will also be a subject of the research, especially in regard to the delays of investments.

Grigor Doytchinov

Designing Sofia's city core in the context of the changing ideological paradigm 1945-1989

The three main periods defining the shape of Sofia's city core today are the city establishing during the reign of the Roman emperors from the 1st to the 4th century, the dynamic decades after the independence year 1878, and the reconstruction phase after WW II. The colonial policy of the Roman Empire and the Christianization is of great importance for the establishing of the centrality of Sofia. The cross point setting of Cardo and Decumanus is sustainable over the centuries and marks the city core even today. The nomination for capital city, 1878, and the first planning activities are a symbolic expression of the intellectual energy oppressed for centuries. The first after-liberation plans establish the city core as a trade and business zone.

The bombardments 1943 and the imposing of the Soviet type of ideological paradigm causes a portentous break in the urban continuity. The claim of the communist ideology for exclusiveness and the refusal of the historic background leave traces in the urban image. The change of the ideological paradigm in 1956 is followed by the shift of the urbanism activities to Sofia's periphery and the fate of the city core.

The policy of preservation and socialization of the cultural heritage bear since the 1970s specific ideological contradictions and support the revival of the complexity of the discipline of urbanism. The period is characterized by controversial ideas for the urban development of the city core. A contrast arises between the determinism of the urbanism methods of the socialist modernity and the arising desire for context and emotion, expressed best by the realization of the pedestrian zones in the urban core. The crisis of the socialism in Bulgaria is dominantly caused by the gap between the intentions for a complex and harmonious environment and the reality. The helplessness of the urbanism is one of the precursors of the political crises in the 1980s.

Aleksandra Đukić

New Belgrade: visions, plans and realizations 1950-2014

The paper explores the urban plans and projects for New Belgrade from 1948 on. New Belgrade is conceived as the new administrative centre of the federal state after WW II, reflecting the ideological and technological aspirations of the recently established socialist system. Its unique position in the topology of Belgrade enables a totally modern design. It is composed of nine mega-blocks and bases on a grid which follows the modernistic ideas of Le Corbusier. Like many other residential developments in the socialistic countries the new city is mainly a residential one with some administrative activities. Simultaneously, the streets and places for social interaction are over-sized, which only stimulates the alienation of the potential users.

During the last two decades New Belgrade is experiencing an urban metamorphosis which has an impact on the character of the mega blocks and public spaces. Following the guidelines of the master plans from 1948 to 1990, the blocks are conceived as mono-functional residential ones. However, a process of a specific urban reconstruction starts during the 1990s, tackling the sensitive issues of the modernist architectural legacy, challenging the purity of the original conception and introducing some new patterns of behavior and urban needs.

The 21st century is bringing significant changes in the physical and functional structure of New Belgrade. The density is increasing, new commercial activities are introduced and it is becoming one of the major construction sites in Belgrade. The original mega-blocks typology is modifying by positioning new buildings along the existing boulevards and changing the previous character of the public spaces. Nowadays, the open modernist mono-functional assemblies are upgraded into a mixed-use development and some green spaces disappear under new buildings.

Eva Vaništa Lazarević

Urban regeneration tools (city branding) in Belgrade after the democratic change in 2000 – social frame

The sociologic appearance of the present city shows its dark and gloomy side. The consequences are reflected in the process of urban renewal and regeneration. The urban regeneration as a method of sustainable development is seen today through the prism of some definitely new and unusual characteristics. The processes are affected, although in Europe as in Serbia, by a whirlpool of sociological, ecological, economical and other changes, due to the period of recession dating from the last decade of the 20th century till the even worse worldwide economic collapse of 2008. In Serbia, the situation seems to be even worse as the country is passing through the difficult transitional period and the post-civil-war era. During the late 1990s however, some banks and investors have tried to participate in financing some acceptable forms of sustainable accommodation in order to launch into the regeneration of the city, but finished rather unsuccessful.

Nevertheless, with the appearances of the first civil societies after the democratic changes in 2000, the Association for Urban Regeneration is established in 2004 as a non-governmental Organization, focusing on the collaboration between the Municipality, the University and the investors/sponsors. It is founded following the European model, as an interdisciplinary expert team, ready to provide the process. The democratic changes in 2000 introduced some new society's paradigms, but a critical professional mass ready to leave the old, strongly centralized governmental position, isn't yet reached. The urban regeneration processes stay strategically in dependence from the governance without involving some other possible actors like agencies, NGOs and the public.

Milena Vukmirović

Belgrade: The quest for the desired city image

The current period is characterized by changes in the priorities and preoccupations in the domain of urban planning and design. The social, political and economic changes lead to the necessity to consider the circumstances for the locational advantages and disadvantages, and the context of the competitive global arena. The changes are reflecting on the place identity, its perception and the expectations from the place and its management. In accordance with this, the place marketing occurs simultaneously with the emergence of a new model of governance, defined as entrepreneurial. The application of place marketing includes the communication and management of the city image, keeping in mind that the relationship between the city and its users is achieved through experience and images. On the other side, the image can only be earned and it isn't possible to control, construct or invent it. The city image is a kind of a general reaction on the real situation.

The turbulent circumstances in the recent past of Serbia have reflected on Belgrade. The first transitional processes took place simultaneously with the wartime events, led by destructive national ambitions. The dominant role is taken over currently by individuals and small groups driven by the own interest and the search for profit, which is leading to the increasing evidence of corruption and violation of the urbanity. The local government has failed under these circumstances to reform itself in the sense of the proper entrepreneurial model, which has resulted in the collapse of the city's image.

The situation is presented in the monograph by numerous strategic urban and architectural projects located significantly in Belgrade. The critical observation emphasises the lack of continuity in the development of the city. The analyses are based on the concept of "strategy + substance + symbolic actions", viewed as a new approach to planning, designing and managing places in the age of globalization.

Nikola Samardžić

Belgrade 1714-2014: Utopianism and uricide

The first war between Austria and Turkey began in 1714. In 2014 the memories of the beginnings of the Baroque Belgrade associated with the period of Austrian governance have fallen into the shadow of the WW I Centennial. Particularly important in this matter could be the actual memory and value distortion related to the historical failure that led Austria and Serbia to the opposing sides in the unfortunate conflict. A whole of the cultural history of Belgrade during the last three centuries could be considered in almost paradoxical continuity of discontinuity of wars, devastation, irrational decisions and unfulfilled visions. Belgrade was a central point in wars between Austria and Turkey in 18th century that reshaped also its cultural background. During the 19th century Belgrade became the most important benefit for the Serbian national revolution, and a cultural challenge for the backward rural society faced with the dilemma of modernization. The modernisation is almost an implied acceptance of cultural conceptions of the late baroque urban experience along the Danube region. In the role of the Serbian and Yugoslav capital, Belgrade enjoyed only three periods of relatively peaceful development: from the final liberation in 1867 until the beginning of WW I in 1914, between 1918 and 1941 when Belgrade built the shapes of its European identity, and from 1944 till the beginning of the Yugoslav disintegration in 1991. The first and third period lasted 47 years each, the second one only 22 years. Even during the occasional peaceful breaks, Belgrade has remained a battlefield of carefully cultivated carelessness, neglect and barbaric treatment of public goods and interests. Belgrade is a migrant shelter that offers only a rudimentary amount of acculturation influence. Belgrade has suffered too much destruction, migration, economic crisis cycles and identity crisis concussions during the two centuries of its modern history. During the 20th century Belgrade was the most common war aggression victim or even aggression promoter. The history of Belgrade's culture is an extraordinary chronicle of the struggle for survival of the ordinary, usually anonymous individuals. The dramatic social and economic changes included sometimes a self-destruction. Belgrade lasted as its own illusion, as invisible, but discernible human energies of optimism, of hope, of ups and downs. Belgrade was both a source of enormous creative effort, and a black hole of futility and misfortune.

Angelica Stan

Urban expansion in Bucharest, after 1990: errors and benefits

The period that followed the fall of the communist regime in Bucharest has meant a radical change in terms of city dynamics. If until that moment, the urban territory had been strictly controlled and limited by the administrative policy of the communist administration, after the December Revolution 1989, it became a permissive boundary, potentially manipulated by different interests. In addition, the release of the system that has destroyed a good part of the Bucharest's valuable built heritage in order to accommodate a project completely alien to the aspiration of the people creates the premises for the expression of freedom, enacting individual initiative and every citizen's desire to define its own living ideal. This ideal, after decades of forced living in block-of-flats, in dormitory-neighborhoods, had embodied in the desire to 'escape' from the city, to live in a house with a yard, 'on earth', closer to the natural elements.

Among other changes, Bucharest was also facing a turnaround in terms of spatial dynamics: from a relatively compact city between its administrative limits, since it had a clearly defined role and a central position within its agricultural sector, to a city with a very unbalanced territory of influence, with a strong residential expansion to the North (announcing a development gap in the southern part). Today, Bucharest clearly shows a chaotic development of the entire peripheral crowns.

For at least 18 years, the Romanian Capital, like many other cities in Romania, fully lived the phenomenon of uncontrolled expansion on adjacent territories, a fivefold driver phenomenon, coming from different layers of urban life: economic, social, cultural, administrative and environmental. The paper discusses the phenomenon of Bucharest peripheral expansion through a model diagram analysis known as DRSP - Drivers, Responses, State, Pressures and Impacts, used by The European Environment Agency.

Mihai Alexandru

Urban planning through major planning documents after 1999: urban centrality between vision and reality

After the fall of Communism in 1989, following a fifty year period of an overregulated and exclusively public funded urban reconstruction supposed to answer to a new ideological order, Romania's planning system was facing new challenges: the property law issued at the beginning of the 1990s as well as a profound shift in the lifestyle of some of the inhabitants that had access to new resources, stimulated a new trend in urban development characterized by massive city expansion and, later on, punctual and contested interventions in the historical fabric of the city that still continue today. Faced with such a challenge, mainly driven by the private sector, the planning system is progressively trying to adapt by repeatedly issuing new laws, additions to old laws etc.

While it is not an exception, Bucharest is the most dramatic exponent of these changes to which several urban planning documents try to react. The weak legislative frame allows a process of progressive deregulation that impacts an already weakened city-center.

The General Urban Plan, 1999, is one of the main pioneering documents issued. It promotes the idea of several areas of centrality in order to tackle the limitless expansion as well as to absorb some of the more intensive development, spread all over the city without a clear logic to that moment. The organic development of the city, made possible by legislative gaps, tells a different story.

The Strategic Development Concept of Bucharest, 2012, is a straightforward document that, apart from an integrated approach, assesses the becoming of the proposed centralities, analyzing their degree of confirmation or their latency, together with an overview on the expansion of the city and the possibilities of tackling it after the economic crisis. This is also the occasion for reconsidering some strategic parts of the city and for proposing a system of centralities that is articulated at several levels and scales together with administrative and legislative recommendations. A new General Urban Plan is currently in progress and is aiming to be a more operational instrument. It remains to be seen if the legislative planning system will demonstrate sufficient flexibility.

Yani Valkanov

Suburbanisation in Sofia: changing the spatial structure of a post-communist city

The spatial structure of the City of Sofia is typical for most of the former socialist cities in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Four concentric zones can be identified: the city centre, the inner city from the pre-socialist period, the large panel estates from the socialist period and the suburban ring. The process of transition to the democratic political system and the market economy causes a transformation of the urban structure towards that of the capitalist cities. The general trends in the post-socialist urban transformation in are the commercialisation of city centres, the regeneration and gentrification of the inner city areas and the suburbanization in the outer ring. Although these processes are in the general direction of making the CEE cities more similar to the Western ones, the transition towards a 'market city' is far from complete. Sýkora & Bouzarovski conceptualize that the post-communist change of the CEE cities is not a straightforward one-dimensional process of transition from a 'socialist' to a 'market city', but a rather complex and lengthy multi-dimensional process involving interrelated institutional, social and spatial transformations.

The paper investigates the institutional, social and spatial dimensions of the urban transformations in Sofia after 1989. The institutional transformations changed the basic principle of political and economic organisations. They were relatively short-termed and resulted in the re-establishment of land and real estate markets and the emergence of a large number of private actors operating. The social transformations involved the medium-term period when people's behaviours, habits and cultural norms were adapted to the new environment. They resulted in a social polarisation, in family structure changes and in the social and cultural values. The spatial transformations involved the long-term reshaping of the urban structure: changes in the urban morphology, the land use, the residential segregation. The paper analyses these processes in relation with the urban planning policy and practices adopted by the city government.

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