
THE EVOLUTION OF PLANNING THOUGHT IN SERBIA: CAN PLANNING BE 'RESILIENT' TO THE TRANSITIONAL CHALLENGES?

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In recent decades, new approaches, instruments and tools have been developed and implemented all around the globe. However, their implementation varies depending on a certain societal setting. Hence, the research aims at identifying the elements important for making the planning 'resilient' throughout transitional periods. To illustrate this, the case study of Serbia – a state that has undergone the turbulent transformations in terms of its political, socio-economic and, consequently, planning system and practices, is presented. After elucidating a general research framework, including both the planning system and planning culture factors, a brief historical overview of the planning evolution in Serbia is provided for: the communist period (until 1989), post-communist phase (until 2000), and contemporary period (until present). In order to achieve analytical coherence, all the evolution stages are observed through the lens of its context (prevailing ideology, state system), planning practice (and products of planning), and planning process, i.e. methodological approach). The contemporary planning modus in Serbia is illustrated with a distinct example of the Belgrade Waterfront project, thus elucidating the contradictory interests and manifold influences of market, political, community and professional demands. The paper ends with the crucial factors for improving 'planning resilience' within transitional systems.

Keywords

planning, post-communist regime, transition, evolutionary resilience, Serbia

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of internationality and, more recently, transnationality is gaining popularity in many planning relevant issues. It is the consequence of globalisation efforts, i.e. a tendency towards a more efficient global network society¹. This also affects the ‘transnational flow of planning ideas and practices’, as Healey puts it. More precisely, we come to the notion of planning thought evolution, i.e. the ways planning ideas and practices flow from one place to another and the challenges of their implementation in certain histories and geographies². According to Healey, there is a higher chance that newly promoted ideas (by global authorities) will continuously evolve in a sustainable way if they are probed more deeply rather than just accepted as appropriate (by domestic/local actors). This is where the concept of resilience comes to the fore.

Resilience in planning is always linked to the questions of values, power, justice and fairness³, as Davoudi highlights it, or, in a word, to a certain context or system, be it a planning, social or political system. Hence, we can assume resilience is high within stable systems – focused on the notions of order and certainty, and is relatively low under suppressive circumstances. However, Davoudi argues that ‘evolutionary resilience’, i.e. seeking opportunities out of crises⁴ is of particular interest for the planning field. More precisely, according to the Stockholm-based Resilience Alliance⁵, this type of resilience addresses the structure and functions of a system, following it through various phases: exploitation of growth, conservation, release or creative destruction, and reorganisation. In contrast to the previously mentioned interdependence between a stable society and high resilience, according to the concept of evolutionary resilience, mature systems are faced with reduced resilience, i.e. such systems are vulnerable to disturbances. Furthermore, having in mind that difficult circumstances (political and social) can produce innovative policies and processes, the resilience can be high in uncertain times with a considerable transformative potential⁶. As this paper illustrates a society affected by a number of transitional challenges, the focus of elaboration will be on the evolutionary resilience.

What does taking the concept of resilience into account mean for professional planning? What are desirable planners’ activities? Which way does the planning community benefit from engaging with the concept of resilience? Here we need to draw attention to the following: in recent years, there has been a growing tendency to consider the concept of planning culture – steering styles, norms, values, belief systems, visions and frames of the actors involved in the planning process⁷, and not only planning systems – the institutional, legal and regulative framework of planning policies. Nevertheless, such a ‘soft infrastructure’⁸ highlighting the differences among stakeholders and their interests in a rapidly changing world certainly reflects socio-economic and political dimensions of spatial planning. In other words, planning activities are deeply influenced by systemic factors (governance and market) framed by political institutions⁹. Having this in mind, I refer to planning as a “co-evolving relation between place development and governance processes”, whereas the planners, “having several identities and loyalties, [are] tied up into social relations and cultures of all kinds, [...] performing ‘planning tasks’ in a formal government system”¹⁰. According to Friedmann, the planning tasks are directed towards achieving ‘the good city’, i.e. they include, among others, “social justice, civic empowerment, and community and human flourishing”¹¹.

Here is important to link the concepts of resilience and professional planning. If planners are understood as executors of progressive and socially justified activities, how does professional planning contribute to improved resilience for local places? Put another way: if effective resilience describes planners using institutions to anticipate and cope intelligently with uncertainty, the key question is if and how the planning addresses the challenge of the public or common good. One way of measuring this can be through identifying the extent to which public interest was preserved in a certain planning process. Combining attention to public goods with resilience is seen as a tool for observing the change in planning thought.



FIGURE 1 The result of ad hoc decisions on spatial planning issues.



FIGURE 2 Mass housing in New Belgrade: An artefact of the communist approach to spatial planning.

The empirical case study serving as a ground for implementing the previously described tool is Serbia. After decades of system transformation, Serbia is still faced with transitional challenges: After the Second World War, Serbia had its specific political and economic system – a ‘softer’ form of communism than experienced in other countries behind the ‘Iron Curtain’¹²; the shift towards a market-oriented democratic society in the 1990s also had a unique flavour¹³, and currently, the neo-liberal paradigm is producing negative effects due to a lack of an institutional system capable of coping with new challenges. This is particularly obvious in the domain of spatial development. Hence, the paper elucidates how professional planning in Serbia responded to major changes to political institutions responsible for providing public goods. The result of this response is the resilience or non-resilience of public good provision for a place.

The paper is structured as follows. After a brief explanation of the main concepts used in the paper (resilience, professional planning, and the linkage resilience–public goods), I start the paper with a story of an urban governance experience in Serbia, as a distinctive example of how contemporary planning practice responds to the previously described notion of resilience. In order to explain how the current planning practice happened, the case study of professional planning in Serbia is analysed through various historical phases. Namely, the features of the planning process in relation to the more general social system, as well as their influence on planning practice are observed through the communist period, the post-communist phase, and the contemporary period. The conclusion highlights the factors that affect strengthening the planning resilience of a highly challenging society.

BELGRADE WATERFRONT: A CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLE OF RESILIENT URBAN GOVERNANCE IN SERBIA?

According to the discourse of current political power structures, the Belgrade Waterfront project (Figure 1) is the ‘best practice’ example of recent urban development in Serbia. Contrary to this, the professional perspective on this topic is quite the opposite – it is a drastic case of usurpation of both the formal planning procedures and the professional expertise in the creation of planning solutions¹⁴. Keeping the two truly antagonistic approaches in mind, it is clear that the Belgrade Waterfront project provides a prolific research field.

Three years after initiating the idea on the Belgrade Waterfront project (during the political campaign of then-largest opposition party), the cornerstone for the 90-hectare land on the river bank was set in October 2015, thus marking the beginning of the 30-year development period. In fact, it is a brownfield regeneration project for the redevelopment of the most exclusive land in the central city area of Belgrade. Moreover, due to its position (close to the confluence of two rivers and in the vicinity of the historical city core), the site redevelopment is not only of city, but also of regional and even national importance. The site is recognised as such in all the previous Belgrade master plans starting from the 1920s¹⁵. However, the current project lacks resilience in three important ways.

The following lines briefly describe how the project responds to system demands, cultural changes to planning approach and local planning professionals' expectations, as the major three groups of factors that affect the formulation of planning ideas and practical planning outcomes.

Systemic factors. Systemic factors are different – from political forces to economic incentives. As in all other post-socialist countries, Serbia is faced with the decentralisation of power, also reflected in the decentralisation of responsibilities in the domain of spatial planning, on one hand, and the adaptation to the neo-liberal paradigm on the other. Firstly, the Belgrade Waterfront project clearly shows that spatial planning power decentralisation in Serbia is not real: although the city authorities should have the major role in defining the priorities for further development of the riverfront area, their role is marginalised; in fact, when it comes to the mega-projects, the tight cooperation between the city and national governance – in the way that all decisions made at the national level are simply imposed on the local/city level – appears as a necessary condition for any further spatially relevant action; finally, the illusion that the city mayor's voice is heard when debating about the future project lies in the fact that both the city mayor and the prime minister belong to the same political party.

Secondly, although the success of the economic system's transition within the ex-central economy-driven post-communist states can be debated, the Belgrade Waterfront is an example of a strong glorification of the neo-liberal principles without taking into account the public interest demand. More precisely, all negotiations during the preparation of the agreement with the foreign investor were subordinate to the developer's requests, while the national interests were masked under the veil of new workplaces and the assignment of the construction work to Serbian subcontractors. Concretely, according to the agreement between Eagle Hills (a company from the United Arab Emirates; UAE) and the national government of Serbia, the state is obliged to remove the old railway tracks (currently at the site since this is the broader area of railway station still in use), invest in constructing the new railway station, provide all the infrastructural equipment to and on the site and even lease the land to the UAE investor for 99 years. Unfortunately, this is a paradigm of the current spatial planning approach in Serbia: ad hoc solutions are today the only way of attracting investments for large redevelopment projects. Such neglect of planning produces the absence of long-term strategic visions of spatial development, which is recognised as one of main features of 'resilient planning'¹⁶.

Cultural factors. The evolution of planning thought appears not only as a result of a political regimes' transformation, but also through the (dis)continuity of "social relations, cultural practices and built environment"¹⁷. Cultural factors highlight the concepts of 'path-dependency', the behaviour of spatial planning actors and the ideas and discourses affecting their actions¹⁸. However, the concept of 'path-dependency' is disregarded in the case of the Belgrade Waterfront, particularly when it comes to the role of planners. In contrast to the former planning professionals who were acting in concert with the authorities, highly appreciated multidisciplinary in the planning process and were recognised as the bearers of public interest, planners of today are completely side-lined for public interest lost its privileged position as the 'higher' reason that cannot be brought into the question¹⁹. More precisely, planners cannot cope effectively with the private interest requests expressed in the Belgrade Waterfront project because their expertise did not evolve through time: they do not know how to swim in the whirlpool of multiple interests, i.e. they did not adapt to the pluralistic society and still try to keep their exclusive position.

The global shift of the planning paradigm addressed the raising awareness of the stakeholders' collaboration in creating the spatial development policies. Nevertheless, in the case of the Belgrade Waterfront project, strategic decisions were made at the political level (with the key role of prime minister!), hence, avoiding any kind of a public debate with a range of interested parties. The professional planners' society was completely ignored by the political power structures: on the one hand, as explained above, they were advocates of public interest, but what is worse, they never showed any understanding of a contemporary society's demands and the need of adjusting their own profile to it. Persistent adherence to the outdated position made them players without power in a stakeholder

arena, thus easily disregarded by the powerful political structures. The civil sector, i.e. several non-governmental organisations, also raised its voice pointing to the irregularity of the legal basis of the Belgrade Waterfront project, thus trying to address the broader public audience. They were underlining the importance of safeguarding public interest and compliance with planning and construction legislation²⁰. However, the exclusion of the planning profession and the public in such an important project is a clear sign of an elementary ignorance of democratic decision-making.

'Local' factors. The previous paragraphs tackled the issues of planners' relationship to other stakeholders. However, here I want to draw attention to the professional expertise – their skills and knowledge needed when dealing with complex spatial problems. According to the premises of collaborative planning, planners are equal participants in the planning process – they need to be sure of their own expert knowledge, be aware of the experiential/everyday knowledge and skills immanent to other stakeholders²¹, and most importantly, be acquainted with the context where they operate, in terms of its socio-political and economic features. Only by recognising and respecting the pluralistic society with multiple interests, are planners capable of constant capacity-building, conducting socially justified activities and, thus, producing sustainable spatial solutions as the main goals of 'resilient planning'²². All the previous features of professional planning are brought into the question in the case of Belgrade Waterfront. Briefly put, Serbian planning professionals place their expertise only on their technical knowledge (of producing the plans), without taking into account 1) the planning process itself (and hence the need to use the skills of facilitation, mediation, and negotiation while communicating with other interested parties), on the one hand, and 2) a broader social context in which the stakeholders' collaboration should take place on the other. The clear example of the Serbian expertise position was the complaint of the National Association of Architects when its president stressed the unfair exclusion of experts in the project²³: the comment was mainly on the quality and design of the project, and not on the strategic decision-making procedure that caused such a design. In this way, the experts confirmed that they only reckon on their own technical experience with no understanding that a strategic decision-making process in spatial planning should include knowledge and skills from other disciplines, as well²⁴.

Hence, instead of a collaborative process, a highly non-transparent planning process coloured the Belgrade Waterfront case. This case illustrates an investment that defies all the premises of strategic decision-making directed towards sustainable spatial solutions²⁵. However, the national government was determined to succeed in an investment that caused so many irregularities in the planning procedure. The peak was reached when the construction work started based on the Plan for the Area of Specific Use, which is, according to the planning law, used only for non-urban areas of particular importance (flooding areas, coal seams, etc.). The Urban Planning Institute – UPI (the urban planning office of the City of Belgrade) due its tight relationship with the current regime, participated as the only expert body in creating the new plan. The UPI professionals incorporated a minimum of technical knowledge into the project, however, with no possibility of being involved in the strategic deliberations²⁶. Moreover, the step of public insight into the suggested solution (prescribed by the law as a part of communist legacy) was skipped during the planning process. In fact, since there is no highly developed democratic system with its own institutions, there is no transparency of planning procedures either. Put another way: planning was transformed into an instrument of the ruling political party.

THE EVOLUTION OF PLANNING THOUGHT: THE CASE STUDY OF SERBIA

We agree that evolutionary processes happen in different ways within various settings, however, it is interesting to observe the flow of planning ideas and their effect on the built environment in a challenging social and spatial context. Keeping the previous section on contemporary urban governance process in mind, Serbia seems to be a particularly intriguing example for elucidating the evolution of planning thought. During the post-Second World War period, due to its political regime – based on so-called ‘self-governance’, where the ‘workers’ community’ had a strong role in political decision-making despite the centralised power seen in the national government, and economic system – whereas the industry sector was public, i.e. the state was its owner, although the small enterprises (organised as the artisan firms) were privately managed, former Yugoslavia differed from the other communist countries in Europe. Moreover, the shift towards the market-oriented pluralist society, which happened soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall in all of communist Europe of that time, was postponed in former Yugoslavia. More precisely, the ex-Yugoslavia was faced with a civil war on its territory, the secession of its republics that had constituted a federal state, and the nationalistic tendencies followed by dictatorships, consequently. In other words, just after the year 2000, the Federation of Serbia and Montenegro, started to develop a new social and economic system. Finally, after a 2006 referendum in Montenegro, Serbia entered a new chapter in its history as the legal successor of the Yugoslav heritage, however, on a territory the same size as it was a hundred years ago.

A brief overview of three periods relevant for the newer history of Serbian spatial planning is presented in the next sections. More precisely, the communist period (after the Second World War to 1989), the post-communist phase (from 1989 to 2000), and a contemporary period (2000 until the present) are described using the same analytical tools. With the aim of achieving analytical coherence, all the evolutionary phases are observed through three parameters: 1) context (prevailing ideology, state system), 2) planning practice (and the products of planning)²⁷, and 3) planning process (methodological approach).

STATE COMMUNISM: AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR TO 1989

The end of the Second World War forms one of the greatest milestones in the political, social and economic system of Serbia, i.e. Yugoslavia. Briefly put, the Yugoslav constitutional monarchy was replaced by the communist regime, while the liberal market economy shifted towards a centralised planned economy. In the period when collective interests gained power, spatial resources (except rural plots not larger than 10 hectares) were announced to be state property. From a spatial planning perspective, it was the start of the ‘golden era’ of Yugoslav spatial development: in 1948, a completely new town (known as New Belgrade) started to grow into the administrative, cultural and housing centre of the entire Yugoslavia.

Observed through ideological lenses, the first years of the new state were strongly linked to the Soviet political ideology. The main planning act (the Master Urban Planning Regulation brought in 1950) clearly stated that spatial planning instruments should support the socio-economic development plans (famous as five-year development plans)²⁸. However, this act was the result of a broad consultation of the Western European planning legislation. Hence, despite the tendency to build new legislation according to communist principles, the Yugoslav legal framework was actually based on Western models in combination with a Yugoslav self-governance model²⁹. During the 1970s, the semi-market economic system continued to be reinforced, while the political system started with its decentralisation. Such circumstances created a great environment for strengthening the position of planning expertise. In fact, local professionals were motivated to develop a new spatial planning agenda and to devote all their efforts to integrating physical planning into a socio-economic planning system, thus paving the way for integrated and comprehensive planning³⁰.

In terms of spatial planning practice (and planning artefacts), the previous tendencies were practically expressed through constructing entirely new complexes of various kinds: from trade fair complexes, across cultural benchmarks, transportation nodes and infrastructure, to the new administrative complexes that were used to represent the strength of a federal state. However, the greatest achievement in this period was the mass provision of affordable housing as a symbol of implementing the social approach to spatial planning (Figure 2). Nevertheless, the concept of a local community (in Serbian *mesna zajednica*), i.e. the self-managed neighbourhood with all relevant facilities, which was the core of new housing areas, was borrowed from Western experiences³¹.

The nature of the planning process was in the beginning focused on the notion of interdisciplinarity. More precisely, all kinds of various planning documents (from republic regional plans to land-use plans) were prepared in a multidisciplinary environment, composed of architects, geographers, economics, sociologists, traffic engineers, etc., who paved the way for the newly recognised profession of ‘urban and regional planner’ or ‘physical planner’³². The result of such interdisciplinary collaboration was a so-called ‘integrated’ planning, with the aim of putting together all relevant sectors when dealing with spatial issues³³. Later on, during the 1970s and 1980s, together with understanding planning as a social practice, the decision-making process included not only experts, but also representatives of local politics and, more importantly, the civil sector. Hence, another great achievement of the communist planning approach in Yugoslavia was introducing the instrument of public participation. More precisely, the citizens’ involvement during the planning process was prescribed by the planning act and it was regularly performed in the planning practice. Some authors even note that the principle of ‘cross-acceptance’ was used in Yugoslavia before it was implemented in Western countries³⁴. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that all kinds of associations and organisations (these being professional or composed of civil sector representatives) were controlled by strongly hierarchical political structures. That meant that hardly any decision could be made without the previous consent of the communist party. However, it seems that achieving public interest was one of the main goals of social planning and that all actors involved had a high level of responsibility and skills in doing their specific tasks under given circumstances, thus jointly contributing to spatial development.

DEVOLUTION: POST-COMMUNIST PHASE (1989-2000)

The second turning point that deeply affected not only the social and economic system of Yugoslavia, but also of other Eastern European countries, was the fall of the Berlin Wall. Other states were faced with fast transformation of the political system into a pluralist democracy, while the economic system change was directed towards the liberal, i.e. market-based economy. However, Yugoslavia additionally suffered from the disintegration of its territory, accompanied by civil wars and nationalistic tendencies in all the newly formed states. Under such circumstances, it was difficult for Yugoslavia to keep pace with the transformations happening in other European states with a communist legacy.

Generally speaking, the 1990s were the period of greatest regression in recent Serbian history in terms of its political, social and, thus, spatial degradation. The state was faced with the need of transforming its economy and institutions, however, politics took precedence over all the attempts to do it in a civilised manner³⁵. The main achievement of Yugoslav political organisation in past decades, which was based on the substantially decentralised system (hence also marking the largest distinction in comparison with other communist states), was totally diminished through the authoritarian political regime experienced throughout the entire last decade of the 20th century. These politics had negative consequences on the position of planning expertise, too. Contrary to the prestigious ‘image’ the planners had succeeded in making in previous decades, during the 1990s, all their proposals, scenarios and spatial visions were confronted with the strong and decisive role of national government, i.e. the responsible ministries.



FIGURE 3 Kaludjerica: The largest illegal settlement in Europe at the outskirts of Belgrade.

The effects of such politics on spatial planning practice were numerous. In order to achieve social stability, shaken by the high unemployment rate and the lowest gross national product ever, the governance let the citizens buy the apartments they had been living in for years, thus turning housing into private property. On the other side, due to the slow administrative procedures and a growing number of refugees from other former Yugoslav states affected by the war, illegal construction flourished until the mid-1990s³⁶. More precisely, completely new housing areas grew up in the Belgrade periphery (Figure 3), but there were also a lot of illegal construction even in central city areas. This was the greatest disruption with the communist legacy of well-planned housing settlements based on modernist approach.

Due to the social and economic changes, the methodological approach to planning was transformed, too. Firstly, integrated planning – widely used in a communist regime, was hindered due to the re-centralisation process. In practical terms, it meant that regional issues were not addressed systematically and the cooperation with neighbouring countries related to border-area problems was missing³⁷. Although horizontal collaboration, i.e. the collaboration among the experts of various kinds on the same governance level still tried to somehow exist against the context of political dictatorship, the vertical cooperation (among local authorities, regional agencies and national ministries) reached its lowest degree. In other words, the key spatial planning documents were the products of a ‘top-down’ planning approach. The second important characteristic of social planning experienced in previous decades – citizens’ participation in the planning process – was tremendously endangered, since the land development process had become almost exclusively driven by private investment. Of course, the private investors gained the confirmation for possible development from the highest governance level³⁸. Hence, the feedback between governance and the private sector strongly diminished the role of the expert community and citizens, as well³⁹.



FIGURE 4 Contemporary planning practice in Belgrade: built environment.

STASIS: A CONTEMPORARY PHASE (2000-PRESENT)

The third milestone in the recent history of Serbia was at the end of 2000, when the authoritarian regime was replaced by the democratically elected government, hence opening the era of pluralist political culture, one that was forbidden in Serbia for more than half a century. This was followed by the re-decentralisation of political and administrative power to the local level⁴⁰. However, such a transformation is considered a 'proto-democracy'⁴¹. Namely, in terms of economic orientation, the tendency for implementing the principles of the neo-liberal paradigm have never been stronger, which, together with a lack of institutional capacity, makes Serbia a transitional society even in the second decade of the 21st century.

The market-oriented economic approach found 'fertile ground' for its further development in the new century owing to the strong relationships between politicians and private investors in past decades. The tight collaboration between the domestic tycoons (who got wealthy in last century thanks to previous monopolistic regime) and the highest government levels was particularly experienced in the first years after 2000. More precisely, according to the Privatisation Law (brought in 2004), the state (social) enterprises were allowed to be bought by private consortia. Thus, the private bodies became the owners of the building, but still not the land on which it was situated. However, the conversion of the land into private property was done in 2009, according to the new Planning and Construction Law⁴². Nevertheless, the new Serbian government (elected in 2012), consisted of representatives of a strong political opposition that had resisted for twelve years, and stopped the practice of collaboration with tycoons. However, they turned to foreign investors. In other words, all the principles of fuzzy collaboration stay the same, only the partners are from abroad.

Although we can assume, from the previously explained initiatives by private investors, that brownfield regeneration was booming in Belgrade in recent years, it is still not the case. The only example of such a development is the new housing settlement in a broader centre of Belgrade, occupying the area of an abandoned military complex of the ex-Yugoslav army. Except for this, all other urban developments have been occurring within the New Belgrade area, thus constantly changing its specific modernist spatial pattern. These are mainly housing blocks and large shopping malls (financed and owned by domestic tycoons) (Figure 4).

Finally, a contemporary planning practice is also faced with a number of mega-projects for some of the most exclusive city areas (Belgrade Port, Belgrade Shipyard, Beko complex, Marina Dorcol) (Figure 5). For these projects, some of the most prominent architects and urban designers were invited to submit a proposal. Although under the veil of star-architecture, these proposals certainly glorified the neo-liberal principles, thus making it impossible to differentiate some parts of Belgrade from those in Hong Kong or Singapore. It seems that the economic crisis prevented the city of Belgrade from further self-destruction.



FIGURE 5 Contemporary planning practice in Belgrade: projects.

As previously mentioned, a ‘proto-democracy’ is a context that still does not recognise the legitimacy of a plurality of interests. Hence, the professional planning remains much the same as in the socialist time – based on expertise rooted in the comprehensive planning model with no respect for the open market demands⁴³, on the one hand, or to the need for a strategic decision-making process on the other. According to the comprehensive planning model, planners’ activities are directed towards achieving public interest in close cooperation with the governing structures. Nevertheless, in a transitional society moving towards a market-based economic system, planners are left unable to understand the complexity of the altered socio-economic framework⁴⁴. In other words, they lack knowledge from the humanities, instead of reckoning only on purely technical disciplines and engineering skills. On the other side, modern planners need to accept that they do not have a monopolistic position in setting the development priorities anymore. On the contrary, they must be aware that other stakeholders (being those from the private civil sector) also have legitimate interests to be achieved through mutual cooperation. Put another way: the skills immanent to the collaborative planning model are absolutely necessary for the planners to properly deal with complex contemporary spatial problems. Only in this way can planners overcome their current position as the ‘passive observers’ of implementing decisions that are made elsewhere. Since the existence of the planning profession has been brought into question by a recent urban development project, it’s high time for planners to learn new strategies that could allow them to consider issues thoroughly and react appropriately⁴⁵.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Keeping the various understandings of ‘the shift in the planning paradigm’ in mind, we can agree that Serbia (ex- Yugoslavia) experienced the shift in terms of a revolution, contrary to evolution of planning. Looking back at different periods, it seems that any new chapter in Serbian history runs down all the inventions made in the period immediately preceding the current one. Thus, all the positive aspects created in a highly controlled context of a communist political regime, such as integrated planning and public participation, were absolutely neglected by the centralised politics in the last decade of the 20th century. Nowadays, despite the tendency of Serbia to become a full European Union member, and contrary to the nationalist tendencies that emerged in the 1990s, there is still not enough knowledge, skills, and responsibility within the transitional institutional apparatus. Experts’ voices are not strong enough to be heard in a fuzzy governance system. Table 1 summarizes the main parameters relevant for observing the evolution of planning through various stages of Serbian development.

Briefly put, in order for Serbia to try to make its planning as resilient as possible to numerous challenges, it should mainly focus on: 1) improving the stakeholders’ collaboration (well-practiced even in communist times), 2) strengthening the position of planning expertise, in terms of keeping expert knowledge, which derives from the communist era, but also combining it with skills of negotiation, mediation and facilitation during the planning process, which will make them more relevant ‘players’ in a highly competitive planning environment, and 3) institutional capacity-building at the level of local governance, which is possible due to the currently decentralised administrative system, hence, trying to create innovative initiatives that will further introduce a ‘bottom-up’ planning approach, one that is strongly missing in Serbia today.

PERIOD	CONTEXT	PLANNING PRACTICE	PLANNING PROCESS
Communism	Politically decentralised system Semi-market economy Self-governance	Physical planning - Large infrastructural projects - Mass housing	Strategic planning – Integrated planning – Public participation – Interdisciplinarity
Post-communism	Civil war Centralised system, autocracy Lack of investments	Illegal construction Politically-driven plans	‘Top-down’ approach Absence of strategic planning Domestic private interests
Contemporary	Market-oriented pluralist society Re-decentralisation of administrative levels Feedback between national government and foreign private investors	Redevelopment projects Housing Commercial activities	Foreign private interests Non-transparent procedures Lack of public participation Lack of expert skills and knowledge Planning subject to politics

TABLE 1 Evolution of planning in Serbia

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Notes on contributor

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- 13 Zorica Nedovic-Budic and Branko Cavric, “Waves of planning: A framework for studying the evolution of planning systems and empirical insights from Serbia and Montenegro,” *Planning Perspectives* 21 (2006), 401.
- 14 For an overview of a broader day-to-day discourse on the topic of the Belgrade Waterfront project conducted from the daily press in the period 2012–2014, see: Marija Maruna, “Can Planning Solutions Be Evaluated without Insight into the Process of their Creation?,” in *Proceedings of the REAL CORP 2015 Conference “Plan Together–Right Now–Overall”*, eds. Manfred Schrenk, Vasily Popovich, Peter Zeile, Pietro Elisei and Clemens Beyer (Ghent, Belgium, May, 15–18, 2015). (Vienna: REAL CORP, 2015).

- 15 The area occupied by the Belgrade Waterfront project is popularly known as the Sava Amphitheatre, the zone which has been the core of Belgrade urban planning for almost a century. The area was first recognised as a space of a particular importance for the urban development of the entire city back in the 1923 Master Plan. Two decades later, the idea of using the potential of the Sava Amphitheatre together with designing the Terazije Terrace was implemented in the 1950 Belgrade Master Plan. In 1972, the ideas on how to develop this area appeared as a part of the study incorporated in the Master Plan. Mainly based on this plan, it was possible to organise an international competition in 1986, and several years later a national architectural competition under the motto "Third Millennium". Even during the period of the greatest crisis of the Yugoslav society throughout the 1990s, the concept known as "Europolis" concerning the future development of the Sava Amphitheatre was promoted as a part of political election campaign (1995). However, only the 2003 Master Plan allocated the specific facilities (mainly commercial, i.e. appropriate to the city centre) to the area of Sava Amphitheatre. For the detailed elaboration of each mentioned document and/or initiative, see: Aleksandra Djukic and Aleksandra Stupar, "Globalizing the Belgrade Waterfront: Mega-projects for a Sustainable Development?," in *Proceedings of the 50th ISOCARP Congress "Urban Transformations: Cities and Water"*, ed. Amos Brandeis (Gdynia, Poland, September 23–26, 2014). (Hague: ISOCARP, 2014).
- 16 Davoudi, "On Resilience", 5.
- 17 Nedovic-Budic and Cavric, "Waves of planning", 397.
- 18 These concepts are rooted in the various forms of the new institutionalism approach, particularly, historical and sociological institutionalism (see: James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life," *American Political Science Review* 78 (1984)) and discursive institutionalism (see: Vivien Ann Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse," *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (2008), 304).
- 19 Miodrag Vujosevic and Ksenija Petovar, "Javni interes i strategije aktera u urbanističkom i prostornom planiranju," *Sociologija i prostor* 190 (2006).
- 20 Maruna, "Can Planning Solutions Be Evaluated without Insight into the Process of their Creation?," 131.
- 21 Yvonne Rydin, "Re-Examining the Role of Knowledge within Planning Theory," *Planning Theory* 6 (2007), 60.
- 22 Davoudi, "On Resilience", 5.
- 23 In order to avoid possible confusion, it is interesting to explain the relation between architects and urban planners in Serbia: most of the urban planning professionals come from the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade or similar technical faculties of the other Serbian universities.
- 24 Maruna, "Can Planning Solutions Be Evaluated without Insight into the Process of their Creation?," 129.
- 25 Such an assessment was formulated also by international urban planning bodies (e.g. INURA – International Network for Urban Research and Action) who tried to reach a broader audience by its *Open letter to the people of Belgrade* (www.inura.org)
- 26 Maruna, "Can Planning Solutions Be Evaluated without Insight into the Process of their Creation?," 131.
- 27 Due to the length of this paper, the distinctive planning practice examples of each period will be explained for the case of Belgrade.
- 28 Ante Marinovic-Uzelac, *Teorija namjene površina u urbanizmu* [Land Use Theory in Urbanism] (Zagreb: Tehnicka knjiga, 1989).
- 29 Nedovic-Budic and Cavric, "Waves of planning", 411.
- 30 *Ibid*, 411.
- 31 The local community in New Belgrade was based on the concept of neighbourhood units by Clarence Perry. It was employed in various institutional and social settings, however, it was broadly accepted in communist Yugoslavia due to respecting the community ideology, so familiar with the social Yugoslav planning.
- 32 Nedovic-Budic and Cavric, "Waves of planning", 412.
- 33 *Ibid*, 412.
- 34 Vujosevic, "Collapse of strategic thinking"; Nedovic-Budic and Cavric, "Waves of planning".
- 35 Zorica Nedovic-Budic, Slavka Zekovic and Miodrag Vujosevic, "Land Privatization and Management in Serbia – Policy in Limbo," *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 29 (2012), 307; Vujosevic, "Collapse of strategic thinking".
- 36 Vujosevic, "Collapse of strategic thinking".
- 37 Nedovic-Budic and Cavric, "Waves of planning", 413.
- 38 Slavka Zekovic, Miodrag Vujosevic and Tamara Maricic, "Spatial regularization, planning instruments and urban land market in a post-socialist society: The case of Belgrade," *Habitat International* 48 (2015), 66–67; Miodrag Vujosevic, Slavka Zekovic and Tamara Maricic, "Post-socialist transition in Serbia and its unsustainable path," *European Planning Studies* 20 (2012), 1710; Vujosevic, "Collapse of strategic thinking".
- 39 Ana Peric, "Institutional cooperation in the brownfield regeneration process: Experiences from Central and Eastern European countries," *European Spatial Research and Policy* 23 (2016), forthcoming.
- 40 Nedovic-Budic and Cavric, "Waves of planning", 414.
- 41 Vujosevic, "Collapse of strategic thinking".
- 42 According to this law, the right to use the building was transformed into the right of owning the building, but also the land on which the building was placed. In one word, the developers who bought the objects automatically became the owners of the land too, without having to pay any recompense for it. Moreover, the plots bought by the private sector were situated in the most exclusive areas of Belgrade – river waterfronts, central city areas, historical sites, etc. It was clear that investors were not willing to continue with the previous land use (city port, industrial complex), but rather invest in more profitable uses such as residential and office complexes. Briefly put: transition, along with all the practical problems described above, created a completely 'distorted image' on how to treat private interests and how to recognise investors and developers as legitimate stakeholders in the planning process. For more information, see: Ana Perić and Marija Maruna, "Predstavnicí društvene akcije u procesu regeneracije priobalja – slučaj braunfield lokacije 'Luka Beograd' [The Representatives of Social Action in Waterfront Regeneration – the Case of the Brownfield Site 'Belgrade Port']," *Sociologija i prostor*, 192 (2012), 61–88.
- 43 Miodrag Vujosevic and Zorica Nedovic-Budic, "Planning and societal context – The case of Belgrade, Serbia," in *The urban mosaic of post-socialist Europe: space, institutions and policy*, eds. Sasha Tsenkova, and Zorica Nedovic-Budic. (Heilderberg: Springer, 2006).
- 44 Maruna, "Can Planning Solutions Be Evaluated without Insight into the Process of their Creation?," 122.
- 45 *Ibid*, 132.

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Image Sources:

Figure 1: www.belgradewaterfront.com

Figure 2: Prokopljevic, Jelena. "Do not throw concrete blocks! Social and Public Housing in New Belgrade and their Representations in Popular Culture." *fusion Journal* 6 (2015).

Figure 3: www.beodom.com

Figure 4: www.helivideo.rs; www.gradnja.rs

Figure 5: www.lukabeograd.com; www.blog.b92.net; www.static.dezeen.com

