

Review paper

POST-SOCIALIST URBAN TRANSFORMATION OF BANJA LUKA

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Abstract. Contemporary urban concept of Banja Luka at the beginning of the 21st century is established in terms of the post-socialist society or so-called transition. Urban space becomes the ground of interweaving different interests and reflects the overall social conditions. New social relations shift the approach toward urban development planning (economic, social, infrastructural, spatial), which is at the discrepancy between the city population needs and interests of the individual social groups. The newly established physical structures change the urban concept in the long-term period and actualize the problem of efficient and equitable management of urban space and the establishment of sustainable urban structures in the function of overall development. The paper focuses on various aspects of modern transformation of urban space of Banja Luka with a critical review of the established practice and urban structures and points out the problems of socio-economic development and spatial-functional organization resulting from elemental development and conflict of different interests in the post-Socialist society.

Keywords: Banja Luka, urban development, urban space, post-socialism, transformation.

INTRODUCTION

Banja Luka, the demographically largest and most functionally developed urban center of the Republic of Srpska (RS), has a continuity in existence since the Roman period. It is the second city in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) by its size and development level. Founded at the political and cultural-civilization junction of the Balkans, Banja Luka inherited various cultural influences, Christian and Oriental, manifested in the morphophysomy and cultural and historical heritage of the city. Geopolitical, physical-geographical and traffic-geographical components of geographical position influenced the continuity of the existence of military, administrative and commercial functions, and the aforementioned functions had defined the dynamics of urban development of Banja Luka and its role in the wider geospace (Mandić, 2013). Changes of state administrations (Turkish, Austro-Hungarian, Kingdom of SHS - Kingdom of Yugoslavia, SFR Yugoslavia and since the end of last century- Bosnia and Herzegovina) and social systems (feudal, capitalist, socialist, post-socialist) were manifested in the development of the structures of society and

urban space of Banja Luka. The discontinuity of cultural-historical and political-geographical development influenced the approaches to urban planning, the functions of public space and the role of certain social groups in its formation.

The Socialist period of development in the second half of the 20th century represented the period of the most intense urban development of Banja Luka. It was initiated by the process of industrialization and violently interrupted in the 1990s by the disintegration of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and the Civil War. Bosnia and Herzegovina witnessed separation from the SFRY, the Civil War, the collapse of socialist social relations and the establishment of a liberal capitalist economy in a short time period. These processes, accompanied by the dynamic migration of population, affected the socio-economic, physical and cultural development of urban centers, including Banja Luka. The transformation of the Socialist social system into market-oriented capitalism was manifested by a change in the ownership structure, i.e. the privatization of state and social goods, the de-industrialization of the economy, social stratification, decentralization and partial planning. The aforementioned processes take place mainly spontaneously on weak base functions and they alter urban structures. Urban centers are becoming a testing ground for political, economic and social stratification. In political and scientific terminology, these processes are popularly called "social transition" and the period the "post-Socialism". Under these newly established social relations, new social groups are formed and individual interests are favored over the general ones. As the largest urban center of the Republic of Srpska entity (RS), Banja Luka is a typical representative of these processes.

Therefore, the paper focuses on post-Socialist transformation of urban space and society and the newly established urban practices in managing public space of the city. The aforementioned processes are present in the former socialist countries and the first papers on urban development problems were initiated in the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary (Sykora, 1998; Domanski, 2000; Kovacs, 1994). The problems of the development of post-Socialist societies have only been initially scientifically treated, mainly from the aspect of economics and sociology, and only marginally from the perspective of geographical science. From theoretical point of view, by geographical-historical and analytical-comparative method, this paper attempts to perceive the differences in approach to urban planning in the function of meeting basic living needs of city population in the period of Socialist and post-Socialist planning. In conclusion, it gives a critical review to the newly established urban concept and social groups, as actors in the modeling of contemporary Banja Luka. The paper perceives the consequences of the conflict of individual and general interests in the public space of the city and the character of urban development, and represents an initial step in studying the post-Socialist transformation of the city.

THE CITY AS A COMPLEX AND DYNAMIC SPATIAL SYSTEM

The City of Banja Luka, as a regional and national urban system, coordinates and directs the overall development processes in the Republic of Srpska (economic, demographic,

social, political, cultural). The city is a product of the totality of territorial capital of a region, so the large urban systems are referred to as a "congested region" (Vresk, 2002). Viewed from aspect of demographic potential, cultural and social relations in general, the city is an indicator of social structuring and relationships established between social groups. The city is a space of high concentration of functions of differentiated location requirements. The totality of urban structures and their spatial-functional organization reflect the degree of orderliness and character of urban development. Constant demographic and functional development increases the need for urban space, and for this reason the rationalization of its distribution is necessary. Effective and long-term sustainable urban development presupposes striking a balance between the needs of social groups and the construction of space to meet their basic needs of life (work, housing, education, cultural needs, supply, rest, communication).

The shift from the state-centralized planning in the period of Socialism which focused on the public interest (jobs, housing, public services, physical infrastructure) to the market-oriented urban space management results in social, functional and environmental conflicts. "A new business space is massively created" (Goler and Lehmeier, 2012). Socially favored political and economic groups are major players in urban planning. Individual interests suppress general needs and question the sustainability of certain newly established urban structures. Coordination of urban development with the modern society needs is a prerequisite for sustainable economic and social, and indirectly demographic and cultural, development, and even the political stability.

The modern city is a complex system of physical and social structures. Physical structures consist of natural and technical systems. Natural systems define the terms of settlement and economy through geostructure, relief features, climatic, hydrological and biogeographical conditions. Technical systems (roads, electrotechnical, plumbing, sewage, heating, telecommunication systems, physical infrastructure) are developed in accordance with the achieved scientific-technological and economic development, the level of infrastructure investments and the level of future planning in order to improve urban order and living conditions in the city. Social systems are formed by demographic and socio-economic structures and social infrastructure of the quaternary sector of activity (education, culture, health, social and administrative services). They are indicators of the achieved level of economic and cultural development and the accessibility of public services as they reflect the quality of cultural and social life. The city is, at the same time, a complex economic system of a highly structured economy of the secondary and tertiary sectors and it concentrates functions and economic power. The development of city-building (base) functions is a prerequisite for infrastructural development. The city is not only a concentration of population in terms of its number, but represents the concentration of intellectual power and workforce on whose potential the functions of the city develop and the social upgrading is based on (housing, infrastructure, culture, etc.). The city is, on many grounds, a very sensitive ecosystem of high concentration of population and activity, and rational management of natural systems (water, land, vegetation) is of primary importance for the quality of urban life and population health.

The development of urban structures (functional, demographic, technical, spatial) is an indicator of the achieved degree of scientific and technological, economic, social, cultural,

urban and institutional development, and it reflects the orderliness of the social system. Developed urban structures are also a factor in development. The city is the driver of development processes in its environment. The social space of the city (the society) reflects social and cultural opportunities and social relations in general. It represents a space of public activity, confrontation and competition in which new urban structures emerge, as a consequence of the manifestation of activities of particular social groups. Thus, even in the urban area of Banja Luka the long-observed phenomenon is confirmed that there is a correlation between social and settlement structure (Jashe, 1973. u Ruppert *et al.*, 1977). The activity of social groups is conditioned by motives, and motivation is a basic factor in the evaluation of space and the formation of new spatial structures. Transition societies are in the phase of orientation towards a market economy, so the urban transformation of Banja Luka takes place motivated by accumulation of capital.

PUBLIC SPACE IN SOCIALISM AND IN TRANSITION OF THE SOCIAL SYSTEM

The term "social system transition" does not determine changes of the social system but it rather denotes starting points and a goal. Transition is "a temporary label used until social systems reach some known type of society" (Pickvance, 2002). Thus, post-Socialist societies are in the stage of transformation of the institutional system and social structures with different manifestations of transition processes and the establishment of new models of economic and social development, which generally take place without a clear idea of the final model and consequences of the resulting social changes. The initial phase of transition and social differentiation on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina/the Republic of Srpska took place under legally, economically and politically unstable social conditions. The elements of collective life, on the basis of which a mental map of urban environments as a social, ethnic and cultural unity in heterogeneity was formed in Socialism, are intensively transformed into a new social morphology. Considering "social morphology as the anatomy of society", Dirksam "perceives it as a moralizing force of collective life" (Vujović and Petrović, 2005). The very emphasis on the individual above the collectivity characterizes the fundamental change in the consciousness of the population, materialized in recent years in urban structures.

The urban concept of contemporary Banja Luka was established in the period of Socialist development with an economic basis in industry (about 43.6% of employees in 1990) and a great diversification of the tertiary-quartar sector. The spatial and planning basis of urban development until the end of the 20th century for the needs of about 200,000 inhabitants was defined by the 1975 Urban Plan. The spatial-functional organization was based on mostly homogeneous zones of urban land use. Industrial zones and complexes were separated, administrative and cultural functions were located in the city center, and public services were distributed by residential districts. Constructed after the 1969 earthquake, due to the quality of housing and infrastructural construction (kindergarten, school, health center, post office, playgrounds, green areas), residential districts of collective type Starcevic and Borik at the time were considered as the most human residential settlements of the former

Yugoslavia. Parts of the city formed in the process of suburbanization (Laus, Petricevac, etc.) were characterized by individual housing type and poor infrastructural equipment. The Urban Plan defined the directions of economic and spatial development, the infrastructural needs of population and the dynamics of their realization in an area of 140 km² (Urban Plan of Banja Luka, 1975).

The Civil War (1992-1995) interrupted economic development and initiated new social processes. Population migrations during the Civil War were dynamic. They covered around 70,000 inhabitants, about 1/3 of the current population of Banja Luka with a concentration of settlement mainly in the suburban settlements of the peri-urban ring of the city (Marinković, 2005). Living conditions and overall social status of the refugee population represent the beginning of social differentiation with a clear manifestation in the urban structure. High needs for housing and infrastructure, in the face of limited economic opportunities, resulted in compromises and individual initiatives. Major changes occurred in the peri-urban area beyond the scope of the Urban Plan from 1975 and new physical structures were created without urban regulation. The lack of a new urban plan, which still has not been agreed upon, is practically solved by lower order documents, i.e. regulatory plans that partly treat sections of the urban space.

Transition of the social system represents a social framework in which social differentiation of society takes place, and transforms the city economically, socially, spatially and culturally. With the denationalization of urban land and a market-oriented development policy, urban transformation begins. In the process of uncontrolled privatization of the industrial sector, the economic basis of the city weakened and thousands of workers lost their jobs. In the second decade of the 21st century, the share of industrial employees has dropped to about 17% in total employment with a negative reflection on the social status of employees in this sector (Statistical Yearbook, 2015). The weakening of the city's core functions has reduced investments in infrastructure development. The state's investments in the housing stock have ceased. Collective housing type is left to the private sector which regulates the real estate market. Residential and residential-business complexes are devoid of green and recreational spaces that are being transformed into public parking lots. Industrial zones and complexes are leased to private entrepreneurs and converted into commercial and other service functions, while some are devastated and represent urban brownfields. The global process of tertiarization is affecting the transformation of the city's morphophysiology, and the new sales and storage facilities are being interpolated into residential areas and along traffic corridors. Built-up densities are increasing, especially in the city center, and contribute to urban compactness (Milojević, 2015). The new construction represents an urban redevelopment of the city center and the development of business functions based on the Veselina Maslesa Street, which represents the business center of the city. The new construction reduces the share of green space.

Banja Luka's new role in the Dayton organization of Bosnia and Herzegovina and transition processes affect the tertiary-quaternary sector function concentration. Urban area, about 190 km² and about 180 000 inhabitants (2013), summons around 14% of the population of the Republic of Srpska. It employs about 24% in trade, banking and finance 54%, real estate 40%, state administration 33%, construction 21% of the total employees in the mentioned sectors of activity of the Republic of Srpska in 2008 (Statistical Yearbook, 2008).

These activities are one of the factors of urban transformation and need specific location conditions. By privatizing the secondary and tertiary sectors, and partly the quaternary (education, health), new social groups were formed. Their demands for work, housing, leisure and recreation space, investing and multiplying capital are constantly growing, and "investors" are offensively entering into the public space of the city (mainly the city center and along major roads) from which they push socially marginalized social groups and activities. Tertiarisation of the economy affects the rise in the price of land along the transport corridors. The theory of David Harvey, the critic of Capitalism, according to which the city is the product of financial and political oligarchy and local bureaucracy, a consequence of the spatial and social distribution of surplus value (Harvey, 2015), is fully validated in the urban development of the post-Socialist Banja Luka and actualizes Habermas's debates on the problem of man and institutions.

Newly established social relations apostrophe the neo-Marxist regulatory theory that originated from France in the 1970s by which the market destroys solidarity in society. Living in a community involves several aspects: biosocial, sociopsychological, socio-political, ethnic, socio-religious, cultural and social that show a weakening of collectivity and emphasize the differentiation of society. Ancient Square, as a public space manifesting the right of all free citizens, freedoms and democracy, becomes an unattainable ideal. The public space of the city is a physical space in which physical and cultural boundaries are determined, as well as the boundaries of collective and personal freedoms and rights to space usage. It includes streets, pedestrian and bicycle paths, parking lots, stops, parks, sports fields, playgrounds, gyms, swimming pools, open and closed spaces, shopping centers, cultural and health institutions. Its character is defined on the basis of the purpose, i.e. the activities that take place in it. It is an indicator of social opportunity and generally excludes socially marginalized social groups. In market relations, public space is unable to reach its ideal of being equally accessible to all citizens. Developed societies transform and 'produce' space into a socially useful category, whereby democratically and socially oriented societies strive to 'open up' useful space to their citizens. Therefore, the formation of a public space needs a complex approach to planning and a developed awareness of the right of all city residents to a quality life in the urban space.

The social differentiation of the population of Banja Luka took place quickly under the cumulative influence of the war and the consequences of the way privatization was carried out. By forming a layer of extremely rich population whose social activity corresponds between politics and private entrepreneurship, the conditions for establishing a monopoly over urban space were created through influencing the definition of legal and normative frameworks of urban development. The state's influence on the planning process is weakening. Involvement of multiple actors in decision-making on development directions (state institutions, local communities, investors, planning offices, non-governmental organizations) gives the appearance of transparency in the decision-making process, while in practice it represents confusion and an opportunity to realize individual interests. The location conditions defined the priority goals in the transformation of the ownership structure from state into private property in order to obtain the most favorable space for certain profitable activities. Changing the ownership structure is the most often simultaneously even the change of the land purpose, which changes the spatial-functional organization of urban

space (conversion of the premises of the Agricultural School, the planned zoo, Banja Luka field, etc.).

Urban construction and reconstruction first included undeveloped areas, devastated buildings and manufacturing facilities, and initially represented a kind of re-urbanization (Mandić, 2013). The housing stock was rejuvenated and representative service facilities were built, mainly business and shopping centers. The construction of residential and business complexes is market-oriented and has reached a level above the demographic needs and social opportunities of the majority of population. The demand for new space as an investment does not lose its intensity and is transferred to land obtained by transformation of the former JNA land complex, parks and facilities in favorable locations, threatening the cultural and historical heritage of the city, green areas, the coast of Vrbas River, as well as the interests of members of the socially marginalized groups. A positive example of the conversion of space for public use is the conversion of military land for the construction of the Republic of Srpska Government Building and the University Campus. Privatized land and facilities change functions according to the interests of the "investor", and thereby "diminishing" the right to a city for population that uses public space mostly as much as they are consumers. Philosophy and Sociology theorist Henry Lefebvre introduced the concept of "right to the city" into scientific theory and defined it as "the right for a city resident not only to be a consumer, but to make decisions about the distribution of urban resources" (Lefebvre, 2009). The contemporary practice of urban development in Banja Luka establishes a monopoly of individuals over the rights of citizens. Streets, vacant areas, parks, sports grounds, cultural objects and other public buildings and surfaces are in the process of being "narrowed" in the face of a growing tendency to multiply consumption content. Social differentiation, non-transparency in decision-making on urban re-development and spatial planning documentation, and reduction of public life into frameworks of political actions are constricting basic human social, intellectual and physical activities as well as human rights. „Man manifests himself as free in morality, in history, in his aesthetics, in institutions, in utopia, but also in regard to his relation to the time and other moments of reality,, (Burger, 2001). Therefore, every person has a need in many aspects of their expression as an active subject and is morally responsible for the development of their community. The public space of the city is an indicator of the social relations of the post-Socialist Banja Luka.

The cultural landscape of the city is a physical reflection of the development degree and institutional order of society. Thus, society produces space (Sjoberg, 1965, in Ruppert *et al.*, 1977). The current state of the urban area of Banja Luka is an indicator of the movements of capital, the association of political and entrepreneurial groups, the main actors in urban development. The suburban space was formed under conditions of lack of capital in the process of suburbanization and refugee migration, and is developing unplanned. The concentration of younger population in suburban areas of the city focuses on the needs of social infrastructure (ambulances, kindergartens, elementary schools, landscaped recreational areas, cultural facilities). Physical infrastructure needs constant investment. The pronounced polarization of urban development between the center and the outskirts of Banja Luka confirms the statement that society produces space. It manifests itself in urban morphophysomy and social dislocation of the population as a result of spatially differentiated investment in urban development.

PUBLIC SPACE MANAGEMENT

Public space management includes several aspects of action as follows: legal-normative, planning-urban, institutional, administrative, economic, social, demographic, infrastructural, cultural-civilizational, spatial-organizational, functional, ecological, informative, and security. These aspects are interdependent. Their coordination reflects the orderliness of society, the efficiency of legal norms, the development of awareness and responsibility, the mutual and intergenerational solidarity and activity of citizens and local governments. The transition process changes and affects the way how public space is managed. Atrophy of basic functions has weakened the economic basis of the city, and less investment has been made in the design of public space and services. In market relations, urban land is exposed as a competing commodity. Service development and public space availability are a civilization issue. The problem of urban regeneration, disposal and "recycling" of land is a matter of rational management of urban space, environmental and economic sustainability. These problems have been addressed in a number of EU development documents and declarations suggesting urban renewal measures: Lisbon Strategy 2002, Gothenburg Strategy 2003, Territorial Agenda 2007, Leipzig Charter 2007 (Territorial Agenda, 2007). The problem of urban renewal has also been intensified in Serbia (Danilović *et al.*, 2008). Geographers, urban sociologists, spatial planners and economists, both in the world and in the geographical area of the former Yugoslavia (Tosković, D., Uzelac A., Pušić Lj., Tošić D...), address numerous aspects of urban development from various perspectives in order to find an acceptable sustainable model.

Public space is a part of territorial capital of the city, concretized through land, natural and cultural-historical heritage, its functions, activities that take place in it, tourist attraction, recognition in the wider region and a sense of belonging to the collectivity. Collective memory, a sense of recognition, belonging, shared responsibility formed in the social and cultural space of the city are significant factors in unifying its population. It is these components that are weak in function of public space.

Financing of public spaces and services is a social upgrade that achieves a high degree of development and accessibility in economically more developed societies. Concentration of public services in the city center is conditioned by greater concentration of population, traffic accessibility and inter-functional connectivity, primarily functions of national and regional importance (cultural, administrative, educational functions). The social infrastructure of peripheral residential settlements is of local importance (Šargovac, Drakulić, Priječani, Motike, Kuljani, Debeljaci, etc.), but is inconsistent with the size and age structure of the population and is indicative of a lack of money to finance it. It can be concluded that infrastructure investments are decreasing in proportion to the distance from the city center.

Economically and legally unregulated real estate market and legal regulations in the business start-up contribute to frequent changes in their structure. Activities inconsistent with site conditions occasionally produce ecological risks. This phenomenon is pronounced in the former industrial zones (Incel) and complexes (Čajavec, Kosmos) where, in addition to production, brownfields and functions of the quaternary sector exist, some of which have the character of public functions (educational, recreational). Adaptation of individual

brownfields (e.g. Čajavec) lacks a vision of unique spatial, functional, social and ecological cohesion (Milojević and Gazibarić, 2014).

The market relationship towards urban land conflicts individual and public interest and endangers cultural property (Kastel Fort, Veselina Masleše Street, Museum of Contemporary Art, etc.). Capital investment influences changes in the space purpose, which constantly changes the spatial-functional structure of the city and again re-establishes connections and relationships between individual elements of the urban system. The space shows the functional organization of society, the way of life, the activity of the population, as indicated by Bobek and Hartke in the middle of the 20th century (Ruppert *et al.*, 1977), so the degree of its orderliness is an indicator of the society orderliness.

“In the practice of current planning, urban development is viewed partially from the perspective of the personal interests of its development actors” (Mandić, 2013). “Partial planning is a consequence of institutional and legal under-construction and political instrumentalization in the field of planning” (Mandić, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to establish legal regulation at all levels and in all planning segments. The initial step is to develop a new urban plan of Banja Luka, which has been delayed for decades and implemented through regulatory plans. Public space management is the management of limited spatial and functional resources, and is vital for the efficient functioning of the city. Their allocation must be economical in terms of financial investment, time duration, number of beneficiaries and fair in terms of the preservation of original values, cultural identity and accessibility to the population.

"Current processes in the spatial-functional transformation of the city will continue until the establishment of a systematic solution of a sustainable urban concept. The lack of institutions at various levels of government and weak legal control system allow for freedom to operate on the principle of stronger rights” (Mandić, 2012), which cannot last long, but certainly contribute to the collapse of urban identity and social differentiation, and reduce confidence in institutions.

Low efficiency of institutions, unresolved property-legal relations, lack or non-updated cadastre-geodetic documentation basis, planning regulations, political instrumentalization in various segments of social practice, low living standard of the majority of population cumulatively contribute to self-initiative and manifestation of urban anarchy, and thus the urban space of Banja Luka is developing more spontaneously than planned.

CONCLUSIONS

Transition of the social system is manifested through multiple social processes and reflects on the stratification of society, character of urbanization and spatial conflicts. As the city of the highest concentration of political and financial power in the Republic of Srpska, Banja Luka is a place of dynamic post-Socialist investment in functions arising from transitional relations, and reflects the totality of social opportunities in a transitional society. The importance of the urban agglomeration of Banja Luka for the overall development of the Republic of Srpska, the position resulting from the entity center competence, political, economic and cultural activities in the region make Banja Luka the youngest "urban leader"

in the Balkans. It increases responsibility for the directions and character of urban development in all elements of urban structures, primarily its business and cultural identity. Establishing legal regulations in the process of urban planning and urban space management, defining strategic goals of economic, social, cultural and spatial development are prerequisites for the socio-economic, demographic and environmental sustainability of the Banja Luka's urban system.

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