

# COMMON SPACE

## Novi Beograd's Local Communities between Conception and Everyday Life

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# Diplomarbeit

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## *Common Space* *Novi Beograd's Local Communities:* *between Conception and Everyday Life*

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## **Abstract**

My research revolves around common spaces that were created during the socialist period in former Yugoslavia. The focus is on the concept of the 'Mesna Zajednica' ('Local Community') that was developed in the course of Yugoslavia's process of decentralisation and the introduction of worker's self-management after the break with the Soviet Union in 1948. The Local Community was the smallest administrative unit of the Yugoslav city and basic cell of self-government on the urban level. *Novi Beograd* (*New Belgrade*), a municipality of the Serbian capital Belgrade, will serve as a case study to investigate the concept of the Yugoslav common space on the neighbourhood level. After Second World War Novi Beograd was planned as a socialist 'model town', following technocratic planning principles of the time that aimed at the all-encompassing 'engineering' of urban space and social relations. In new (modernist) city quarters, like Novi Beograd, the Local Community was also the basic planning element that aimed at the creation of self-sufficient 'communities' of 5,000 – 15,000 people. The heart of each 'community' was a neighbourhood-centre. Here the inhabitants could meet, buy their daily supplies, receive services and get involved in the political organisation of their neighbourhood.

Based on the assumption that socialist conceptions of common spaces continue to have an effect on life in the city, their development and symbolic dimensions are central parts of this work. Different facets and scales of this concept will be explored: its definition as a political space for citizen participation, space of ideological representation and a realm where 'community' was believed to be still possible within the modern city. The theory of the Yugoslav common space will be put in perspective when looking at the culture of everyday life that unfolded in these spaces. The discrepancy between the state's ideological conception and the space as it is perceived and lived by its inhabitants today will be explored.

## **Kurzfassung**

Mittelpunkt der Recherche sind Gemeinschaftsräume die während der sozialistischen Ära Jugoslawiens entstanden. Der Fokus liegt auf dem Konzept der 'Mesna Zajednica' (Ortsgemeinschaft) das während Jugoslawiens Entwicklung in Richtung Dezentralisierung und der Einführung der Arbeiterselbstverwaltung nach dem Bruch mit der Sowjet Union 1948, entwickelt wurde. Die Ortsgemeinschaft war die kleinste administrative Einheit der jugoslawischen Stadt und Kern der Selbstverwaltung auf der städtischen Ebene. Novi Beograd (Neu Belgrad), ein Bezirk der serbischen Hauptstadt Belgrad, dient dabei als Fallstudie um das jugoslawische Konzept der Selbstverwaltung auf der Nachbarschaftsebene zu untersuchen. Novi Beograd wurde nach dem 2. Weltkrieg als sozialistische 'Modellstadt' mittels technokratischen Planungsprinzipien und allumfassendem 'Social Engineering' von räumlichen als auch sozialen Beziehungen erbaut. In neuen (modernistischen) Stadtteilen wie Novi Beograd, war die Ortsgemeinschaft gleichzeitig auch Planungsbaustein der zur Schaffung autarker 'Gemeinschaften' für 5.000 bis 15.000 Einwohner dienen sollte. Das Kernstück jeder Ortsgemeinschaft war das Gemeinschaftszentrum. Dort konnten sich die BewohnerInnen treffen, ihre täglichen Einkäufe erledigen, soziale Dienstleistungen erhalten und an der politischen Organisation ihrer Nachbarschaft teilnehmen.

Basierend auf der Annahme, dass sozialistische Konzeptionen von Gemeinschaft auch heute noch einen Einfluss auf das Leben in der Stadt haben, werden ihre Entwicklungen und symbolischen Dimensionen genauer untersucht. Unterschiedliche Facetten und Maßstäbe sollen erkundet werden: ihre Definition als Orte politischer Partizipation, Räume ideologischer Repräsentation und Ort an dem Gemeinschaft in der modernen Stadtgesellschaft wieder Wirklichkeit werden sollte. Die Theorie des jugoslawischen Gemeinschaftsraumes soll dem Alltagsleben welches sich an diesen Orten entfaltet hat gegenübergestellt und relativiert werden. Die Diskrepanz zwischen der staatlichen Konzeption und wie der Raum wahrgenommen und erlebt wird sind zentrale Aspekte der Arbeit.

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# 1

## *Introduction*

### *1.1*

#### *Common Space – Learning from the Yugoslav Experiment?*

In recent discussions about urban developments participation has become a frequently discussed issue. In Vienna for example several attempts to integrate citizens in the planning process (e.g. Schwedenplatz, Aspern Seestadt, Lokale Agenda 21, etc.) have been made. In German cities like Hamburg and Berlin civil-society protests aim to prevent developments within their neighbourhoods that were decided upon by private investors and the city administration. By demanding their ‘Right to the City’ these initiatives plead for their entitlement, as inhabitants and citizens, to partake in negotiation processes about their local environments.<sup>1</sup> A variety of questions arise in these contexts: How can a ‘top-down’ planning approach get combined with participation of local residents in the decision-making process? Can participation get planned at all and if so who is to decide this in a democracy? How much leeway should or can a city-administration and its planning institutions allow for such approaches? Would self-organisation lead to a fairer city, or does it lead to more private ownership of space? How should public and private spaces get negotiated? How can public space get appropriated by a group without restricting access for others? Should the state/city provide all necessities? At the end of the day the main question is: Who is to decide?

While this work can not find answers to all these questions, it yet aims to investigate a historic model – the Yugoslav model of socialist self-management on the urban level – that might give some insights for potentials and limitations of citizen-participation in urban development processes. Last

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<sup>1</sup> see e.g. Holm, Andrej (2011): Das Recht auf Stadt. In Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik 8/2011, pp. 89-97.

but not least the former model of self-management in socialist Yugoslavia should be analysed in relation to today's socio-economic transformations and their manifestations in urban areas like the Serbian capital Belgrade.

The Yugoslav socialist system (1945-91) was a highly experimental model of citizen-participation. It aimed at a maximum of participation in several spheres of life – from work-places, to educational and cultural institutions, political organisations, to the commune and the neighbourhood. In 1950 *workers self-management* was introduced in enterprises and soon after a system of self-government on the municipal-level was implemented as well. These were further expanded over the next three decades. In new (modernist) city quarters like *Novi Beograd* (New Belgrade), the case study of this work, this concept of self-government had a formative effect on the physical and social design as well. Here the visions of the Yugoslav ideologists and city-planners were considered to be built from scratch and the material basis for the imagined society created. If and to what extent this approach of 'social engineering'<sup>2</sup> has left an imprint on the city's urban fabric (in social and well as physical terms) will be critically examined.

The main endeavour of the Yugoslav experiment was to modernise its society and lift the standard of living. This was linked with the objective to create a society free from 'alienation' and to 'wither away the state' by replacing bureaucracy with a self-managed society. The concept of *community* played a crucial role in this project. Community was seen as something lost in the course of modernity that needed to be recreated, especially in urban areas, under the auspices of planners and according to rational objectives.

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2 According to Zygmunt Bauman "modernity was overall an epoch of 'Social Engineering' that did not rely on the spontaneous emergence and reproduction of order", to counteract pre-modern social tendencies this order had to be "rationally planned and enforced through monitoring and management", Bauman, Zygmunt (2009) *Gemeinschaften, Auf der suche nach Sicherheit in einer bedrohlichen Welt*. Frankfurt/Main: Surkamp (1<sup>st</sup> publ. in engl. 2001), p.49 (transl. By J.W.); The terms 'societal engineering' and 'social design' in this thesis are used to explain the objectives of a state to directly influence its society – its values, its structures, behaviour, etc. – according to the state's conceptions through planning. Focus of this work is hereby on the interconnection of the Yugoslav state's planning of material and social factors within the urban environment. The Yugoslav model of socialist self-management, like the fordist model of the 'Western' welfare-state, can be seen as a system which applied 'social engineering'.

The ideal society and its ideal city was seen as something that needed to be first 'engineered' to be then left to the devices of its citizens. For this task the notion of a *socialist common space* was developed that was to manifest in the realm of the neighbourhood as the basic cell of communal life and self-management.

In socialist Yugoslavia *common space* was conceived as something that was "in-between public space and private space"<sup>3</sup> and that belonged to a specific group – a community – that would self-manage its local affairs. In this endeavour the concept of the *Local Community (Mesna Zajednica)* – "one of the key categories of socialist Yugoslavia"<sup>4</sup> – was introduced. According to Martinović, "the Local Community emerges as a consequence of the broader ideological concept of self-management". Since theory and practice are rarely congruent "the problems of its implementation are connected to questions regarding legal ownership, economic development, and the defining of common space."<sup>5</sup> To understand in how far the social- and urban planners of Yugoslavia tackled these issues is part of the analyses of this work.

In 1986 Henri Lefebvre and his two colleagues, the architects Serge Renaudie and Pierre Guilbaud, took part in a competition for the restructuring of Novi Beograd. In their introduction they argue that "Because of self-management, a place is sketched between the citizen and the citadin [city dweller], and Yugoslavia is today perhaps one of the rare countries to be able to concretely pose the problematic of a New Urban".<sup>6</sup> In their competition entry, Lefebvre, Renaudie and Guilbaud, condemned the CIAM (*Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne*) principles that were put into prac-

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3 Marinović, Marija (2012): Social space, property and everyday life, Common areas in socialist Yugoslavia. In *Conference Proceedings: The Production of Place 2012, University of East London, 2012, p.1*.  
4 Ibid.  
5 Ibid.: p.2.  
6 Lefebvre, Henri/Renaudie, Serge/Guilbaud, Pierre (1986) International Competition for the New Belgrade Urban Structure Improvement. Printed in: *Autogestion or Henri Lefebvre in New Belgrade*. (2009) edited by Bittner, S./Derksen, J/Weber, H (Urban Subjects), Vancouver/New York: Filippo, Sternberg Press, pp.1-67, p.2.

tice in Novi Beograd's planning while at the same time suggesting that the Yugoslav self-management system opens up the possibility for a "right to the city". This right, they suggest, "leads to active participation of the citizen-citadin in the control of the territory, and in its management (...) It leads also to the participation of the citizen-citadin in the social life linked to the urban; it proposes to forbid the dislocation of that urban culture, to prohibit the dispersion, not by piling the 'inhabitants' and 'users' a one on top of another, but by inventing, in the domains and levels of the architectural [sic], urbanistic, and territorial."<sup>7</sup> Their concept of the "right to the city" aimed to instigate an appropriation of urban space by its inhabitants. The Yugoslav system of communal self-management, for them, created a basis for such a claim. The question, for me, that arises from this statement and that has incited this research is: *In how far did the Yugoslav socialist system create this place between the citizen and the city dweller and what is its legacy today?*

From today's perspective we know that the system had a variety of obstacles and problems. At the end of the 1980's self-management was deemed a failure and was therefore abolished. After 1989, with the fall of communism in Europe "many expected a golden age of West European-style democracies, renewed public realms and widespread civic engagement to unfold across Eastern Europe."<sup>8</sup> Yet since the socialist system was replaced by free-market democracies many citizens in the countries of former Yugoslavia, as Horvat and Štikš put it, feel "excluded from decision-making processes."<sup>9</sup>

7 Ibid.: p.2; The use of the terms citizen and citadin/city-dweller can be traced to Lefebvre's earlier writings: Using Schmid's interpretation of Lefebvre's works *'The Right to the City'* (1968) and *'The Urban Revolution'* (1970), the city is an "intermediate level" between the "global" (the state, institutions, ideologies, etc.) and the "private" (the everyday life, the dwelling), the private and the global are interrelated and both find expression in the city, Schmid, Christian (2010): *Stadt, Raum und Gesellschaft. Henri Lefebvre und die Theorie der Produktion des Raumes*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, p.165; In this regard the place between the citizen and the city-dweller that Lefebvre (et al.) refer to in the competition entry for Novi Beograd, can be interpreted as a mediator of the private life as it unfolds in the home and the neighbourhood, and the state that is here represented by the word citizen.

8 Hirt, Sonia (2012): *Iron Curtains, Gates, Suburbs and Privatisation of Space in the Post-socialist City*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell (Studies in Urban and Social Change), p.22.

9 Horvat, Srećko/Štikš, Igor (2013): Willkommen in der Wüste der Transformation: Postsozialismus die Europäische Union und eine neue Linke am Balkan. In *Soziale Kämpfe in Ex-Jugoslawien*. Edited by Kraf, Micheal G. (2013), Wien: Mandelbaub kritik & utopie, pp.47-62, pp.47f.

According to them elections mostly reproduce the "same political oligarchy" with little alternatives. In the new capitalist system the privatisation process has left many people without jobs, work conditions worsened and social services are reduced.<sup>10</sup> In other words not just the autocratic regimes were abolished, also many achievements or objectives of the former system like social security have been abandoned today.

In cities like Belgrade, compared to the structures of self-management during socialism, people seem to have less possibilities to have a voice in decision-making processes on the urban level today. The neoliberal restructuring of the city leaves little leeway for citizen-participation or general civil-society influence. This is especially problematic, not because participatory democratic systems are better than representational ones per se, but because urban developments are increasingly subject to "neo-liberal 'predatory' capitalism"<sup>11</sup>. In the changed socio-economic conditions of today, critical thinkers like Zoran Erić ask: "How to build on the local socio-political legacy of workers self-management and reaffirm this concept in the new context where different kind of self-organization would be desirable?"<sup>12</sup> For Erić "in the local context [of Novi Beograd], one of the crucial aspects of the development of possible *differentiated neighbourhoods* – as opposed to economic, ethnic or racial socio-spatial segregations fostered by the 'predatory capitalism' of today – is the potential for new types of self-organisation in local communities".<sup>13</sup> Erić here does not propose a return to the top-down model of self-management that the socialist regime tried to implement, but a new form of self-organisation.

10 Ibid.

11 Erić, Zoran (undated): *"Urban Feudalism" of New Belgrade: The Case of Belville Housing Block*. downloaded under: [http://www.academia.edu/4317479/\\_Urban\\_Feudalism\\_of\\_New\\_Belgrade\\_The\\_Case\\_of\\_Belville\\_Housing\\_Block](http://www.academia.edu/4317479/_Urban_Feudalism_of_New_Belgrade_The_Case_of_Belville_Housing_Block) (pages not numbered), last access 13. 05.2014, for this subject see also Erić's talk 'Urban Feudalism' of New Belgrade. At the conference 'Social Housing – Housing the Social' in 2011 at the Symposium 'Social Housing – Housing the Social' in Amsterdam (online on: <http://www.skor.nl/nl/site/item/zoran-eric-urban-feudalism-of-new-belgrade-the-case-of-belville-housing-block>).

12 Erić, Z. (2009a): Differentiated Neighbourhoods of New Belgrade: Project of the Centre for Visual Culture at MOCAB. In *Differentiated Neighbourhoods of New Belgrade*. Edited by Erić, Zoran, Belgrade: Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade. pp.8-21, p.19.

13 Ibid.: p.20.



Districts like Novi Beograd that were built with the pretension of social ownership have seen drastic changes in its ownership structures since the 1990s. Almost the entire housing-stock was privatised and a large number of commercial facilities on all scales, from kiosks to large shopping-malls and business-parks, were added to the functional mix in an unplanned fashion. In this atmosphere of all-encompassing private usurping of public spaces the neighbourhood-centres, that were an integral part of the socialist community-concept, are some of the rare spaces that are still part of the public infrastructure. Yet since public here also means being part of the existing power-structures it is questionable if these spaces can, in today's circumstances, become spaces of civil-society initiatives needed to gain or regain democratic control over common spaces.

## 1.2 *Contribution to the Field – an attempt to understand the post-socialist city from the perspective of the socialist city*

With the fall of the 'Iron Curtain' in 1989 the political landscape of Europe changed drastically. The capitalist system lost its counterpart and contender and as such became the main economic and political system on a global scale. Communism became synonymous with the dictatorships that have ruled the countries and was deemed a failure. The introduction of democratic structures as well as a free-market were seen as the solution to the problems the previous system had produced.

According to Dieter Segert many concepts have been formulated for the analyses and interpretation of the system-change in Eastern Europe after 1989. A plurality of approaches that try to analyse and interpret the system-change in former communist countries has been combined under the general term of *transformation-theories*. They describe a process, i.e. the transformation, of an all-encompassing change within a society, in which all basic political and economic institutions change, leading from one societal system to another. These theories suggest that the result of the crisis of

state socialism during the 1980s, was a "*Tabula rasa*" onto which the 'Western' model of democracy and market-economy could have been replicated. Critical approaches to the transformation-theories<sup>14</sup> suggest that socialism was not only a system of governance and economy but a social order as well. Social systems are based on daily routines, experiences and expectations which can not be eradicated like institutional frameworks. A social system is based on experiences – positive and negative that have an impact on decisions and habits.<sup>15</sup> If we understand urban space as a social product we have to take the social processes into account that shape them.

Looking at Yugoslavia's post-socialist transformation we find that it can not be simply compared to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that belonged to the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia's specific economic and political path – often referred to as Yugoslavia's *Third Way* – produced a particular modernisation-process that had a deep effect on post-socialist transformations in all its former republics<sup>16</sup>. Compared to other communist countries of Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia had a greater scope on a political and economic level. Since the break with Stalin in 1948 Yugoslavia opened up to the West. Through its foreign policy it was consequently following a different path between the Eastern- and Western-Block. Through the introduction of worker's self-management it tried to implement an alternative socialist concept on an economic as well as on a socio-political level. The political sovereignty and the stability of the country was based on the establishment of an all-Yugoslav identity that aimed to unite all 'ethnic' groups of the federation and solve the question of nationalities. This ideology was built upon the undisputed and charismatic leader Josip Bronz known as 'Tito' and a power structure that relied heavily on the army, the police and the (communist) Party to assure its power.<sup>17</sup>

14 Segert here refers to the concept of 'Postsozialismus-Forschung' as it was proposed by anthropologists at a conference of the Max-Planck-Institute Halle. cf. Segert, D. (2007): Postsozialismus-Spätsozialismus-Staatssozialismus: Grundlinien und Grundbegriffe einer politikwissenschaftlichen Postsozialismus-Forschung. In *Postsozialismus: Hinterlassenschaften des Staatssozialismus und neue Kapitalismen in Europa*. Edited by Segert, Dieter (2007), Wien: Wilhelm Braunnüller, pp.1-23, pp.5f.

15 cf. Segert (2007): pp.5-7.

16 Bosnia-Herzegowina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Serbia.

17 cf. Džihic, V. (2007): Spurensuche im jugoslawischen Postsozialismus – Was bleibt? In *Postsozialismus:*

Vedran Džihic states in this context, that the ‘success’ of the Yugoslav republics in their post-socialist transformation towards democratic market-economies since the 1990s depends on some overall characteristics of all republics but also the differences between them. Advantages, like the relative freedom of intellectuals, an already existing integration into the world-market, the experience of workers-migration to capitalist countries, strong trade unions and a confident working-class compared to other socialist countries made the transformation in some republics (especially Slovenia and Croatia) easier. The socialist regime’s incapability to solve intra-Yugoslav conflicts, investigate and process historic events like the violence between Serbs and Croats during Second World War, and the inability to solve economic disparities between republics made it impossible to create a lasting uniting Yugoslav identity. Those difficulties, that existed throughout the socialist period, worsened with the weakening of the regime since Tito’s death in 1980. Growing inequalities between the republics and provinces, an economic crisis that created a feeling of uncertainty in social and identity questions, and the loss of Yugoslavia’s privileged geopolitical position after the collapse of the Eastern-Block in 1989 fostered Nationalist tendencies. The break-up of the Yugoslav federation and the accompanying wars created new problems that still effect today’s circumstances in the region. Following Džihic’s argumentation further, the war accelerated the process of weakening state institutions that had already started during the last period of socialism.<sup>18</sup> The crisis of former Yugoslavia created a “specific overlap of system transformation, re-definition of governance and a post-war situation”.<sup>19</sup>

All these transformations also had a deep impact on the urban fabric. According to Vujošević and Nedović-Budić the “changes that most directly influenced urban development and planning were the privatisation of urban land and structures, the decentralisation of government, and the relinquishing of the land development process to market forces and a multiplicity of

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*Hinterlassenschaften des Staatssozialismus und neue Kapitalismen in Europa.* Edited by Segert, D. (2007), Wien: Wilhelm Braunmüller, pp. pp.165-183 pp.165f.  
 18 cf. *ibid.*: pp.165-167.  
 19 *Ibid.*: p.167 (transl. By J.W.).

investors and other participants”<sup>20</sup> For Hirt the “changes in the urban environment are not only dependent on post-socialist changes in politics and economics” though. Rather, she argues, space is “a medium of culture”, the “changing urbanity” of the post socialist city “is the story of the post socialist cultural condition” which she calls “privatism”.<sup>21</sup> This “privatism”, for her, is a “widespread disbelief in the viability of the public realm”<sup>22</sup> which leads to a “widespread sense that to appropriate the public is to thrive in private”<sup>23</sup>.

Similar to Hirt’s case study Sofia (Bulgaria), Belgrade and other cities in former Yugoslavia have seen an omnipresent usurpation and appropriation of public spaces for private uses. These range from small-scales like rooftop extensions and kiosks, to whole informally or illegally built settlements, and investor financed commercial facilities. A variety of publications have investigated these phenomena<sup>24</sup>. So far there are no comprehensive studies that look at spaces that were specifically conceived of as common spaces during the socialist period. As these spaces were developed in accordance with and with the aim to foster self-management, I believe it is important to include these aspects in the research. In the words of Le Normand: “further research is needed to establish the real impact of the implementation of this [self-management] doctrine on the everyday lives of Yugoslavs and on their relationship with the state”<sup>25</sup> If we take Segert’s argument into account, that the socialist system was a social system that continues to have an effect on life today, then we need to look at both the former system as it was conceived and implemented and the impact it had and still has on everyday-life.

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 20 Vujošević, M./Nedović-Budić, Z. (2006): Planning and Societal Context – The Case of Belgrade Serbia. In *The Urban Mosaic of Post-Socialist Europe. Space, Institutions and Policy.* Edited by Tsenkova, Sasha/ Nedovic-Budic, Zorica (2006), Heidelberg: Physica Verlag, pp. 275-294, p.275.  
 21 Hirt, Sonia (2012): *Iron Curtains, Gates, Suburbs and Privatisation of Space in the Post-socialist City.* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell (Studies in Urban and Social Change), pp.3f.  
 22 *Ibid.*: p.24.  
 23 *Ibid.*: p.27.  
 24 See e.g. Vökler (2008); Hirt (2008, 2012); Tsenkova/ Nedovic-Budic (2006); Waley (2011); the contributions of Meili and Topalović in Belgrade Formal/Informal (2012).  
 25 Le Normand, Brigitte (2006): Make No Little Plan: Modernist Projects and Spontaneous Growth in Belgrade, 1945-1967. In *East Central Europe*, 33, Nos. 1-2 (2006), pp.243-267, p.244.

### 1.3

#### *Methodology and Structure of the Work*

This thesis aims to investigate to what extent the ideal of a common space, that aimed to create a basis for inclusive societal negotiation-processes, was implemented. Even though a bottom-up approach was proposed by the state it was mostly a top-down prescribed model, therefore the first part the analyses will focus on the aspect of the Yugoslav state's 'social engineering'. It can be divided in three main facets: the 'design' of a governance model that aimed to develop institutional structures for as much citizen-participation as possible, tools for the physical design of communal facilities, and the design of social relations from an ideological perspective. All three facets aimed to have an active impact on everyday life of citizens according to the official ideology. The theory of the Yugoslav common space will be put in perspective when looking at the culture of everyday life that unfolded in these spaces. The discrepancy between the state's ideological construct and the space as it is perceived and lived by its inhabitants today will be explored. Through interviews with several inhabitants of Novi Beograd I have tried to gain insights into their perspective. Besides questions of how they perceive changes in their neighbourhoods since the system transformation during the 1990s I have asked what they understand under the term *Mesna Zajednica* (Local Community). The aim of this empirical research is to understand to what extent everyday-life was affected by the official ideology and how inhabitants relate to this model nowadays.

The main part of this work focuses on the analyses of literature. A variety of international reviews of the self-management system on the urban level have been included, such as Sharon Zukin's account from 1975 and Wolfgang Höpken's analyses from 1986. Also included are works published during the socialist period from within Yugoslavia. The architecture of Belgrade and Novi Beograd in particular have been subject to a variety of works in the last ten years. These accounts have been useful sources in understanding the socialist conception and implementation of architecture and urban planning as well as the developments since the break-up of Yugoslavia dur-

ing the 1990s and after. The fieldwork in Belgrade mainly conducted in June 2013 but also in prior visits, and especially the conversations with several inhabitants of Novi Beograd and with cultural workers of the municipality have allowed some insights in today's life that is shaped by local and global conditions past and present alike.

Chapter 2 gives a general introduction to the city of Belgrade as it developed before Second World War. This is a preparatory chapter that aims to create a basis to understand the point of departure from which the socialist leaders and city planners of the post-war period tackled urban issues in Belgrade. Chapter 3 will then introduce the Yugoslav socialist state that was installed after 1945. Its political, social and economic objectives as well as geopolitical developments that influenced the state will be analysed in their importance for the development and planning of Belgrade as a 'socialist city'. Special regard will be put on Novi Beograd which was an integral part of post-war planning of the city and of Yugoslavia as a whole. Novi Beograd serves as a case study to investigate the Yugoslav socialist system's implementation on the urban level over time. Since the main objective of the work is to gain knowledge of the system of citizen-participation on the urban level, the Yugoslav' commune system and its influence on urban planning and social objectives, and vice versa will be analysed in chapter 4. The before mentioned interviews represent a link between the former system and its legacy today. The inhabitants' view of Novi Beograd should allow some insights into everyday life and how it was or still is affected by the former system of direct democracy and its problems of implementation. In a critical review the application of the former system and its outcomes will be examined and the relevance for today's conditions evaluated.

## 2

# *An Introduction to Belgrade's Historic Development before 1945*

### 2.1

#### *Overview – Pre-History until Serbian Independence*

Belgrade is one of the oldest settlements in Europe and has changed hands several times. Its strategic position on a rock that overlooks the confluence of the river Sava into the Danube has brought many peoples and armies to the site. Since the Romans settled there from the first century AD the city was destroyed some forty times and each time rebuilt according to the new owners conceptions. Its history as human settlement dates back before Roman times though: during the Bronze Age Illyrian, Thracian and Dacian tribes moved through the area and later the Celtic tribe *Singi* built a fortified settlement in the third century BC. When the Romans eventually took it over they named it after this tribe *Singidunum*.<sup>26</sup>

The Romans built a castrum (the foundations of the *Kalemegdan fort* – today a public park and landmark of the city), a grid street structure which still shapes parts of today's city centre, a forum, a basilica, and other civic buildings. In the sixth and seventh century Slavs moved into the city and renamed it *Beligrad* – the 'White City'<sup>27</sup> – after the white walls of the fortress.<sup>28</sup> Under Byzantine rule the Slavonic tribes were converted to Christianity through the "followers of the monks Cyrill and Methodius"<sup>29</sup> who invented the Cyrillic alphabet to bring the new religion to the Slavs in their own language. As part of the Byzantine Empire the Slavs of the area belonged to the Orthodox Church.<sup>30</sup>

26 cf. Norris, David A. (2009): *Belgrade: a Cultural History*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-4.  
27 cf. Hirt, Sonia (2009): City Profile: Belgrade, Serbia. In *Cities* 26, 2009, pp. 293-303, p.293.  
28 cf. Norris (2009): p.1.  
29 Ibid.: p.6.  
30 Ibid.: p.6; Today the Serbian Orthodox Church is the main religious denomination in Serbia.

For centuries the city was the site of rivalries between Serbs, Byzantines, Bulgarians and Hungarians, until in the 13<sup>th</sup> century it became part of the "expanding Serbian Empire"<sup>31</sup> of which it became the capital in 1403.<sup>32</sup> At this time, "Belgrade's population is thought to have neared 50,000 people".<sup>33</sup> Already in 1427 the Hungarians forced the Serbian ruler out of the city and the "Serbian capital further down the Danube to Smederovo. From then until the nineteenth century the city was lost to the Serbs".<sup>34</sup>

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century the Ottoman Empire started to move into the Balkan Peninsular. In 1456 Ottoman forces besieged Belgrade but were not successful to hold it until 1521.<sup>35</sup> The city underwent a radical transformation under the new ruler. While most of the Serbs moved out of the town new inhabitants from all parts of the Ottoman Empire moved in giving it a new name: "Dar ul Jihad, or House of the Holy Wars", the old fort was given "the name Kalemegdan,(from *kale* town and *megdan* battlefield)" which is still used today. With the spread of the Ottoman Empire Belgrade ceased to be a border town and became an "important trading, administrative and military centre".<sup>36</sup> It became an 'oriental' town with city quarters for different groups and buildings typical for Ottoman towns like mosques, schools, Turkish baths, caravansaries, etc..<sup>37</sup> Economic centre was the *Čaršija*, the central market place, where goods were sold and produced, but also where the public life of the city unfolded.<sup>38</sup>

In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century the city passed a few times between Austrian and Ottoman forces. In 1699 a treaty established the Sava as the new border between the two Empires with Belgrade on the Ottoman and Zemun, a small

31 Hirt (2009): p.294.  
32 cf. Norris (2009) p.9.  
33 Hirt (2009): p.294.  
34 Norris (2009): p.9.  
35 cf. ibid.: p.9.  
36 Ibid: p.10.  
37 cf. Boeckh, Katrin (2009): *Serbien Montenegro*. Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, p.34.  
38 cf. Münnich, Nicole (2013): *Belgrad zwischen sozialistischer Herrschaft und gesellschaftlichem Eigensinn – Die jugoslawische Hauptstadt als Entwurf und urbane Erfahrung*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, p.59f.

town a bit further upstream the Danube, on the Austrian side.<sup>39</sup> Between 1717 and 1739 the Austrians managed to keep Belgrade in their hands for a longer period of time and the town “quickly acquired the look of a European city”.<sup>40</sup> But the Ottomans recaptured Belgrade and again the city’s population changed drastically: Christians that had previously come from other parts of Europe moved elsewhere and many of the Serbs moved north of the Sava. Buildings that were erect under the Habsburgs like churches were destroyed and the former appearance was re-established.<sup>41</sup>



Fig. 1 Belgrade at the border of the Ottoman Empire, around 1801

39 cf. Norris (2009): pp.11f.  
 40 Ibid.: p.14.  
 41 cf. ibid.: p.14.

## 2.2 19<sup>th</sup> Century Belgrade

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by the struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire. The First Serbian Uprising 1804 – 1813 was directed against the tyranny of the janissaries and their leaders who took over power in the region in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. At first successful, the uprising was crushed and the Serbian leader Karađorđe forced to flee into Austrian territory.<sup>42</sup> A Second Serbian Uprising in 1815, evoked by the brutal revenge against the local population, was led by Miloš Obrenović who negotiated with the Ottomans instead of fighting them in battle. Miloš finally became *knez* (prince) of Serbia which gained more independence but stayed a part of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>43</sup> The following period up until the beginning of the First World War was affected by the fight for power between the two dynasties Karađorđe and Obrenović that both claimed Serbia for themselves.<sup>44</sup>

In 1841, because of its strategic position at the border to the Habsburg Empire, Belgrade became the capital of the newly found autonomous state of Serbia<sup>45</sup>. At the same time the city was also the seat of the Ottoman Vizier, who still occupied the Kalemegdan fort with his troops. Due to this “peculiar dualism of government” neither side would invest in the city’s infrastructure that was in pressing need of repair. At that time Belgrade’s *mahalas*, the ethnically-based neighbourhoods outside the fort, were mostly characterized by single-story houses with gardens and winding roads.<sup>46</sup> Already in the 1820s and ‘30s, under the rule of knez Miloš, some first steps to Europeanise Belgrade were made. Mostly representative buildings like

42 cf. ibid.: pp. 15, 28-32.

43 cf. ibid.: pp.36-38.

44 Norris (2009).

45 In 1830 Serbia was declared a principality that was independent but had to pay tribute to the Ottomans. In the same year Belgrade came under jurisdiction of the Serbian state. Until 1841 though Kragujevac was the capital of Serbia, cf. Münnich, 2009: p.71.

46 Stojanović, Dubravka (2009): Urbanization of Belgrade 1890-1914. In *Stockholm – Belgrade: proceedings from the IV Swedish-Serbian Symposium “Sustainable Development and the Role of Humanistic Disciplines”, Belgrade, October 2–4, 2008*. Edited by Pavlavestra, Pedrag (2009), Belgrade: Srpska Akad. Nauka i Umetnosti. pp. 33-42, pp.33f

the knez' residence and buildings for military officials were built in safe distance from the Kalemegdan. To demarcate Serbian Belgrade from the Ottoman rulers Miloš even suggested to move the *Čaršija*, the city's trade centre, across the Sava river. Since this plan was not accepted by the population the public authorities started concentrating on the modernisation of the inner city.<sup>47</sup> Especially since the 1850s Belgrade lost more and more of its Ottoman appearance. Mosques were destroyed<sup>48</sup>, streets straightened and new buildings based on European trends erected<sup>49</sup>.

In 1868 the Ottomans finally “left Belgrade and other Serbian cities”.<sup>50</sup> This opened the way for large scale reconstruction of the city which was driven by the two goals “to endow the urban built fabric with rich references to Serbian nationhood and reorganize it according to European planning principles, thus strengthening Serbian national identity while grounding it within the broader context of European civilization”.<sup>51</sup> The main planning document for this reconstruction was the town plan by Emiljan Josimović, who is considered the first Serbian urban planner. The narrow unpaved streets and small wooden houses were to be replaced by large boulevards, public squares, and civic buildings.<sup>52</sup> There were also plans to deal with general infrastructure problems like sanitation, water supply, road pavement, electrification and public transport. The city administration however proved mostly incapable to solve the numerous problems. The *Law on the Regulation of the City of Belgrade* that was initiated through Josimović's plan, was not adopted until the 1920s. Many works were postponed because the city limits were not determined. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the city had grown due to new, illegally built settlements on the outskirts and the city administration could not decide whether to include

47 cf. Münnich (2013): pp.73-75.  
 48 Today the *Bayrakly Mosque*, built around 1660-1688, is the only Ottoman mosque left in Belgrade; cf. Blagojević, Ljiljana (2009b): *Urban Regularisation of Belgrade, 1867: Trace vs. Erasure*. In *Serbian Architecture Journal*, 2009, 1, pp. 27-44, here p.41 and fn 36.  
 49 cf. Münnich (2013): 73ff.  
 50 Stojanović (2008): p.34; Serbia was internationally recognised as sovereign state at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, cf. Boeckh (2009): p.68.  
 51 Hirt (2009): p.294.  
 52 c.f. eg. Hirt (2009): 294; Norris (2009): 64-72; Münnich (2013): 75-79.

them in the city proper or not. The actual execution of infrastructure works, like in the case of the introduction of electricity in 1894, was mostly carried out on the basis of individuals initiatives.<sup>53</sup>

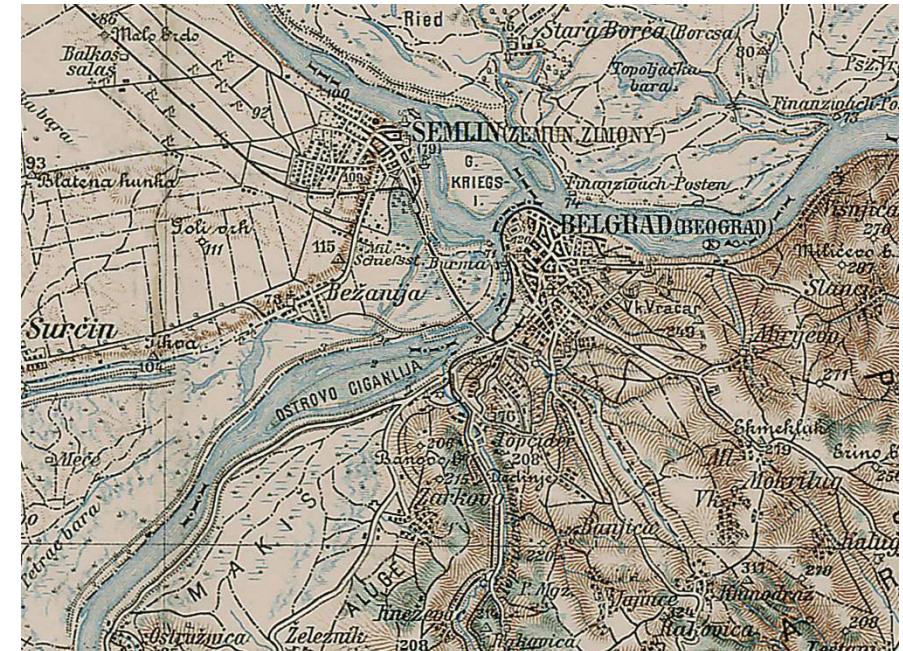


Fig. 2 Belgrade and Zemun (Semlin) around 1910

53 cf. Stojanović (2009): pp.31-37.



Fig. 3 Emilijan Josimović: Plan for the Regulation of Belgrade 1867



Fig. 4 Kingdom of Serbia and neighbouring countries in 1914

## 2.3

### *The Capital of the First Yugoslavia*

After the First World War Belgrade became the capital of the *Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*<sup>54</sup>, that incorporated the former Kingdom of Serbia, the Kingdom of Montenegro and the former Austro-Hungarian territories: Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Now the capital of a much larger state Belgrade transformed in the “short interwar period of just twenty years (...) from a provincial Balkan centre into what could be seen as modern European capital”<sup>55</sup> Between 1921 and 1938 the population more than tripled to 350,000 inhabitants at the end of the thirties and also the territory was four times larger than at the end of the war.<sup>56</sup> The city had been heavily damaged through Austrian and German attacks during First World War.<sup>57</sup> This destruction as well as the influx of huge numbers of people in the ensuing years lead to a severe housing crisis and the creation of unsanitary slums where tuberculosis was one of the major causes of death. These were in stark contrast to the cultural and economic developments of the upper-class that lived in the inner city quarters that had been redeveloped in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>58</sup> The city prospered in the inter-war years and was “becoming one of Central-East Europe’s most vibrant urban centres”.<sup>59</sup> From the late 1920s onward an architectural avant-garde established the modern movement in the city and added some modernist buildings to the cityscape. Most notably the *Group of Architects of the Modern Movement* that was founded in 1928 by the four western-educated architects Milan Zlonković, Branislav Kojić, Jan Dbovy and Dušan Babić.<sup>60</sup>

With the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918 the Sava river ceased to be a border and Zemun became part of the same Kingdom as

54 Renamed the *Kingdom of Yugoslavia* in 1929.

55 Blagojević, Ljiljana (2003): *Modernism in Serbia: the Elusive Margins of Belgrade Architecture, 1919-1941*. Cambridge, Massachusetts/London: MIT Press. p.127.

56 cf. *ibid.*: p.128

57 cf. Hirt (2009): 294.

58 cf. Münnich (2013): pp.79-82; Blagojević (2003): pp. 127-140.

59 Hirt (2009): p.294.

60 Blagojević (2003).



Fig. 5 Kingdom of Yugoslavia 1929-1941 (1918-29 called the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes)

Belgrade. This development opened the way to further expand the city over the Sava river towards Zemun. The two cities were already connected through a train-line since 1883. Zemun was an important trading partner for Belgrade and “was regarded a cultural model” that brought “western tastes to its co-nationals across the water”.<sup>61</sup> In 1921/22 an international architectural competition was carried out for the expansion and regularisa-

61 Norris (2009): p.209.

tion of Belgrade. Most competition entries proposed to shift the city across the Sava and connect Belgrade with Zemun.<sup>62</sup> One of the ex aequo winning entries, by the Viennese Architects Rudolf Perco, Erwin Böck and Erwin Ilz, proposed “a radical reconstruction of the city” that completely negated “Belgrade’s topography and its urban character”.<sup>63</sup> On the left bank of the river Sava they planned a monumental district in neo-Baroque style<sup>64</sup> which they called “*Singidunum Novissima*”<sup>65</sup> as a reference to the Roman name of Belgrade (see above) and the new beginning of the city and the newly found Kingdom that would expand over to the former Habsburg territory<sup>66</sup>. Probably due to the impossibility to realise the plan<sup>67</sup> no first prize was awarded<sup>68</sup>. Instead a city commission was assigned with the planning of a new master plan. Finished in the following year the *General Urban Plan of Belgrade from 1923* (Fig. 6) was adopted but without the appendix (Fig. 7) concerning the new city quarter on the left bank of the Sava.<sup>69</sup> Several bridges across the Sava were projected in the plan from 1923 but only the King-Aleksander-Bridge (*Most kralja Aleksandra*)<sup>70</sup> was realised. In 1934 Zemun became part of Belgrade’s city administration<sup>71</sup> but the district that would connect the cities was not built until the Communists took over power after Second World War. Yet between 1937 – ‘38 a fairground<sup>72</sup> was built where the King-Aleksander-Bridge meets the left bank of the Sava. In the short period of time between it’s opening and the occupation of the city in 1941 by German troops it established Belgrade as important centre for international fairs in south-east Europe.<sup>73</sup>

62 cf. Münnich (2013): p.118.

63 Blagojević (2009b): pp. 39f.

64 cf. Kulić, Vladimir (2009): *Land of the In-Between: Modern Architecture and the State in Socialist Yugoslavia, 1945-65*. Dissertation at the University of Texas at Austin, p. 132.

65 cf. Blagojević (2009b): p. 40.

66 cf. *ibid.*: p.40.

67 cf. Münnich (2013): p. 118.

68 cf. homepage of the Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade (*Urbanistički zavod Beograda*), here: [http://www.urbel.com/default.aspx?ID=uzb\\_BG\\_planovi&LN=ENG#1867](http://www.urbel.com/default.aspx?ID=uzb_BG_planovi&LN=ENG#1867), last accessed: 16.4.2014

69 cf. Münnich, 2013: 127f, the bridge was opened in 1934, destroyed during WW2 and later rebuilt, today’s name is Brankov most.

70 cf. Norri (2009): p.211.

71 Today called: *Staro Sajmište* – Old Fairground

72 cf. Münnich (2013): pp. 127f.

73 cf. Norris (2009): p.125.





Fig. 6 'General Urban Plan of Belgrade from 1923' by Đorđe Kovaljevski

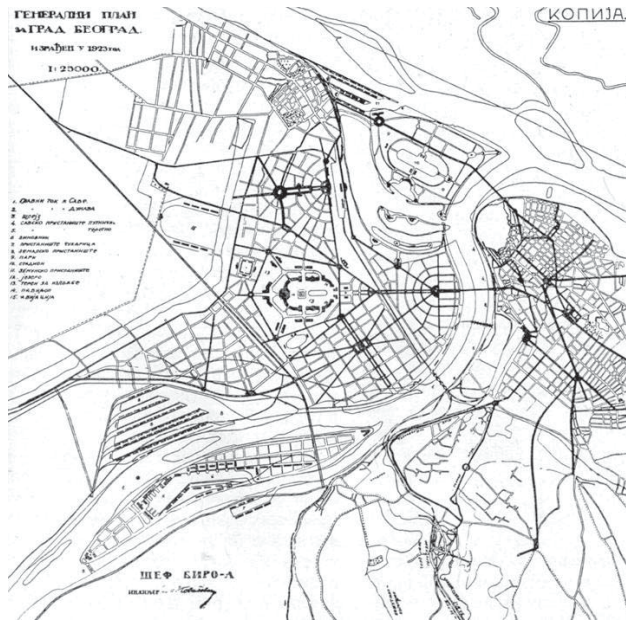


Fig. 7 Appendix to the General Urban Plan of Belgrade from 1923 (Đorđe Kovaljevski): Illustrative Plan for the Regulation of Belgrade on the Left Bank of the River Sava

During World War II Yugoslavia was divided among the Axis-Powers and Belgrade and Zemun became frontier towns one more time.<sup>74</sup> Belgrade was part of Germany and Zemun part of the *Independent State of Croatia*, a puppet state of the Nazi-regime. The fairground, even though on the Croatian side was turned into a concentration camp under German command. The so-called *Semlin Judenlager* was the biggest concentration camp in Nazi-occupied Serbia. “Between March and May 1942, approximately 7,000 Jewish women, children and the elderly (almost half of the total Jewish population of Nazi-occupied Serbia) were systematically murdered” there. After that it was turned into an “*Anhaltelager*, a temporary detention camp for political prisoners, captured Partisans and forced labourers“. Of the 32,000 inmates 10,600 people, mostly Serbs died or were killed there between May 1942 and July 1944.<sup>75</sup> The history of the fairground and its role during the war as well as the cooperation with the Nazi-regime were taboo for a long time after the war.<sup>76</sup>

74 cf. the homepage: *Semlin Judenlager in Serbian public memory*: <http://www.semmlin.info/>, last accessed: 6.2.2013.  
 75 Münnich (2013).  
 76 For the concept of Yugoslavia’s “in-betweenness” see Kulić, Vladimir/Mrduljaš, Maroje/Thaler, Wolfgang (2012b): *Modernism In-between: the Mediator Architectures of Socialist Yugoslavia*. Berlin: Jovis Verlag.

### 3

## *Yugoslavia and its Capital (New) Belgrade after 1945*

The evolution of socialist Yugoslavia did not follow a straight line. From its first conception during Second World War by the communist partisan-fighters to its violent dissolution during the 1990s ('Yugoslav Wars' 1991-1999) it underwent different stages of political and economic orientations. Its general characteristic as ideological construct is the attempt to reinterpret Marxist theory and find a way in-between a centralised communist state and market economy, also a political position between the two power blocks of the cold war.<sup>77</sup> In societal terms the socialist period is characterised by incisive social transformations generated by a rapid modernisation process which was an integral part of the official ideology. Through forced industrialisation and a concomitant fast urbanisation process Yugoslav society changed from an essentially agrarian society<sup>78</sup> to a semi-industrialised one within only a few decades. The influx of huge numbers of people from rural into urban areas had profound implications on life in the cities of Yugoslavia, most of all Belgrade. By 1961 almost seventy percent of Belgrade's population was not born there<sup>79</sup> which put pressure on the city's infrastructure and posed a huge challenge to city planners especially in times of austerity like the post-war period. During most of the socialist era a drastic



Fig. 8 Occupation of Yugoslavia by the Axis-Powers during Second World War

77 See e.g. Lohoff (1996): *Der Dritte Weg in den Bürgerkrieg: Jugoslawien und das Ende der nachholenden Modernisierung*. Unkel/Rhein: Horlemann, p.21; Münnich, Nicole (2013): *Belgrad zwischen sozialistischer Herrschaft und gesellschaftlichem Eigensinn – Die jugoslawische Hauptstadt als Entwurf und urbane Erfahrung*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, p.23.

78 cf. Münnich (2013): p.158.

79 The Kingdom of Yugoslavia was founded after the First World War in 1918 as the *Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*, renamed the *Kingdom of Yugoslavia* in 1929. It consisted of what is today Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia (without Istria) and Slovenia. It was the first attempt to integrate all South-Slav groups within one 'nation' but throughout its existence the kingdom was characterised by Serbian dominance and the enrichment of Serbian political elite at the expense of economic development. This led to disparities and conflicts that destabilised the region in a way that resulted in different alignments of the 'ethnicities'/nationalities' at the outbreak of WW II. cf. Lohoff (1996): pp.18-32.

housing shortage led to precarious living conditions for large portions of the urban population. New modernist housing complexes were built as a means to meet the high demand. At the same time modern as well as social and communist quality standards were to be implemented. This chapter aims to give a general overview of the evolution of the Yugoslav state after 1945 with special regard to the development of the highly decentralised economy and state which is reflected in the housing policies and the attempts to generate an urban society based on collectivity. Social and urban design was a means to counteract socially isolating effects that were connected with the pre-war cities of capitalist countries. In relation to the state the urban development of Belgrade and Novi Beograd in particular will be investigated to understand the interrelation of urban, political, economic and social transformations throughout the socialist period.



Fig. 9 Republics of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia founded in 1945

### 3.1

#### *War and Revolution – Constructing the Yugoslav Federation*

The beginning of Second World War marks the end of the *Kingdom of Yugoslavia*<sup>80</sup>. On 6<sup>th</sup> of April 1941 Yugoslavia was invaded by German troops in order to secure the Balkans as a point of entry for the war against Russia. With the help of Italian and Hungarian troops the country was occupied and divided among the Axis-Powers – Germany, Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria. The prime minister of the Yugoslav monarchy fled to London to install a government in exile under King Petar II that cooperated with the Allies. Resistance within the country was first established by the so-called *Četnici* – a Serbian-nationalist, anti-communist group that was loyal to the king. A few months after the occupation the *Central Committee* of the *Communist Party of Yugoslavia* (CPY), that was illegal until the war, decided to organise a resistance in the form of a popular front. The partisan-movement led by Josip Bronz ‘Tito’ (1892-1980) recruited fighters throughout the country and became the main resistance against the occupying forces as well as against the Croatian-Nationalist party *Ustaša* and the *Četnici*.<sup>81</sup>

In 1943, Tito proclaimed an interim-government that was acknowledged by Great Britain, the USA, and later by the Soviet Union as well. Until fall 1944 Belgrade and most of Serbia was recaptured and on 8<sup>th</sup> of May 1945 the *People's Liberation Army*, as the partisan-movement was called, marched into the Croatian capital Zagreb. The Partisans emerged victorious from the war and subsequently the Communist Party organised the new government and proclaimed the *Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia* (FPRY) in 1945.<sup>82</sup> Under a one-party rule “six republics, five ethnicities, four languages, three religious denominations and two alphabets” were united within the federation.<sup>83</sup>

80 cf. Boeckh (2009): pp.130-133.

81 cf. Boeckh (2009): pp.133, 136.

82 Ibid.: p.136 (translation by J. Wildeis).

83 cf. ibid.: pp.105-109.

The nationality-question became one of the main issues in the creation of the socialist federation. On the one hand all nationalities and ethnicities were to be recognised and on the other hand a collective Yugoslav identity created to unite them. During the *Kingdom of Yugoslavia*, not all nationalities were recognised. Tensions between the ‘ethnicities’, especially regarding the centralist ambitions of the Serbs, could not be resolved during the ‘First’ Yugoslavia.<sup>84</sup> “Montenegrins and Macedons were treated as Serbs (...) Bosnians as Serbs and Croatians.”<sup>85</sup> With the recognition of all nationalities as equal, six sovereign republics as part of the socialist federation were established: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina<sup>86</sup>, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. In Serbia the two multi-ethnic regions Vojvodina and Kosovo received the status of autonomous provinces.<sup>87</sup> The demarcation between the republics, that the Yugoslav communists chose, followed largely the borders from before the First World War. Yet the territorial separation of the republics did not determine homogeneous ‘ethnic’ territories. As in the past the whole region was inhabited by a variety of groups and all republics (except Slovenia) had large minorities. Under socialist rule these groups gained rights that had hitherto not existed. The demarcations between the republics were also a way to put an end to Greater Serbian ambitions as large portions of the Serbian population lived as minorities in other republics.<sup>88</sup> In general though “the Yugoslav system was based on the idea that nobody could be treated as a minority, but as equal to the majority. (...) For example non-Slavic minorities were proclaimed ‘nationalities’”.<sup>89</sup>

84 Ibid.: p.136 (translation by J. Wildeis).

85 Bosnian Muslims gained the status of a nation in 1963. In terms of language and ethnicity Bosnian Muslims do not diverge from Serbs and Croatians. In this regard it is interesting to note that in the secular state of socialist Yugoslavia the religious denomination of a group was used to define a ‘nationality’, cf. Lohoff (1996): pp.57f, see here especially fn4.

86 cf. Boeckh (2009): pp.169f; In the immediate post-war years “many ethnic Italians and Germans were forced to leave”, Jović, Dejan (2011): *Reassessing Socialist Yugoslavia, 1945-90: The Case of Croatia*. In *New Perspectives on Yugoslavia: Key Issues and Controversies*. Djokić, Dejan/Ker-Lindsay James (eds.) (2011), New York/Oxon: Routledge, p.117-142; p.122.

87 cf. Lohoff (1996): pp.58f; In Croatia “Serbs were given the status of a ‘constitutive people’ of Croatia, and thus nominally equal to Croats”, Jović (2011): p.122.

88 Jović (2011): p.122, In 1962 the concept of minorities was declared politically incorrect.

89 Norris (2009): p.129.

Each republic had “its own government and a capital city, but real power was tightly centralized in the hands of the Communist Party”.<sup>90</sup> Ultimate goal of Tito’s policy was to dissolve the affiliation to a specific nationality and create a collective identity to resolve the historic tensions between the groups. While the 1946 constitution defined the republics as sovereign, their status was already reduced by the 1953 constitution to being merely independent with an emphasis on their territorial integrity in the federation as a whole.<sup>91</sup> Throughout the socialist period the relations between the republics and them and the federation changed and were adapted to the respective economic and political requirements which are reflected by the numerous reforms and constitutional changes the country underwent (see chapter: 3.6).

During the first years after the Second World War Yugoslavia largely followed the Soviet model of a centralised communist state. Its first constitution from 1946 was mostly modelled on the Soviet constitution from 1936.<sup>92</sup> Like in the USSR<sup>93</sup> a first Five-Year Plan (1947-51) was prepared with a focus on heavy industry<sup>94</sup> and the general aim to overcome the economic and technological state of underdevelopment.<sup>95</sup> “Land, industry, transport and banks were nationalised”<sup>96</sup> through expropriations. Political opponents were eliminated or imprisoned and propaganda was omnipresent to win the masses for their aim to create a unified socialist society.<sup>97</sup> Initially the ties between the Soviet Union and the FPRY were close, but soon differences in defining the relationship between the countries put pressure on the relations of their leaders. Stalin saw Yugoslavia as a mere satellite state that would act as a buffer against hostile neighbouring countries and offered a market for Soviet goods in exchange for raw materials. Yugoslavia in return saw itself as an equal partner in the international project to promote socialism. Since

90 cf. Boeckh (2009): p.169.

91 cf. ibid.: p.139.

92 USSR – abbreviation for *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, here used synonymous with *Soviet Union*.

93 cf. Boeckh (2009): 141.

94 cf. Münnich (2013): p.108.

95 Norris (2009): p.129.

96 cf. Boeckh (2009): pp.140-142.

97 Norris (2009): p.130.

the “Yugoslav communists liberated their country with little help from the Soviet Red Army and were quick to establish control over government”<sup>98</sup> they were self-confident and reluctant to take on a subordinate role.<sup>99</sup> In 1948 the situation culminated in a dispute between Tito and Stalin which led to a break with the Soviet Union and the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the *Cominform* (*Communist Information Bureau*) and a year later from the *Council for Mutual Economic Assistance* (CMEA/Comecon). The dispute turned into an ideological conflict with the persecution of ‘Stalinists’ in Yugoslavia and ‘Titoists’ in the countries of the USSR.

### 3.2 *Conceptualising the Capital: Belgrade after Second World War*

The post-war history of Belgrade is ultimately linked to the building of Novi Beograd – the ‘new city’ that would span between the two historic towns of Belgrade and Zemun. After 1945 the face of the former king’s residence was to be changed quite drastically in order to fulfil its purpose as the capital of the new federation. Novi Beograd as part of greater Belgrade but also representative capital of Yugoslavia as a whole represented the most prestigious project of the country and became part of the socialists endeavour to modernise the city. At the end of Second World War Belgrade was still a fairly small city compared to other west European capitals. During the socialist period though the city grew from less than 300,000 to over a million inhabitants in only two decades. Through urban restructuring and the acquisition of new land, as in the case of Novi Beograd, the city was to become the embodiment of the socialist city as the Yugoslav planners envisioned it. The political objectives and priorities that shaped urban development strategies changes over time, each leaving an imprint on the city’s social and spacial fabric. Not least the residents’ waywardness affected the official planning paradigms in unexpected ways.

98 cf. *ibid.*: p.131.  
99 cf. Boeckh (2009): 145; Norris (2009): p.131.

On 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1944 Belgrade was liberated from German occupation by the *Yugoslav Liberation Army* and the *Soviet Red Army*.<sup>100</sup> At this point the city was largely destroyed. It had been bombed once in 1941 by the Germans and a second time in 1944 by British and American planes.<sup>101</sup> According to Nicole Münnich about 13,000 buildings were completely destroyed, as well as 50% of the industry, every third apartment and half of the transportation system. While in 1938 Belgrade’s population estimated about 320,000 people, it was reduced to 270,000 at the end of the war.<sup>102</sup> In addition, more than 50,000 people were relocated to smaller towns between 1944 and ‘50 as a measure to cope with the housing shortage but also to weaken Serbian-nationalist tendencies. Especially people that were supporters of the pre-war regime and after the Cominform conflict ‘Stalinists’ were moved out of the city.<sup>103</sup>

As Kulić writes, it “was not self-evident” that Belgrade would become the capital of Socialist Yugoslavia. As to create a federation in which historic ethnic tensions would be eliminated the decision to restore Belgrade as capital posed a “potential problem since it was symbolically associated with the pre-war monarchy and the dominance of the Serbian dynasty”.<sup>104</sup> For the vice-president of the federal government Miovan Đilas Sarajevo with its multi-ethnic and multi-religious population would have been more appropriate for the representation of the country. It did not have the same capacities and accessibility as Belgrade though and so Đilas’ idea was not pursued.<sup>105</sup> At the end of the day Belgrade was already then the largest city of the region and could more easily be extended than for example Sarajevo. The liberation of Belgrade had also played an important role in the partisans’ fight and their effort to gain power. It was the first city to be freed after mostly fighting in the countryside<sup>106</sup> and as the former capital of power it was of great symbolic

100 cf. Münnich (2013): p.88.  
101 cf. Norris (2009): p.128.  
102 cf. Münnich (2013): p.88.  
103 cf. Boeckh (2009): p.143  
104 Kulić (2009): p.128.  
105 cf. *ibid.*: p.128.  
106 cf. Norris (2009): p.128.

value for the partisans and the *Communist Party of Yugoslavia* (CPY) since it presented an assertion of the presumed changes of government. Kulić further speculates that, had the capital been moved elsewhere, it would have alienated the Serbs who could have interpreted it as a “symbolic punishment of a city that suffered terrible losses during the war”.<sup>107</sup>

The new federal government was determined to break with the previous capitalist and monarchist traditions. Belgrade as the former capital of the *Kingdom of Yugoslavia* especially had to be attached with new meanings in order to include it into the ideological construct of the new communist government. In his first public speech, a week after the city’s liberation, Tito negated Belgrade’s status as the capital of the ‘First’ Yugoslavia. He claimed that only through the partisan’s fight for the city it became the true capital of all South-Slavs. As Münnich shows in her analyses of Tito’s speeches, the city was interpreted for the socialist ideology in two ways: first it was attached to heroism – the heroic fight of the partisans and the resistance of the population against the occupying forces were repeatedly used over the next three decades to validate and emphasise Belgrade as the federation’s capital. Secondly it was attached to one of the cornerstones of the Yugoslav ideology: the concept of *brotherhood and unity* (*bratstvo i jedinstvo*) between all Yugoslav nations. Belgrade was hence defined as a city that had played an important role in the socialist revolution, that was unmistakably linked to the anti-fascist liberation movement, and was framed as home to members of all Yugoslav nationalities, therefore the city and its reconstruction should lead the way in the effort to create an all-Yugoslav identity and a nation-state.<sup>108</sup>

The redefinition of the capital was also established by appropriating spaces from the former regime and interpreting them for the socialist symbolism and especially the personality cult around Tito, the undisputed lifetime leader of the federation. Right after the liberation of Belgrade Tito took over the former ‘Royal Compound’ (including the ‘White Palace’ which was the former

107 Kulić (2009): p.128.

108 cf. Münnich (2013): pp.93-96.

residence of the prince) for his personal residence and official workplace.<sup>109</sup> According to Kulić, this was “an obvious symbolic statement of succession in power”<sup>110</sup> and was repeated by the appropriation of other former architectural symbols connected with the monarchy throughout the federation.<sup>111</sup> Also Tito himself was half Croat and half Slovene and the fact that he ruled from Serbian Belgrade became a metaphor for the pan-Yugoslav idea.<sup>112</sup>

The city’s geographical position also offered leeway for a symbolic redefinition that could be highlighted in spatial terms. It allowed for the construction of a new settlement – *Novi Beograd* (New Belgrade) – that could be “clearly delineated” and separated from the old city centre without “abandoning the existing one”.<sup>113</sup> In a way this can also be seen as a compromise that allowed Belgrade to stay the Yugoslav capital but suggested a new start to the other republics. Unlike its later realisation Novi Beograd was first conceived of as the political capital for all Yugoslavs that would house buildings for federal institutions and the Communist Party. The historic centre of Belgrade stayed the capital of Serbia that should house the new ministries of the republic.<sup>114</sup>

The site chosen for Novi Beograd’s construction were the marshlands that were created by the confluence of the river Sava into the Danube, across from the historic city of Belgrade. For centuries these wetlands were the “no-man’s-land” between the Ottoman and the Habsburg Empires – between Orient and Occident.<sup>115</sup> The Sava as the demarcation line also separated the border towns of the respective empires from each other: Belgrade, on the Ottoman side, overlooking the meeting-point of the two rivers and the *Great War Island*, and Zemun (*Semlin* in German) the Austro-Hungarian frontier town lying a bit further upstream the Danube. When the Socialist regime made its plans to connect the two cities and started to reclaim the

109 cf. Kulić (2009): pp.94-101.

110 Kulić (2009): p.97.

111 cf. *ibid.*: p.101.

112 cf. *ibid.*: pp.114f.

113 *Ibid.*: p.128.

114 cf. *ibid.*: pp. 136-141.

115 cf. Blagojević (2009): p.22.

marshlands they treated the site as a “tabula rasa” negating its tragic history during Second World War.<sup>116</sup> To deal with the atrocities of the war was seen as an obstacle in the creation of an all-Yugoslav identity. Since Novi Beograd was envisioned as a city in the name of brotherhood and unity among all South-Slavs, the concentration camp (see chapter 2.3) did not become part of the commemorative culture. It was only in the late eighties, after Tito’s death, that the city-administration decided to declare the old fairground (*Staro Sajmište*) a memorial site.<sup>117</sup>



Fig. 10 The Site of Novi Beograd, 1946

116 Blagojević (2005): pp.5f.

117 cf. Münich (2013): pp.128ff. In 1995, a monument was placed at the promenade along the river but it is hardly recognisable as a Holocaust memorial. The site itself was partly destroyed during the World War and over time became the home of illegal settlers.

### 3.3

#### *Departure from Stalinism*

The break with the Soviet Union was a decisive moment in Yugoslavia’s development. In the years following the dispute the Yugoslav leaders were looking for an alternative socialist system that would set them apart from the Soviet model. The isolation from the Eastern bloc, especially the imposition of a comprehensive trade embargo, led to a deep economic crisis that put hardship on the already destitute population that was still recovering from the war. Subsequently Yugoslavia turned towards the West for economic aid.<sup>118</sup> The situation between the two power blocs was tense and Western aid on a large scale did not reach Yugoslavia until after Stalin’s death in 1953. Under Khrushchev (1894-1971), who succeeded Stalin, the USSR underwent a policy-change and the relationship between the two countries improved. In 1955, with the signing of the *Belgrade Declaration*, the two countries were officially reconciled. Yugoslavia’s sovereignty was accepted, the mutual non-interference in political affairs agreed on and the strengthening of their relationship determined. Incidents like the interference of troops of the *Warsaw Pact* in Czechoslovakia (ČSSR) during the *Prague Spring* in 1968 was met with little protest from Yugoslav officials, since the economic cooperation with the USSR was too important to put at stake.<sup>119</sup> Despite their lack of protest the events in the ČSSR led to a restructuring of Yugoslavia’s national defence: the entire civilian population between 18 and 65 years of age (between seven and eight million people) were obliged to defend the country in the case of an attack and were equipped with arms and uniforms. A circumstance that was reflected in the defence-education programs in schools and universities.<sup>120</sup>

The standing army – the *Yugoslav People’s Army* – was founded during the partisan-war as the *People’s Liberation Army*. Besides it’s duties for the country’s defence, it was used for repression within the country in case of revolts.

118 cf. Boeckh (2009): p.146.

119 cf. *ibid.*: p.148.

120 cf. *ibid.*: p.169.

In this regard as well as through the army's general indoctrination by the state it was a cornerstone of the regimes power. Another pillar of the Communist Party's sovereignty was the *State Security Administration* (UDBA), that was responsible for the monitoring and imprisonment of regime critics. Especially during Alexandar Ranković's (1909-1983) term in office as minister of the interior and head of the intelligent service (1945-1966) harsh repressions were used as a tool to consolidate the Party's power.<sup>121</sup>

Yugoslavia's reorientation in relation to the USSR became a pivotal question in the development of its own "version of socialism"<sup>122</sup> that is often referred to as Yugoslavia's *Third Way*. During the economic crisis after 1948 the country repositioned itself between the Eastern and Western blocs that were embodied by the *Warsaw Pact* and the *NATO*. Together with the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, Tito founded the *Non-Aligned Movement* in 1955. The aim of the movement was to "avoid participation in the Cold War" and "consisted of countries that didn't want to conform to the rule of two major political blocs by trying to find a third possible platform on which to cooperate and act globally".<sup>123</sup> Due to Yugoslavia's non-alignment it received military assistance from both blocs (after 1953). This allowed a feeling of security from foreign aggression until the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the counties of the *Warsaw Pact* in '68.<sup>124</sup>

To define its own ideological system the Yugoslav *Third Way* was built upon Karl Marx's idea of a 'withering away of the state' and 'de-alienation'. In their critique of the Soviet model the ideologists of the CPY argued that in the USSR state-ownership led to power being taken away from the work-

121 cf. *ibid.*: pp.151f, Rankovic stood for a centralised state, his discharge in '66 was mostly a sign of the Yugoslav state to move towards liberalisation and decentralisation, on this subject see also Lohoff (1996).

122 Erić, Z. (2009b): *The Third Way: The Experiment of Workers' Self-Management in Socialist Yugoslavia*. In: *Autogestion, or Henri Lefebvre in New Belgrade*. Edited by Bittner, Sabine./Derksen, Jeff/Weber, Helmut (Urban Subjects) (2009), Vancouver/Berlin: Fillip and Sternberg Press, pp.135-150, p.137.

123 *Ibid.*: p.136.

124 cf. Boeckh (2009): p.169.

ers and to a growing bureaucratisation of the state apparatus.<sup>125</sup> In the spirit of this criticism *Socialist* or *Worker's Self-Management*<sup>126</sup> was introduced, central planning abandoned and a process of de-centralisation and de-bureaucratisation started. After the split with Moscow the political situation within the country was tense but the Party supported Tito and his course away from Stalinist policy.<sup>127</sup> In this endeavour Tito could build upon the collective effort of the liberation-war, that was glorified in the following years. The partisan ethos was transferred to the post-war period and used to win the masses for the new project of building Socialist Yugoslavia. Especially peasants from the countryside, where most of the partisans had been recruited, became members of the CPY<sup>128</sup> and received benefits like free education and job-training<sup>129</sup>. According to Zoran Erić the development of Yugoslavia's ideological experiment "after the historical break" with the Soviet Union, was supported by the "authentic anti-fascist liberation movement". It's concept of "*fraternity and unity* among all [South-Slav] nations in the fight against German occupation", provided "the strongest cohesive force within the multiethnic country".<sup>130</sup> Especially during the reconstruction period after 1945 and throughout the crisis after '48 the partisan-movement continued to have an effect on the ability of the CPY to mobilise the masses. Thousands participated in voluntary worker's brigades to reconstruct the country. While Zukin (1975) explains that this mass mobilisation was "based on enthusiasm rather than coercion"<sup>131</sup>, Boeckh (2009) paints a more differentiated picture of the working brigades. According to her many joined them out of fear for repressions or in the hope of material gain. Also political opponents were forced to work on the construction sites.<sup>132</sup>

125 cf. *ibid.*: p.149.

126 *Samoupravljanje* – Serbo-Croatian for 'self-management' and 'self-government' see Zukin, Sharon (1975): *Beyond Marx and Tito: Theory and Practice in Yugoslav Socialism*. London -New York: Cambridge University Press, p.48 – here fn1.

127 cf. Boeckh (2009): p.146, 148.

128 Renamed League of Communist of Yugoslavia (LCY) in 1952, cf. Erić (2009b): p.139.

129 See eg. Zukin (1975)

130 Erić (2009b) p.135, emphasis added.

131 Zukin (1975): p.20.

132 cf. Boeckh (2009): pp.141f.



### 3.4

#### *Yugoslavia's Modernisation Project*

One of the main issues the new leadership was determined to resolve, starting in the reconstruction period, was the country's state of economic underdevelopment. Until the mid-twentieth century Yugoslavia was mostly a rural society with 80% of the working population practising subsistence farming.<sup>133</sup> The communist government was determined to change these circumstances by industrialising the country in order to stimulate the economy and take the population out of its poverty. As Lohoff put it "the metamorphosis of the peasant masses to wage-workers was not easily accomplished and constituted a process of rupture"<sup>134</sup> The CPY was therefore confronted with several problems in their endeavour to industrialise the country. Especially in the industrially underdeveloped South many farmers kept their land to produce food besides their new jobs as factory workers which had negative effects on productivity and competitiveness with western Europe.<sup>135</sup> Another problem was the lack of skilled labourers as well as experienced managers that could direct the businesses.<sup>136</sup> However the modernisation process in Yugoslavia was comparatively smooth. While in western European countries industrialisation had created devastating living conditions for the 'working class' of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Yugoslav system had placed the workers within the centre of its focus. From the start industrialisation in Yugoslavia was connected to social services and social mobility within the society.<sup>137</sup> According to Zukin, the prospect to live in an "industrialising society with an expanding economy" was received positive by "most social groups"<sup>138</sup>

For the leadership economic prosperity was seen as the basis for the creation of socialist living conditions. While industrialisation was an important

133 cf. Lohoff (1996): p.21.

134 Lohoff (1996): p.49.

135 cf. *ibid.*: p.49.

136 cf. *ibid.*: p.51.

137 cf. Lohoff (1996): pp.51f.

138 Zukin (1975): p.20.

aspect of Yugoslavia's development strategy<sup>139</sup>, the pitfalls of industrialisation as it was observed in capitalist countries since the 19<sup>th</sup> century were to be avoided. On the basis of "Marx's ideas of self-government and direct democracy"<sup>140</sup> worker's self-management was introduced in order to counteract alienation<sup>141</sup> as it was connected with modern, capitalist societies. Therefore industry was to be established rejecting both: capitalist ownership structures and centralised state-ownership as the Soviet model suggested. Yugoslavia's position between the blocs also meant that it had to find a compromise between them. A system needed to be found that was ideologically sound and unassailable for other communist countries but would still differ from the Soviet model and would also not offend the West. Ultimately the Yugoslav public needed to be convinced that the socialist system would benefit them in order to gain its support.<sup>142</sup> Here again the Party used the partisan-ethos to promote their ideology. Following Zukin, the first self-management organs were created "in the image of political organizations which enjoyed widespread support from the population". "These organisational models", she writes, "were the National Liberation committees of local government that the Partisans had instituted during the war" in liberated areas.<sup>143</sup> Initially these committees were centrally controlled by the CPY but already in 1949 communal self-governance was established by a law. This guaranteed that all regional, district and communal officials should not get appointed through the central government but through directly suffrage.<sup>144</sup>

139 cf. Zukin (1975): pp.19f.

140 cf. *ibid.*: p.54.

141 For Gumpel to overcome 'alienation' was the basic concept behind the Yugoslav economic system (i.e. the self-management system) and all its reforms since 1950. In reference to Stane Dolac (Dolac, Stane : Der Kern der jugoslawischen Selbstverwaltung. In *Sozialistische Theorie und Praxis*, Jg. VI (1979), No.2, p.31) he points out the three main forms of alienation that according to the Yugoslav communists still existed in Soviet-style communism and needed to be overcome: a) alienation of the worker from the conditions and results of his work, b) alienation of social connections, relationships and common interests of workers in the form of political power, i.e. the state, and c) alienation from the intellectual potential of workers from work as such, cf. Gumpel, Werner (1986): "Sozialistische Marktwirtschaft" Zur theoretischen Legitimation eines wirtschaftlichen Konzepts. In *Jugoslawien am Ende der Ära Tito. Bd. 2: Innenpolitik*. edited by Grothusen, Klaus-Detlev/Haberl, Othmar Nikola / Höpken Wolfgang, München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag (Südosteuropa Jahrbuch, Bd. 12), pp. 37-47, p.40.

142 cf. Zukin (1975): 52f.

143 *Ibid.*: p.116 for quotes, and p.55.

144 cf. Supek, Rudi (1986): Probleme und Erfahrungen der jugoslawischen Arbeiterselbstverwaltung. In *Jugoslawien am Ende der Ära Tito. Bd. 2: Innenpolitik*. edited by Grothusen, Klaus-Detlev/Haberl,

### 3.4.1

#### *Workers Self-Management*

The 1<sup>st</sup> *Law on Self-Management* was passed as early as 1950 and in the course of the next three decades the system was implemented “in all spheres of society”.<sup>145</sup> Self-management was to enable each individual to participate in the decision-making process on several levels of social life, with the aim to create a more ‘humane’ society. At first the system was limited to workplaces but with the gradual expansion of the system, especially the decentralisation of the territorial administration, more and more spheres of social life and institutions were self-governed. In 1953 a constitutional law<sup>146</sup> was passed that established “the cornerstones of the sociopolitical order of the country” by the principles of: “social ownership of the means of production, self-management by producers in the economy and self-government by the working people in the commune, municipality and district”.<sup>147</sup> The one-party rule was justified by the long-term goal that the state would die out and state functions would be “taken over by associations of free producers”.<sup>148</sup> In the meantime the Communist Party needed to guide the country’s development in its effort to “transform the state into society”. Symbolic for this

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Othmar Nikola / Höpken Wolfgang, München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag (Südosteuropa Jahrbuch, Bd. 12), pp.159-185, p.160. First attempts to put these concepts into practice can be found during the short socialist rule of the *Paris Commune* in 1871 [the street named *Pariske Komune* in Novi Beograd today still commemorates this precedent] or the councils, i.e. *soviets* established by Russian workers during the short 1905 and the 1917 Revolutions that were incorporated by Lenin in his revolutionary program. After the first World War similar councils were established in Germany (Räte) and Hungary. In his writings Antonio Gramsci, a leading Italian communist intellectual of the inter-war period formulated the “idea for factory councils as organs of the working class which would operate differently from either the Socialist Party or the trade unions”, Zukin (1975): 53. According to Lohoff self-management in Yugoslavia was mainly based on the early works of Karl Marx, especially his concept of a “free association of producers” that was seen as a contradiction to the Soviet interpretation that aimed at the ownership of all means of production by the central state. Besides this concept of a ‘dying of the state’, Yugoslav ideologists also found precedent in the concepts of Svetozar Markovic and Dimitrije Cenec two Serbs who had formulated their ideas about workers participation in factories during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, cf. Lohoff, Ernst (1996): p.69.

145 Erić (2009b): p.140.

146 “*The Constitutional Law on the Principles of the Social and Political Order of the FPRY*, promulgated in January 1953”, see Bošković, Blagoje and Dašić, David (eds.) (1980): *Socialist Self-Management in Yugoslavia: 1950 – 1980 Documents*. Belgrade: Socialist Thought and Practice, p.53.

147 Bošković/Dašić (1980): p.53.

148 Erić (2009b): p.138.

vision stands the transformation of state property into “social property”. In the immediate post-war period “all big companies and industry” were nationalised, but with the introduction of self-management it was transferred into the property of society as a whole.<sup>149</sup>

Another reason to decide against a multi-party system was that democracy was defined in a different way as for example Western European countries. Unlike western liberal democracies, the concept of self-management suggested that “true democracy was not political (...) but economic”.<sup>150</sup> Through the implementation of worker’s councils in enterprises that were elected by all employees, workers should gain control over the products and conditions of their labour.<sup>151</sup> Direct democracy was to take place on the “lower levels of society (...) where all workers participated in the decision-making process”. In questions regarding production and “other social issues such as the distribution of income, vacations, rights to state-owned apartments for workers in need, etc.” working councils were independent. Delegates, that were elected by all council members, represented the decisions made at the council meetings to higher levels of the organisational structure, though in questions “regarding scientific issues” of the enterprise decisions were made by experts.<sup>152</sup>

According to Lohoff “no other country had institutionalised its public debate about the definition of working-conditions and the extent of social responsibility of enterprises as much as Yugoslavia”.<sup>153</sup> However since all decisions were subordinated to the profitability of the enterprise general societal questions could not be debated.<sup>154</sup> Even though the Yugoslav state aimed at the creation of a socialist society, the basic principles of its modernisation process were still based on the division of labour and the attachment of work with monetary value. In this context money was not abolished and the

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149 Erić (2009b): p.138f.

150 Ibid.: p.138.

151 cf. ibid.: p.138.

152 Ibid.: p.140.

153 Lohoff (1996): p.75 (transl. by J.W.).

154 cf. ibid.: p.75f.

public authorities as well as enterprises had to be economically viable. These circumstances together with the anti-Stalinist program led to a hybrid system that connected communist principles with those of market economies and an authoritarian one-party rule with radical-democratic structures.<sup>155</sup>

### 3.5 *Planning Socialist Belgrade*

#### 3.5.1 *Architecture and Urban Planning in Socialist Yugoslavia*

Urban Planning and Architecture in socialist Yugoslavia was highly connected to the state and its development of political and economic objectives. In the first period planning was a task of the central state but after the introduction of self-management and the decentralisation of the economy and administrative structures Yugoslavia had “one of the most decentralised forms of social and physical planning”.<sup>156</sup> Yugoslavia hereby used modern design principles and industrialised building techniques from an early stage.

During the first post-war years the new political leadership deemed modernist architecture “bourgeois” and “artless” mostly referring to the villa architectures of the western upper-class.<sup>157</sup> Until 1948 in political, economic as well as cultural questions Yugoslavia followed the Stalinist doctrine. In art and literature *Socialist Realism*, as it was prescribed in the Soviet Union as the only possible cultural expression, was soon taken on by and forced onto Yugoslav’ artists. In the field of architecture though it was not as simple. Modernist design was already well established in the inter-war period and part of the architectural discourse. Most of the architects that became Yugoslavia’s post-war elite had fought in the partisan war and their support for the system could not be denied in the ensuing years. Many of them

155 Lohoff (1996).  
156 Simmie, James (1989): Self-management and town planning in Yugoslavia. In *Town Planning Review*, 60 (3) 1989, pp.271-286, p.271.  
157 Kulić (2009): p.20.

were modernist pioneers in the inter-war period or their disciples.<sup>158</sup> Nikola Dobrović for example was one of Serbia’s main modernist representatives of the 1930s. After his involvement in the partisan-movement he became the head of the *Urban Planning Institute of Serbia* and *Belgrade’s Urban Planning Institute* that was founded in 1945.<sup>159</sup>

The Socialist-Realist ‘dogma’ also led to confusion at the time since it was rather unclear how it was defined. Before the war it represented an eclectic mix of styles in the USSR that ranged from “‘wedding-cake’ monumentalism and [...] Palladianism, to American skyscrapers, Italian *Novecento*, *Art Deco* and even leftovers of Soviet avant-garde”.<sup>160</sup> During the short Stalinist period of Yugoslavia most of the monumental historicist buildings that were later seen as the epitome of Socialist Realist architecture were still under construction and could not be used as precedents for Yugoslav’ architects.<sup>161</sup>

The official acceptance of modernist design came with the break between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in 1948. Western aid then became crucial for the survival of the country. Through political and economic reforms Yugoslavia tried to convince the new (capitalist) allies that it diverged clearly from Stalinism. In cultural terms as well the Yugoslav regime moved towards liberalisation and with that a clear dissociation from Socialist Realism.<sup>162</sup> Modern art, literature, architecture and city-planning principles became officially accepted in the ensuing years or in Kulić’s words modernism became the “official’ style of the state”.<sup>163</sup>

158 Kulić (2009): pp.53-71, Kulić names for example Nikola Dobrović, Kazimir Ostrogović, Muhamed Kadić, Edvar Ravnikar for the older generation of architects, among the younger architects of the post-war group he mentions Vajenceslav Richter, Bogdan Bogdanović and Neven Šegvić; cf. Kulić (2009): 56-60.  
159 cf. Münnich (2013): pp.96f; LeNormand, Brigitte (2006): *Make No Little Plan: Modernist and Spontaneous Growth in Belgrade, 1945-67*. In *East Central Europe*, 33, Nos. 1-2 (2006) pp.243-267, p.246.  
160 Kulić (2009): p.63, emphasis by Kulić.  
161 cf. *ibid.*: pp.63f.  
162 cf. Kulić (2009): pp.186, 191-198, 214.  
163 Kulić, 2009: p.124, emphasis added by Kulić.

Since 1933 a team of Yugoslav architects around Ernst Weissmann and Vlado Antolić from Zagreb took part in the CIAM. By translating the writings of the movement into Serbo-Croatian they made the movements ideas accessible to other Yugoslav architects.<sup>164</sup> After a break during the first post-war period Yugoslavia rejoined the CIAM-movement at their 9<sup>th</sup> conference in Aix-en-Provence in 1953 and in 1956 *CIAM X* was held in Dubrovnik at the Croatian coast.<sup>165</sup> Even though Le Corbusier did not take part in the tenth congress (like most other founding members), his works were highly influential for many Yugoslav architects during the 1950s, especially those who had worked at his office in Paris in-between the world wars.<sup>166</sup> Particularly the *Unité d'Habitation* Le Corbusier had built in Marseilles found several emulations in Yugoslav cities.<sup>167</sup>

### 3.5.2

#### *1950 Master Plan for Belgrade*

In the first Five-Year-Plan of Yugoslavia (1947-51) Belgrade was recognised as the political, economic and administrative capital that, in order to fulfil this purpose, should be reconstructed and expanded. No additional budget was appointed for this task though and Belgrade received the same amount as other big cities – a fact that was later often criticised by city officials. In terms of city planning, the first Five-Year-Plan suggested that in the twenty biggest cities of the country, works should be prepared for the redesign of their urban structure according to modern planning prin-

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164 cf. Münnich (2013): pp.97-113.

165 cf. Kulić (2009): p.197.

166 e.g. Ernst Weissmann, founding member of the pre-socialist Yugoslav CIAM group worked for Le Corbusier in 1933, others were Ksenija Grisogono, Edvard Ravnikar, Drago Ibler, Milorad Pantović (from Belgrade); see Münnich, 2013: 113 – fn. ibid no.127; also Juraj Neidhardt from Zagreb and important modernist architect in Bosnia had worked in Le Corbusier's office between 1933 – '35 where he worked on projects such as *Ville radieuse* and the *Plans for Algiers*, Le Corbusier also wrote the preface for Neidhardt's book *Architecture of Bosnia and the Way to Modernity*; cf. Kulić, 2009: 199, 205ff. According to Blagojević, Branko Peričić, who designed the 1957 Master Plan of Novi Beograd and some Block 1 and 2 in Novi Beograd had collaborated "on Le Corbusier's project for L'ilot insalubre no 6 in 1937", cf. Blagojević (2012): p.244.

167 For an account on Le Corbusier's influence on Yugoslav architecture, cf. Kulić, 2009: 198-210.

ciples and to accommodate the new economic, communal and cultural requirements.<sup>168</sup>

Since the end of the war the reorganisation of Belgrade was under discussion. A city planning commission was installed to prepare a draft-plan for the future development. In this development-plan Belgrade's population growth was estimated to rise to over 1,1 million inhabitants by 1966.<sup>169</sup> This immense increase had profound implications for life in the city and its structures. Both newcomers and old-established residents would experience drastic changes to their personal lives and environment in the years following the war.<sup>170</sup> The estimated influx of 35,000 people per year<sup>171</sup> meant that the production of housing and infrastructure was of great importance. New city plans were made in a spirit of great optimism but the difficult situation after the war meant most of the housing problems could not be solved. Also during the first decade after the war political decision-makers focused mostly on the rapid industrialisation of the country. The drastic housing shortage was not tackled until the mid 1950s when a political awareness of the problem was established and the production of housing was finally stimulated.<sup>172</sup>

The main planning document for the restructuring of Belgrade was the *Master Plan of Belgrade from 1950* (Fig 11) that was created on the basis of the before mentioned development-plan. The development of the master plan were conducted during the time of Yugoslavia's reorientation away from Stalinist doctrine and a turn towards modernist planning principles. This was seen as a means to address the 'chaotic' urban developments from the time of the monarchy and a way to restructure the city according to

.....  
168 cf. *ibid.*: pp. 108f, Münnich here quotes the *Law for the Five-Year-Plan of the development of the FPRY 1947-51*. It is interesting to note that already the 1st Five-Year-Plan suggested modern design principles, as it was formulated during the Socialist-Realist period, this can be seen as prove that urban planners and architects were from the beginning set on the goal to restructure Belgrade according to modernist movements objectives.

169 cf. Münnich (2013): p.105.

170 see e.g. Zukin (1975).

171 cf. Münnich (2013): p.105.

172 cf. *ibid.*: pp.163ff.

contemporary tendencies in urban planning and design. Following modern planning trends of the time (then seen as Western) the plan suggested a 'rational' separation of uses and the division of the city in different zones: housing, industry, green-spaces, zones for 'special' uses like the army or universities, spaces for hospitals, agricultural land and main traffic zones. The 1950 master plan was only a general guideline and did not include detailed plans and regulations, which would follow at a later stage. It only consisted of one drawing: a plan at the scale of 1:10,000. The main documents were essays that dealt with general urban questions of traffic, canalisation or green-spaces but also social questions. According to Nicole Münnich, the main objective of the Master Plan was to eradicate social injustice and unhygienic conditions within the city. Functional zoning therefore was seen as a means to create equal living conditions on the whole territory of the city.<sup>173</sup>

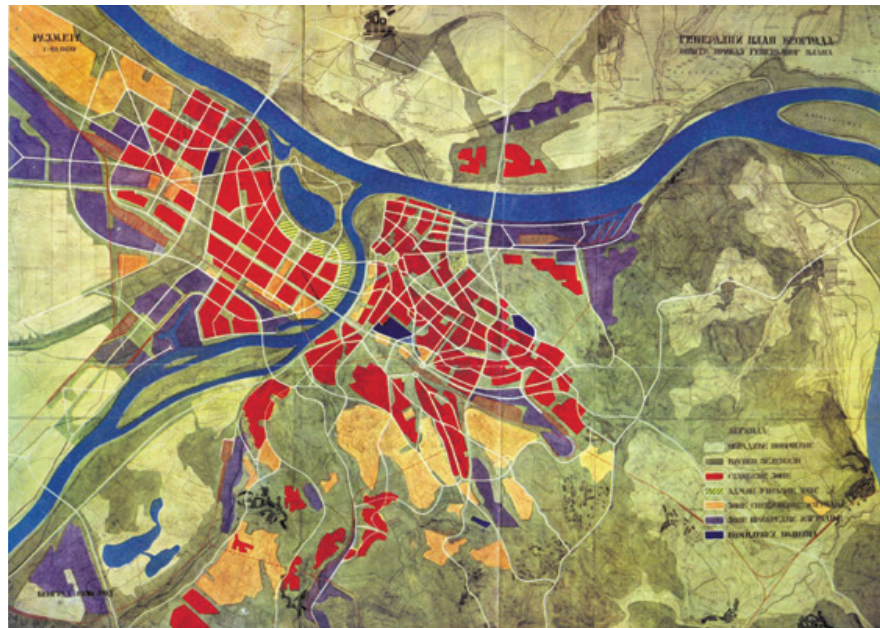


Fig. 11 Master Plan of Belgrade 1950

173 cf. *ibid.*: pp.110-116, 133.

Before 1945 modernist architecture was already in use but modernist urban planning was not. Prior master plans for Belgrade were mostly seen as ways to regulate and straighten the street network and the built structures (cf. chapter 2.2 and 2.3).<sup>174</sup> In the socialist period modernist planning principles were used to restructure society and its environment alike. The socialist critique of power structures, inequalities and bad living conditions was directly reflected in their policies on city planning. To restructure the city was a way to change the material basis of the prior system and create new, better conditions for everyone. The aspirations of earlier modernists like equality, communality, state ownership of land, etc. that aimed at the creation of adequate housing for workers suited the ideological conceptions of the CPY. Social reformist ideas of the inter-war period such as Ernst May's workers settlements for Frankfurt (Neue Frankfurt) or the Viennese Gemeindebauten ('commune-housing') of the social-democrat city-government during the 1920s but also Le Corbusier's ideas of orderly and healthy cities were the basis for socialist considerations in city planning.

Another important aspect in the decision to use modernist principles was its tendency to use standardised construction techniques and planning instruments (e.g. standard floor-plans and building designs). Pre-fabrication allowed to build cheap and fast. This would allow to build dwellings and industrial facilities that were badly needed in Yugoslavia in order to reach the goal of economic prosperity and competitiveness with the West in a short amount of time.<sup>175</sup>

174 cf. Münnich (2013): pp.102f, 113f.

175 Kulić (2009); Le Normand (2006).

### 3.5.3

#### *Novi Beograd – Designing the ‘Heart of Yugoslavia’*

When the new government made its first plans to erect Novi Beograd Yugoslavia was still an ally of the Soviet Union. The aspirations of the leadership were to build a new capital for Yugoslavia and potentially a “secondary center of the Communist world” besides Moscow.<sup>176</sup> Its position close to the Serbian capital Belgrade on the one hand and the territory of the multi-ethnic province Vojvodina on the other hand constituted the perfect building ground for the pan-Yugoslav capital. The site was seen as empty terrain, “with no previous urban history” that represented “a homogenous abstract space” – a “*tabula rasa*”, as Ljiljana Blagojević framed it.<sup>177</sup> Negating the historically charged site of the concentration camp<sup>178</sup>, as well as any previous settlements on the land, Novi Beograd was envisioned as space that marked “a new beginning”<sup>179</sup>, a place where new meanings could easily be inscribed. While the capital was designed from scratch by Party officials and urban planners, the site was prepared by thousands of voluntary workers that dried out the swamps with hardly any machinery. To foster the symbolic value of Novi Beograd its historiography was mythologised through the narrative of *brotherhood and unity*: the communal effort of voluntary youth-brigades that came from all parts of the country to build the new Yugoslav city.<sup>180</sup> At the same time another prestigious project was started: the *Highway of Brotherhood and Unity* (*Autoput Bratstvo i Jedinstvo*) that runs from the Slovene capital Ljubljana, down to Zagreb, through Belgrade and finally to the Macedon capital Skopje (Fig. 12).<sup>181</sup> When the highway

176 Kulić (2009): p.140.

177 Blagojević (2005)p.5, (2009): p.23.

178 cf. Blagojević (2005): p.5, according to Blagojević the location of the Old Fairground/Judenlager Semlin was subject of several design competitions: e.g. in 1950 for the Military Museum and in 1972 for the Belgrade Opera House.

179 Ibid.: p.5.

180 cf. Münnich (2013): pp. 126, 130-133.

181 Topalović, Milica (2012): *New Belgrade: The Modern City’s Unstable Paradigms*. In *Belgrade Formal Informal. A research on urban transformation/Eine Studie über Städtebau und Urbane Transformation*. Edited by ETH Studio Basel Contemporary City Institute (eds.): Zürich: Schneidegger & Spiess, 2012, pp.128-228, pp.130ff.

enters Belgrade in its west it becomes part of Novi Beograd’s street grid and with that its most precious part: the so-called *Central Zone*. Both projects – the capital and the highway – employed nearly 200,000 voluntary youth workers. This mobilisation of the masses was to “strengthen the national solidarity and generate international prestige”<sup>182</sup> but their labour was also of great economic value: without pay and under harsh conditions the brigades worked long hours each day, not all of them voluntarily though.<sup>183</sup> In this way, retrospectively, the initial phase of Novi Beograd as many other (re-) construction projects can be seen as a time of coercion and privation that was positively redefined in order to create the myth of a communal effort that built socialism. Nonetheless the mobilisation of the youth and their



Fig. 12 *The Highway of Brotherhood and Unity*

182 Ibid: p.135.

183 cf. Münnich (2013): pp. 126, 130-133.



Fig. 13 Worker's Brigades around 1948

exodus from rural Yugoslavia created, together with the partisan-movement, the basis for the societal transformation processes that accompanied the modernisation process kindled by the new regime.

Right after the war Nikola Dobrović became one of the key figures of Novi Beograd's planning. As the founding director of Belgrade's *Institute of Urban Planning* and the city's chief architect as well as the director of the *Federal Ministry of Construction* he was in charge of all mayor planning processes of the city (Kulić, 2009: 133). Already in 1946 he designed the first post war plan for New Belgrade: the 'Sketch for the regulation of Belgrade on the left bank of the Sava'.<sup>184</sup> The centre of his radial plan was a new central railway station with axial streets running towards it and a set of V-shaped smaller streets along which he placed the federal ministries (about 20 buildings) and foreign embassies. The main buildings were the railway station, the seat of the federal government and the headquarters of the Communist Party. The latter was placed along an axis that ran from the so-called 'Winner'-memorial (*Pobednik*) at the old fortress (*Kalemegdan*) to the new train station. Designed as the highest building of the city the so-called *Central Committee of the Communist Party* should dominate the landscape and symbolically raise the new system over the old.<sup>185</sup>The Federal Parliament he

184 cf. Münnich (2013): pp.121f; Blagojević (2009), p.24.  
185 cf. Münnich (2013): p.123.

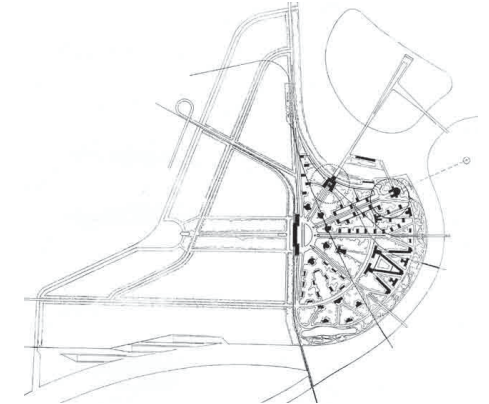


Fig. 14 'Sketch for the Regulation of Belgrade on the Left Bank of the Sava' by Nikola Dobrović, 1946

designed on the side of the old city and placed it on top of the *Kalemegdan* fortress – symbolically connecting the old and the new city.<sup>186</sup> At the centre of Dobrović's proposal was not, as one would expect of a planned socialist city, the 'liberated working class' but the new regime and its assertion of power. Housing was completely absent in his sketch which he designed as a mere administrative and representative 'city'.<sup>187</sup> While most of this first plan was soon revised the sites for the *Presidency of the Government of the SPRY* and the *Central Committee of the CPY* nearly stayed the same until their construction.<sup>188</sup>

The new leadership was in a hurry to build the "heart of new Yugoslavia"<sup>189</sup>. In late 1946 the Federal Government ordered the construction of a monumental seat of the *Presidency of the Federal Government* as well as other public buildings on the left bank of the Sava. At this time neither a master plan for the whole city nor one for New Belgrade, besides the before mentioned sketch, were prepared. The urgent order also came at a time when the city was heavily damaged and many were without a home.<sup>190</sup> As Kulić put it in his analyses of the leaderships unrealistic and inappropriate order

186 cf. Kulić (2009): p.146.  
187 cf. Blagojević (2009) p.25.  
188 cf. Münnich (2013): p.123.  
189 Blagojević (2009) p.23.  
190 cf. Kulić (2009): p.142-144.

“the symbolic meaning of New Belgrade disproportionately outweighed any pragmatic need that would have justified its construction”.<sup>191</sup> Being completely new to their functions as government members, especially in a new state that aimed at doing everything different than the one before, it seems the party members in charge had no idea how to plan a state. The first Five-Year-Plan was as ambitious as it was unrealistic and the same was true for the planning of the new capital. When the competition for the Presidency of Government was announced in late 1946 it was ordered to be finished within one year – an order completely unrealistic especially in regard to the monumental character of the building that was requested. The post-war period was also a time of austerity: hardly any construction materials were available not to speak of machinery or enough skilled labourers to operate them. Also the research and technical abilities to build on such difficult terrain like the marshlands New Belgrade was projected on were non-existent.<sup>192</sup>

On the basis of Dobrović’s sketch a series of pan-Yugoslav design competitions were organised in 1946/47. The competitions for the design of the government’s seat and Party headquarters as well as an urbanistic solution for the whole terrain were open to all citizens of the federation, highlighting the purpose of the new city to create a centre for all Yugoslavs. A third competition, open to architects and engineers only, was announced at the same time for the design of a representative hotel – *Hotel Jugoslavija* – that should host state guests.<sup>193</sup> The plan to build a new capital aroused immense enthusiasm among the architectural profession. For the Presidency of Government and the master plan twenty-six entries were submitted, for the Central Committee the number was seventy. A huge amount of architects and engineers participated: according to Kulić “one in eight” of Yugoslavia entire architectural profession were involved in the competition for the Party headquarters.<sup>194</sup>

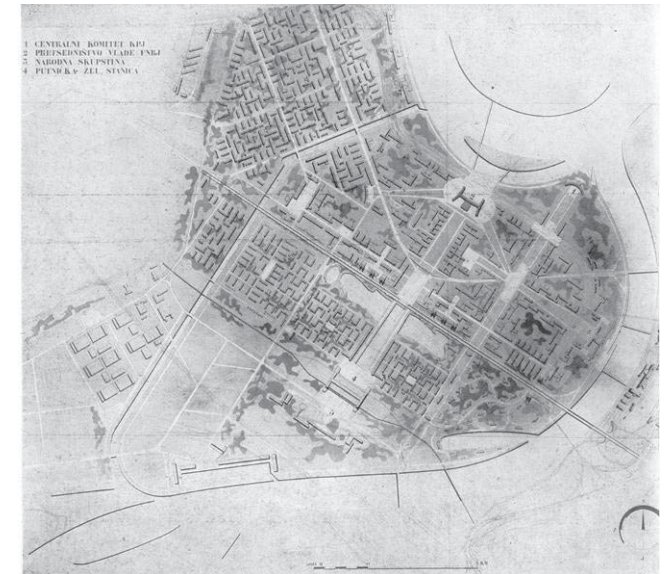


Fig. 15 'Master Plan of Novi Beograd 1948' (Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade)

None of the competition entries for the master plan were realized, but there was a general consensus that rejected Dobrović’s plan from 1946. Most entries proposed a “functional organisation of orthogonal urban structure with the two main state and party buildings as the centre pieces of the urbanistic composition”.<sup>195</sup> The Institute of Urban Planning was entrusted with the design of a new concept plan for New Belgrade. The functional concept for Novi Beograd changed with this 1948 plan from a mere administrative capital to a “federal cultural and economic centre”<sup>196</sup>. When the general urban plan for the whole city – the *Master Plan of Belgrade of 1950* – was prepared by the Town Planning Institute it became self-evident that Novi Beograd had to be incorporated into the city especially since Belgrade and Zemun were to be connected into one metropolitan area. Both plans – the *1948 Master Plan of Novi Beograd* and the *Master Plan of Belgrade of 1950* show a distinct ‘scientific’ approach to urban planning. Reminiscent of Le Corbusier’s *Athens Charter* or *La Ville Radieuse* Belgrade was

191 Ibid.: p.144.

192 cf. *ibid.*: pp. 142-145.

193 cf. *ibid.*: pp.144f.

194 *Ibid.*: pp.149f.

195 Blagojević (2009) p.25.

196 Topalović (2012): p.147.



redesigned as “a functional city of segregated activities” that incorporated the modern capital – New Belgrade.<sup>197</sup>

The architectural styles that the competing architects proposed for the governmental buildings were a clear rejection of the Soviet ‘wedding-cake-style’. Instead they had designed the buildings in a variety of modernist aesthetics that ranged “from functionalism and even constructivism on one end, to classicized modernism/stripped-down classicisms on the other”. The common denominator of all entries was clearly: monumentality.<sup>198</sup>

The official construction start of New Belgrade was in spring 1948 at the historic date of Belgrade’s liberation – the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, but already in autumn of 1947 youth brigades started to dry out the swamps.<sup>199</sup> The first building to be erected on the empty terrain was the *Presidency of Government* designed by an architectural team from Zagreb who had won the competition: Vladimir Potočnjak, Zlatko Neumann, Anton Ulrich and Dragica Perak.<sup>200</sup> Through the crisis evoked by the break with the Soviet Union the construction came to a halt though. When the worst part of the crisis was over by the mid- 1950s and the economy recovered the construction of New Belgrade was resumed but in the meantime the geopolitical position of the FPRY had changed. The extensive program of Novi Beograd shrunk due to the decentralisation of the state. Many of the planned ministries were no longer needed or stayed in the old part of the city. The centralising character of New Belgrade was more or less abandoned. The three main representative buildings: the Presidency of Government, the Central Committee and the Hotel Jugoslavija were still the central parts of the new ‘city’. The Presidency – renamed under the new socio-political circumstances into *Federal Executive Council* (*Savezno izvršno veće – SIV*) had to be redesigned in order to

197 cf. *ibid.*: p.147.

198 Kulić (2009): p.153.

199 cf. Münnich (2013): p.130.

200 Blagojević, 2009: 27; According to Kulić the team had been educated at some of the most prominent modernist architectural offices and schools in Europe during the inter-war period: “Potočnjak worked for Adolf Loos in Paris and Ernst May in Frankfurt. Ulrich studied with Joseph Hoffmann at the Viennese Kunstgewerbeschule [...] Neumann spent eight years working for Loos (1919-27), both in Vienna and Paris.” see Kulić, 2009: 160f.

suit the reduced function of the federal state. For this task a different architect was commissioned: Mihailo Janković and his office *Stadion* from Belgrade, who had just finished the *Yugoslav People’s Stadium* (1947-1954).<sup>201</sup> The building was finally finished in 1961/62 and opened for the purpose of the 1<sup>st</sup> Summit of the Non-aligned Movement.<sup>202</sup> Since its construction had already started in 1948 it became the only point of reference for all other plans that followed during the 1950s and 60s.

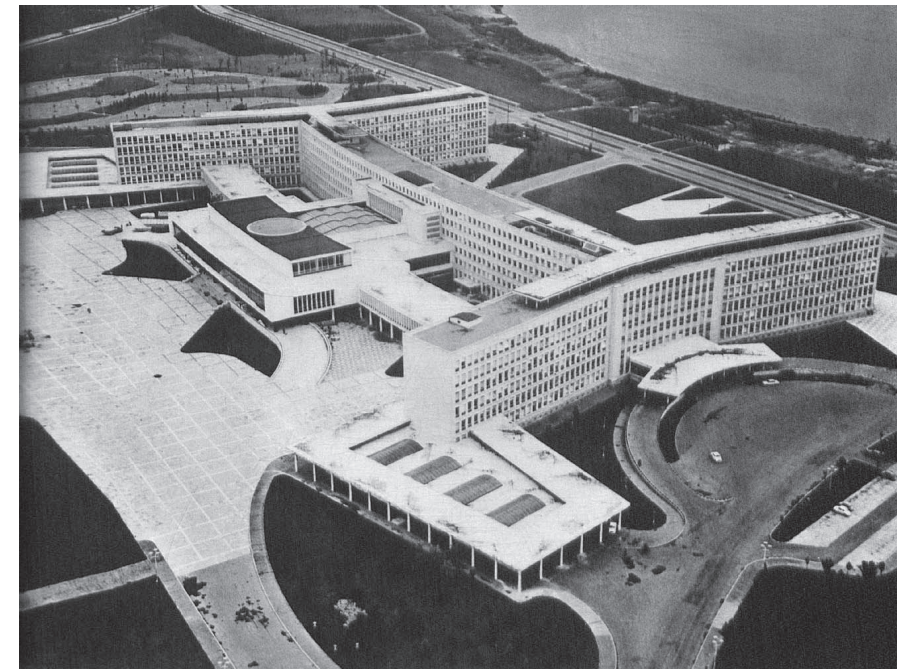


Fig. 16 ‘Federal Executive Council’ (Federation Palace), opened in 1961

In 1959/60 another competition was organised to adapt the *Central Committee of the Communist Party* to the changed system. Janković won this competition as well. The CPY itself had changed its name into the *League of Communists of Yugoslavia* in 1952. Through the introduction of workers

201 cf. Kulić (2009): pp.271-280.

202 Erić (2009b): p.136.

self-management a variety of social and political organisations were created that should be represented in the new building which was subsequently renamed the *Building of Social Political Organisations*.<sup>203</sup> The realised building, a twenty-four-storey 'glass-tower', emulates an American skyscraper. Instead of a steel skeleton and a curtain wall the structure was made from reinforced concrete that also defined the façade. Yugoslavia at that time had neither the technical know-how nor the financial capacities to built such a structure like an actual curtain wall. What is really striking is that a socialist country incorporated a building typology that was usually associated with capitalist commercialism into their symbolic identity.<sup>204</sup> The simple international style was seen as best reflecting the Party's (at least official) withdrawal from power in the decentralisation and democratisation process and associate the Yugoslav state with "contemporaneity"<sup>205</sup> and progress. Devoid of any communist insignia or statues the building was none the less used for large scale propaganda: the façade was equipped with lights that were used to write slogans like "Long Live Tito" across the whole building.<sup>206</sup>

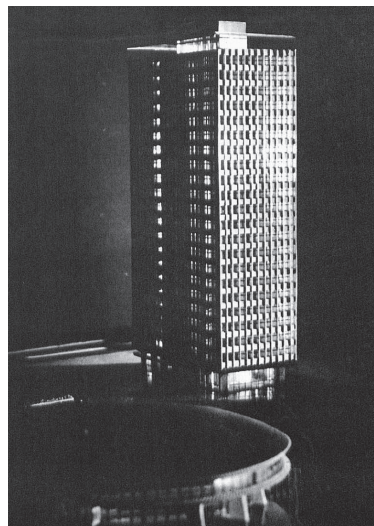


Fig. 17 Design for the 'Building of Social and Political Organisations' by Mihailo Janković, 1960

203 cf. *ibid.*: 139.  
 204 cf. Kulić (2009): pp.280-289.  
 205 Blagojević, 2009: 28.  
 206 Kulić (2009): pp.288f.

### 3.6

#### *Socialist Market-Economy – Economic Reforms*

Economic decentralisation and a gradual liberalisation of the economy demarcated the Yugoslav system further from the Soviet one. Already in the first phase after the introduction of self-management loosening of state control over enterprises was advocated by some economists. Through a reform package in 1952<sup>207</sup> and the 1953 Constitution enterprises gained some autonomy "as far as plans, profits, and wages were concerned"<sup>208</sup> This was seen as beneficial to the economy as well as for self-management.<sup>209</sup> By transforming enterprises from being centrally controlled into competing market-entities they had to manage their own resources and work economically. This should put an end to wasteful practises that were characteristic for the centralist era during which enterprises had no direct influence on their funds and facilities.<sup>210</sup> Besides these first attempts to decentralise and de-bureaucratise the economy "the state still retained considerable control over the country's development by allocating investment funds centrally."<sup>211</sup>

According to Mencinger (1989) in the period from the 1953 Constitution Act to the early sixties "two of the basic economic decisions, namely decisions on income distribution and the savings/investment decisions, remained under strict government control"<sup>212</sup> Through a progressive tax system the state redistributed the budgetary surplus of successful enterprises to uneconomic branches and less prosperous regions.<sup>213</sup> Starting in 1952 enterprises could keep between 3 and 15% of their profit but they had to

207 cf. Estrin, Saul (1991): Yugoslavia: the Case of Self-Managing Market Socialism. In *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 5, No 4 -Fall 1991, pp. 187-194, p.188.  
 208 Zukin (1975): p.59.  
 209 cf. *ibid.*: pp.59f.  
 210 cf. Lohoff (1996): pp.70f.  
 211 Estrin (1991): p.188  
 212 Mencinger, Joze (1989): The Yugoslav Economy: Systemic Changes, 1945 -1986. in *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, No. 707. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh, Centre for Russian and East European Studies, pp. 1-33, p.2.  
 213 cf. Lohoff (1996): p.78.

pay their employees wages and support social and cultural facilities for their workers from this amount.<sup>214</sup> The income of every employee now depended on the profitability of the firm but the state kept its influence by guaranteeing a fixed minimum wage for workers from less successful enterprises.<sup>215</sup> At the same time consumerism was introduced as market regulating method in so far as consumer needs were to decide what and how much to produce. Also enterprises were “free to decide how to organize production and how to combine productive factors”<sup>216</sup>

Since the reforms at the beginning of the 1950s the Yugoslav economy could achieve high growth rates: between 1952 and ‘62 the industrial production tripled and in the second half of the 1950s Yugoslavia had the highest increase in its gross national product (GNP) within Europe besides Romania. Despite these exceptional economic developments, the country had to deal with substantial problems. On the one hand the yearly growth in GNP resulted in inflation and on the other the country imported more goods and raw materials than it exported. This foreign trade deficit could only be kept under control because the country got financial aid from the West, especially the USA who supported the country for political reasons.<sup>217</sup> From the early 1960s onward the government tried to counteract its economic problems by introducing a set of reforms that lead to further decentralisation and economic liberalisation of the country.<sup>218</sup> What had started as a critique of the Stalinist central-state was now moving further towards a market economy. The theoretical concept of self-management was hereby used to “legitimate” the “replenishments of the state-economy with market elements”<sup>219</sup> According to Lohoff, the more self-management mechanisms were introduced the more market mechanisms were incorporated and with that governmental control weakened.<sup>220</sup>

214 cf. *ibid.*: p.71.  
 215 cf. *ibid.*: p.73, see especially fn.13.  
 216 Mencinger (1989): p.2.  
 217 cf. Lohoff (1996): pp.79-81.  
 218 Lohoff (1996).  
 219 *Ibid.*: p.69 (translation by J.W.).  
 220 cf. Lohoff (1996): p.82.

According to Mencinger, during the 1960s, especially through the reforms from 1961 and 1965, “a phase referred to as ‘market socialism’ was initiated”.<sup>221</sup> The state reduced its control over the economy drastically and companies became largely independent.<sup>222</sup> In 1961 enterprises gained autonomy to determine their employees wages (in theory these were controlled by the workers councils in each firm) and the progressive tax system got replaced by a uniform tax rate of 15%.<sup>223</sup> Although the aim was to bring economic prosperity to the whole country, the results of these reforms were growing disparities between the rich North and the much poorer South of the country. Since less profitable enterprises lost more of their profit and profitable ones simply did not invest the gained money in the enterprise or hired more people, the unemployment rate rose.<sup>224</sup> Apart from a few measures to counteract the deregulation of the market again, like price control, supervision of imports and exports, etc., reformers directed the country more and more toward a “Socialist Market Economy”.<sup>225</sup>

In 1964 and ‘65 far-reaching reforms further reduced the state’s control over the market. Investment funds were transferred from different levels within the state to “socially owned banks” which were founded and controlled by “enterprises or local government authorities”.<sup>226</sup> Progressive taxes were further reduced, as were the state’s control of prices and the market was opened for foreign investors<sup>227</sup>. Yugoslavia was to be integrated into the world market by reducing subsidies and tariff barriers while at the same time devaluing its currency. However the liberalisation of the foreign trade could not increase exports, instead foreign goods flooded the Yugoslav market. The result were a stark decline of the economic growth rate and a steep increase of the unemployment rate that rose to half a million until

221 Mencinger (1989): p.2.  
 222 *Ibid.*: pp.2f.  
 223 cf. Lohoff (1996): 84, According to Lohoff the economic reforms of 1961 were implemented right after major financial aid from the USA ended.  
 224 cf. *ibid.*: p.84.  
 225 Lohoff (1996): p.85.  
 226 Estrin (1991): p.189.  
 227 According to Lohoff this opportunity was taken on by an insignificant number of foreign firms though, cf. Lohoff p.86 fn11.

1966. This led to a wave of work-migration to western European countries (especially West-Germany) to an unprecedented degree. The number of work-migrants rose steadily from already 300,000 in 1965 to 860,000 in 1973. Their remittances became the most important income of foreign currency for Yugoslavia.<sup>228</sup>

One of the hopes the reformers within the *League of Communists*<sup>229</sup> (LCY) had was that the disparities between the republics could be compensated through the deregulation and a similar living standard achieved throughout the federation. In this way the aim of the reform programs can be seen as a “pan-Yugoslav movement”<sup>230</sup> but its results were a further federalisation of the country. Since both the centralist administration of the post-war period and the reform programs of the sixties failed to resolve the North-South divide the Yugoslav idea started to crumble and the republics were less and less willing to subordinate their own interests to it.<sup>231</sup> The introduction of self-management in the fifties had already established a territorial decentralisation that gave the republics and the communes the right to keep some of the profits their local enterprise generated. Thereby wealthier regions with a better functioning industry gained more income than regions with less industry.<sup>232</sup> Still Croatia and Slovenia were dissatisfied with the fact that large portions of their profits left their republics and that the redistribution as well as the banking sector were centralised in Belgrade. In Croatia this dissatisfaction developed into a political movement that included a large portion of the population. It had started in 1967 as a protest by intellectuals that aimed at the recognition of the Croatian language as independent

.....  
228 cf. Lohoff (1996): pp. 86f.

229 Since 1952 the *Communist Party of Yugoslavia* was renamed the *League of Communists of Yugoslavia*, this reflects the decentralisation program since the Communist Party was now organised as a union of independent republic-parties. At the beginning this was a mere formal decision and the executive committee (politburo) controlled the country centrally but in the course of the country's decentralisation the republics party's gained influence and promoted local interests. cf. Lohoff (1996): p.90 fn1. According to Dejan Jović renaming the Party into League of Communists “was consistent with the idea of developing a new, previously unseen and untried non-party system”, Jović (2011): p.121.

230 Lohoff (1996): p.90 (transl by J.W.).

231 cf. Lohoff (1996): pp.90f.

232 cf. *ibid.*: pp.76f.

but developed into a far reaching political and economic movement that became known as the *Croatian Spring*<sup>233</sup> (1967-71).<sup>234</sup>

In order to keep these movements in line Tito reacted with a “radical federalisation of the state”.<sup>235</sup> To begin with in 1969 the Party leadership was reorganised in a way that all republics and autonomous provinces were proportionally represented in the executive committee. Through reforms the republics could now keep 50% of the previously federal taxes. Control over banks, one of the main contentious issues at the time, was transferred to the work organisations who consigned their funds in them. Nonetheless the conflicts could not be resolved. Since 1970 Croatia had a new nationalist-communist leadership that demanded that each republic of Yugoslavia should keep its profits. According to Lohoff, in 1971 the situation escalated when several Croatian firms stopped their loan repayments and the central committee of the Croatian Communist Party demanded that republics should keep their own inflow of foreign currency. At the same time student-protests demanded democratic reforms and restrictions of the Party's power. In late 1971 Tito as the head of the League of Communists, reacted with a wave of arrests and the elimination of liberal party members throughout the federation. A return to a more centralist system was not possible though and with the comprehensive changeover in the party it also lost a majority of its political elite.<sup>236</sup>

.....  
233 cf. *ibid.*: pp.90-94

234 For an account on the Croatian Spring see Jović (2011).

235 Lohoff (1996): p.95 (translation by J.W.)

236 *Ibid.*

### 3.6.1

#### *The 1974 Constitution – ‘Contractual Socialism’ or the System of ‘Free Associated Labour’*

Eventually Edvard Kardelje, the main theorist of the Yugoslav self-management system and with that an advocate of decentralisation, could assert his ideas within a new constitution. Its outcome was not a dying out of the state, as he advocated, but the creation of several states within a union that gradually dissolved. This *1974 Constitution* “defined the republics and autonomous provinces as sovereign”.<sup>237</sup> “The federal system was not the superordinate institution” but became a mere “representative of interests and decisions that were common to all republics”.<sup>238</sup> Federal institutions kept “important authority in terms of external politics, defence and monetary politics, but even in those areas decision-making came to be strongly influenced by agreements between the republics and autonomous regions.”<sup>239</sup> Macro-economic developments were from now on managed by each republic or province itself. In Serbia and the southern republics this led to more state control than in Slovenia and Croatia where market mechanisms were further implemented. Belgrade also lost its purpose as the central capital with direct administrative and legislative purpose. Lohoff even compares it to the position of Brussels within the European Union during the nineties.<sup>240</sup> The symbolic pan-Yugoslav figure of Tito, the Yugoslav Peoples Army that connected the republics in security questions and the omnipresence of the League of Communists in everyday life could hold the country together during the seventies. With the death of Tito in 1980 this consolidation of power became more and more fragile.<sup>241</sup>

Unhappy with the direction economic and social developments were going the League of Communists took measures to counteract these during the 1970s. According to Bošković and Dašić, the 1965 reforms had mostly

.....  
237 Ibid.: p.97 (transl. By J.W.).  
238 Ibid.: p.97 (transl. By J.W.).  
239 Jović (2011): p.133.  
240 Lohoff (1996): p.97.  
241 cf. ibid.: pp.101f.

aimed to achieve “greater efficiency in economic activities” but had neglected the “social implications”.<sup>242</sup> While the sixties reforms managed to reduce the states control over investment and resources (for them a major step towards the ‘withering away of the state’) the influence of work collectives was still low.<sup>243</sup> Since the “federal government gradually ceased to have a say in decision-making on capital accumulation, other power centres arose to appropriate the resources of the social capital accumulation”. Instead of being under the control of the working people the “decentralized resources” were under the control of “banks, large foreign trade and domestic commercial concerns, insurances, various funds held by sociopolitical communities, housing construction enterprises, etc.”<sup>244</sup>

These problems are familiar for capitalist systems but in Yugoslavia it was believed that they could be resolved through the introduction of a new socio-economic system that was implemented from top-down. Through constitutional amendments in 1970 and especially the *1974 Constitution* as well as the *Associated Labour Act in 1976*<sup>245</sup> a new set of reforms were enforced that aimed to “provide political direction to the development process and to strengthen self-management”<sup>246</sup>. According to Mencinger, “disappointments with the market revived confidence in planning”, which did not lead to a return to central planning but instead a “new concept of social planning was invented which differed considerably from both directive and indicative planning”.<sup>247</sup> In this so-called “associated-labour concept”<sup>248</sup> neither the market nor indirect planning by the state were to regulate the economy. Instead a system of contracts was established that should prevent competition and promote cooperation between different agents within the economy and socio-political organisations.<sup>249</sup>

.....  
242 Bošković/Dašić (1980): p.121.  
243 Ibid.  
244 Ibid.: p.122.  
245 Mencinger (1989): pp.3, 6.  
246 Estrin (1991): p.189.  
247 Mencinger (1989): p.8.  
248 cf. ibid.: p3.  
249 cf. ibid.: pp.3, 6f.

On the level of socially owned enterprises the system of associated labour aimed to radically decentralise the workers councils. In large companies workers councils were split up into several sub-units: the ‘*Basic Organisations of Associated Labour*’ (BOALs) that functioned independently within the company and regulated their affairs through contracts – so-called *Self-Management Agreements* – with other BOALs of the company.<sup>250</sup> The company as such ceased to exist since the BOALs were legally separate. Despite these separations, the former structures of enterprises often re-emerged due to contracts among the BOALs.<sup>251</sup> Besides *Self-Management Agreements* between BOALs, *Social Contracts* were used on a socio-political level for agreements between different government levels (e.g. the commune, see chapter 4) and them and economic agents like trade unions and other interest groups.<sup>252</sup> To coordinate economic developments “the authorities convened consultative committees by industry and region to reach agreements on pay, investment shares in net enterprises and development plans”.<sup>253</sup>

As we can see the system introduced during the seventies was quite complex and involved a rather “awkward terminology”<sup>254</sup> of which only the very basics were explained here. Important to note is that despite the institutional changes that aimed at the democratisation of the economy most enterprises power structures were as Supek put it “oligarchical”<sup>255</sup>. A variety of sociological studies have shown that while managers, company directors and experts were not legally part of the workers councils they participated far more in the discussions and workers mostly stayed passive.<sup>256</sup> Often decisions were made under the influence of party members and public authorities (see chapter 4), leaving workers councils and municipal assemblies out of the decision-making process altogether.<sup>257</sup> Informal influence by powerful groups were not the only reason for the demise of the Yugoslav system. It

250 cf. Supek (1986): p.162f.  
 251 cf. Estrin (1991): p.190.  
 252 Mencinger (1989): p.7.  
 253 cf. Estrin (1991): p.190.  
 254 Mencinger (1989): p.6.  
 255 Supek (1986): p.170.  
 256 cf. *ibid.*: p.171  
 257 See eg. Gumpel (1986), Höpken (1986).

also had a variety of inherent structural problems. Contrary to expectations the self-management system, especially since the seventies, was becoming more and more bureaucratic. The huge number of associations, councils and interest-groups “produced even bigger and more complex administration and bureaucratic apparatuses”.<sup>258</sup>

By the end of the 1970s Yugoslavia was in a precarious economic situation that only became apparent to the wider public until after Tito’s death in 1980.<sup>259</sup> Until then fiscal problems, like the foreign trade deficit had been covered-up by foreign and domestic loans. In the following period however Yugoslavia was facing a “serious crisis manifested by hyperinflation, foreign debts, trade deficits, unemployment, etc.”.<sup>260</sup> In 1988, under Prime Minister Ante Marković, social property and self-management were replaced by a “mixed market economy”. His efforts to reform the country were met with resistance from the “Communist oligarchy” since it undermined “all previous pillars of the socialist system”.<sup>261</sup> The strengthening of nationalist tendencies that accompanied the economic- and financial crisis finally led to the violent dissolution of the federation during the 1990s.<sup>262</sup>

### 3.7 *Housing Policies – plan and reality*

Housing reforms in Yugoslavia went hand in hand with economic reforms and therefore reflect the raise in economic liberalisation and decentralisation – ultimately Yugoslavia’s mix of a state-socialism and market economy. In the period between the end of the war until the mid-50s housing was clearly defined in line with the socialist goal to create an egalitarian society

258 Erić (2009b): p.142.  
 259 cf. Sundhaussen, Holm (2013): *Das Projekt Jugoslawien: Von der Wiege bis zum Grab*. In *Mythos Partizan: (Dis)Kontinuitäten der jugoslawischen Linken: Geschichte//Erinnerungen//Perspektiven*. Edited by Tomić (et al.) (2013), Hamburg/Münster: Unrast Verlag, pp. 28-45, p.43.  
 260 Erić (2009b) p.144.  
 261 *Ibid.*:144.  
 262 cf. Džihic (2007): p.167.

and the cost of housing was “kept artificially low”<sup>263</sup>: in 1946 a four person household spent only about 5,8% of its income on rent, a number that even dropped to 2,4% in 1958. In comparison a family of the same size had to spend 33,6% of its income on housing in 1938.<sup>264</sup> But housing production was low in comparison to the influx of people from rural areas into the cities. Until the mid-50s the government was focusing on the expansion of heavy industry to lift the living standard and the economic competitiveness with the West. Even though plans to built thousands of apartments had been made, the housing shortage had hardly been tackled. The constant influx of the rural population into the city had worsened the pressure of the city’s infrastructure. Overcrowding, illegal construction, ‘unhygienic settlements’, usurpation of public spaces and communal facilities like laundries, garages, basements, elevators, etc. as dwellings was the consequence. In 1956 the political leadership finally recognised these problems and housing production was prioritised over industrial expansion. At the same time the production of consumer goods was given more priority as a way to boost the economy and lift the living standard. By introducing consumerism into the economic strategy it was believed to raise workers productivity who would work harder in the prospect to be able to acquire more goods.<sup>265</sup>

In accordance with the introduction of a consumer culture housing was increasingly treated as a consumer good<sup>266</sup> and housing production became an economic sector.<sup>267</sup> Through the commodification of housing the socialist ideology was more and more compromised and led to inequalities. While consumer goods were easily made available to large portions of the population, Le Normand states that “the acquisition of a home was a costly proposal, and one that was not within everyone’s reach”<sup>268</sup>. Especially unskilled and semi-skilled workers were left out of the distribution<sup>269</sup>, a con-

263 Le Normand (2008): p.4, according to Le Normand low rent prizes were also a measure to keep wages down which was seen as beneficial for the industrialisation.

264 cf. LeNormand (2008): p.4.

265 Ibid.

266 cf. *ibid.*:p.8.

267 cf. Münnich (2013): pp.178-180.

268 Le Normand (2008): p.3.

269 cf. *ibid.*

tradition it would seem in a socialist state. Instead of regulating apartment prices, the production and distribution of affordable housing was increasingly left to market regulation. During the 1960s Yugoslav policy makers hoped that by introducing economic competition a higher living standard could be created.<sup>270</sup>

As early as 1955, through the decentralisation of the country, the responsibility of the provision of housing was transferred from the federal level to the republics, who put 3% of their income into the *Republics’ Funds for Housing Construction* and from there it was transferred to the communes.<sup>271</sup> In 1959<sup>272</sup> a system was introduced on a national scale that transferred the financing of housing to local governments and socially owned enterprises<sup>273</sup>. The new system should be financed through the creation of *Funds for Housing Construction* into which workers contributed 4% of their wages.<sup>274</sup> These funds now accounted for two thirds of the costs of housing projects and enterprises for one third.<sup>275</sup> Further, in order to create a financially viable housing sector, rent-prices were raised to finance the buildings maintenance and their amortisation.<sup>276</sup> “For the first time”, writes Le Normand, “policy makers actively sought to mobilize personal savings in order to increase the housing stock.”<sup>277</sup>

Due to the further decentralisation enterprises and communes gained more importance in the provision of housing during the sixties. At the same time the economy was further liberalised and market mechanisms introduced into the housing sector. Through the economic reforms in 1965 federal and republic funds for housing were transferred to banks who assigned

270 Le Normand (2008).

271 cf. Münnich (2013): p.180.

272 This system was already tested in 1955 in Belgrade and other selected Yugoslav cities. cf. Le Normand, 2008: p.8

273 With the introduction of workers self-management, enterprises were self-governed by their employees who also owned their workplaces.

274 cf. Le Normand (2008): p.4; Petrovic, Mina (2001): Post-Socialist Housing Policy Transformation in Yugoslavia and Belgrade. In *European Journal of Housing Policy* 1(2), 2001, pp. 211-231, p.218.

275 cf. Münnich (2013): p.180.

276 cf. Le Normand (2008): p.8; Münnich (2013): pp.182f.

277 Le Normand (2008): p.8.

credits, without interest, to workers' associations in enterprises and other housing co-operatives.<sup>278</sup> Not all enterprises could build (enough) apartments for their employees though. According to Mina Petrović (2001) the chances to gain a socially-owned apartment from an employer depended on the enterprises market-position.<sup>279</sup> Enterprises or institutions that were not able to make a profit, like the public administration, could not invest into housing funds for their employees at all.<sup>280</sup> For people in need of a dwelling it was possible to directly ask for support from the commune, but the chances to gain a flat were low and often dependent on connections.<sup>281</sup>

In the mid-1960s private capital gained further importance in the housing sector. The state withdrew more and more from regulating housing production and lost its influence on urban developments.<sup>282</sup> The housing shortage was still pressing and private investments, especially individual construction of houses were increasingly politically accepted.<sup>283</sup> More loans for example were made available for individual housing construction.<sup>284</sup> Besides the possibility to gain an apartment through the employer or by renting from the commune or other private apartment owners, one could invest in housing projects before they were built. If a person had enough money he or she could buy the 'right to an apartment' by paying a certain percentage of the apartment price before its construction in order to gain the right to buy it once it was finished. The principle of these procedures was competition: whoever could offer more money gained the 'right' to the apartment. Another form of housing-acquisition were housing co-operatives (*stambena zadruga*): here at least ten future tenants collected the money as a collective in order to finance the apartment-building together. In comparison to sin-

278 cf. Münnich (2013): pp. 181f, 200.

279 cf. Petrovic (2001): p.218.

280 cf. Münnich (2013): p.203.

281 cf. *ibid.*: pp. 192f.

282 cf. *ibid.*: 208.

283 According to Srna Mandić "In 1971, 82% [of Yugoslavia's] total housing stock was privately owned", cf. Mandić, Srna (1990): *Housing Provision in Yugoslavia: Changing Roles of the State, Market, and Informal Sector*. In *Government and Housing: Developments in Seven Counties*. Edited by van Vliet, William van and van Weesep, Jan (1990), Newburry Park/London/ New Delphi: Sage Publications, pp.259-272.p.263.

284 cf. Petrović (2001): p.218.

gle-family home builders it was much easier for the interest-groups to gain credits from banks. Often construction works were conducted by the future tenants themselves leading to lower costs but unfortunately also lower quality. Especially in Serbia this type of co-operative building was very popular: in 1961 around half of all housing co-operatives in Yugoslavia were registered in Serbia. The amount of money invested through these co-operatives was high but the majority of investments were made through the construction of single-family homes.<sup>285</sup>

In general the housing production was lagging behind the demand throughout the socialist period. According to statistics from 1963 2,5 people shared a room in Belgrade.<sup>286</sup> The national average was 1,6 but other Yugoslav capitals reached similarly high numbers as Belgrade. Numerous people were forced to share their apartments with newcomers or sublease to them.<sup>287</sup> Many migrants that came to Belgrade to find work solved their need for a dwelling by building single-family houses illegally. Whole settlements developed through informal and illegal building practices. From the mid-fifties onward these problems were addressed through the construction of cheap small apartments with only the most basic amenities<sup>288</sup> and the provision of allotments for private self-building<sup>289</sup>.

The Yugoslav housing system, besides not producing enough quantity, created further inequalities. Since market mechanisms were introduced into the housing sector people with higher incomes were advantaged. They could participate in the 'right to an apartment'-competitions, join co-operatives, build their own houses or even buy an apartment.<sup>290</sup> The system to obtain a flat from the employer favoured elites like political leaders, managers and experts that had obtained a higher education.<sup>291</sup> While the 1965 reforms

285 cf. Münnich (2013): pp.192-197.

286 cf. Münnich (2013): p.161 here: fn:52.

287 cf. *ibid.*: pp. 161f.

288 cf. *ibid.*: pp. 169f.

289 Le Normand (2006): *Make No Little Plan: Modernist Projects and Spontaneous Growth in Belgrade, 1945-1967*. In *East Central Europe*, 33, Nos. 1-2 (2006), pp. 243-267.

290 cf. Le Normand (2008): pp.11f.

291 cf. Münnich (2013): pp.204.



sought to increase the amount of housing for all in-come strata through the introduction of competition the opposite was the result. Prices for homes and rents were rising. The same was generally true for incomes but not at the same ratio as the costs for housing.<sup>292</sup> Finally in 1968 Belgrade's government tried to counteract the housing-inequalities by introducing a social-housing program similar to western European models: besides the 10,000 flats that were projected to be built every year, an additional 2,000 should be constructed for the most marginalised groups.<sup>293</sup> In 1974 another federal housing reform was passed that aimed, unlike the previous one from 1965, to increase state control again over market actors. Municipalities were now responsible for the coordination of supply and demand. Also enterprises that did not have the financial means to provide their employees with dwellings were supported through payments by more successful firms. According to Petrović "less than 5 per cent of the socially owned housing stock was built as solidarity-flats".<sup>294</sup>

As we have seen above there were basically three types of housing available: privately owned, rented from a private party and ones that were socially-owned, i.e. were rented apartments that were built from the tenants income. In comparison to the rest of the city Novi Beograd was owned almost entirely by socially-owned enterprises – the ideal housing-concept of the Yugoslav State. The housing blocks of the *Central Zone* for example were owned by the *Belgrade Land Development Agency* and the *Yugoslav People's Army*. At the end of the socialist period almost 90% of Novi Beograd's housing stock was socially owned<sup>295</sup>, where as the rest of metropolitan Belgrade this number was 66%<sup>296</sup>. Responsible for the management of Novi Beograd's construction was the *Directory for the Construction of Novi Beograd* that was established by the *Assembly of the City of Belgrade*.<sup>297</sup> Here urban planners

292 cf. *ibid.*: pp.184f.

293 cf. Le Normand (2008): pp.16f.

294 Petrović (2001): p.218.

295 cf. Blagojević (2012): p.233.

296 cf. Petrović (2001): table on p.220., in the total area of Belgrade that includes sub-urban areas as well the number of socially-owned flats was 53,4%, the average in urban areas of the SFRY was 39,1%, all numbers from 1990/91.

297 cf. the Article: Directorate for the Construction of Novi Beograd. (no author mentioned) In *Yugoslav*

had a more comprehensive influence over developments and could implement their goals to create the material basis for the new society. The next chapter will give an overview of the changed conception of Novi Beograd from a capital city project to a housing district since the 1950s. This twist can be seen as the basis to understand the implementation of the political system on the urban level in Novi Beograd.

### 3.8

#### *Novi Beograd re-conceptualised*

During the 1950s the idea to create a representative pan-Yugoslav city was abandoned. No longer was Novi Beograd conceived as extraterritorial capital of all Yugoslav republics but an integral part of the growing city of Belgrade. The ideological conditions had been redefined and the population moved into the centre of its endeavour. Instead of a city for bureaucrats and political elites, a "city of housing" for the working people was to be established.<sup>298</sup> Novi Beograd was henceforth conceived as the new civic heart of the city that would supersede the historic core in its function as cultural and economic centre. Modernist design and city planning principles were to convey progress and allow for a redefinition of urban centrality in the modern socialist state: in its very centre the new socialist city was defined by housing that, as Ljiljana Blagojević put it, "acts as the decisive factor in the urban planning and expansion of metropolitan Belgrade".<sup>299</sup> Similar to Lucio Costa's *Superquadra* in Brasilia that were built around the same time, Novi Beograd was designed as a composition of self-sufficient housing *blocks*<sup>300</sup>.

Already around 1950 the construction of some housing blocks near Zemun

*Building Construction and Engineering*, June 1971, Belgrade: Export-Press, pages not numbered.

298 Blagojević, Ljiljana (2012): The Residence as a Decisive Factor: Modern Housing in the Central Zone of New Belgrade. In *Arhitektúra & urbanizmus : Journal of Architectural and Town-Planning Theory*, vol. 46, no. 3-4, 228-249, p.242, see also Blagojević (2005): p.6.

299 Blagojević (2012): p231.

300 The word *Block* (*blok*, *blokovi*) has become part of Novi Beograd's "standard vocabulary", Topalović (2012): p.155.



Fig. 18 The 'Pioneers' (later called the *Paviljoni*), Novi Beograd's first Blocks

was started: the so-called '*Pioneers*', a set of five-storey apartment-buildings that were to house around 10,000 inhabitants.<sup>301</sup> Nearby the Student-City (Studenski Grad) was built between 1949 and '55 and housed about 5,000 students.<sup>302</sup> Despite these first construction projects a new Master Plan for Novi Beograd was adopted in 1957. Designed by Branko Petričić it proposed "idyllic neighbourhood-units sunken in a sea of green"<sup>303</sup>. The plan was soon rejected for its monotony and absence of symbolic value and soon after its adoption an open competition was announced for its redesign.<sup>304</sup> Despite its general rejection the plan defined most of the street network and by 1958 Branko Petričić's design for the first experimental housing blocks with 3,000 apartments was constructed. These Blocks – no. 1 and 2 in Novi Beograd's city Block numbering system<sup>305</sup> – displayed the first 'skyscrapers' on the newly acquired land. Here the use of prefabrication techniques, like

301 Stamenković, Zoran S.(2010): *Novi Beograd, Novi Grad/New Belgrade, a New City*. Belgrad: Evro-Giunti, p.32.

302 Stamenković (2010) p.24; *Novi Beograd (1961)* p.95.

303 Blagojević (2012): p.244.

304 cf. *ibid.*: p.244.

305 Today Novi Beograd has 70 Blocks.



Fig. 19 'Master Plan for Novi Beograd 1957' by Branko Petričić

pre-stressed concrete, were tried out for the first time in Belgrade.<sup>306</sup> Especially in the *Central Zone*, the new city centre, but also in later mass-housing projects, the technological progress in the development of industrialised construction techniques was showcased.<sup>307</sup>

306 cf. Stamenković (2010) p.28; see also *Novi Beograd 1961 – ville nouvelle. (1961)*, Belgrade: The Directorate for the Construction of Novi Beograd.

307 Blagojević (2012).

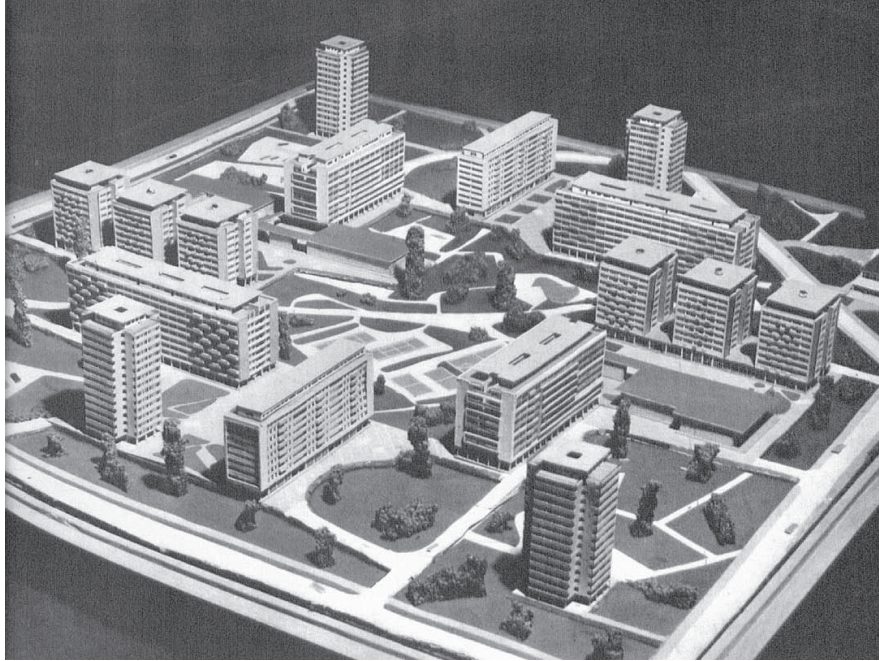


Fig. 20 Model of Block 1, designed by Branko Petričić

In 1960 the Plan of Novi Beograd's Central Zone was adopted. It contained a series of three public squares that were surrounded by six housing super-blocks that each should house between 4,000 and 10,000 residents (Fig. 22).<sup>308</sup> All together Novi Beograd was designed for 200,000 inhabitants.<sup>309</sup> The provision of housing was seen as the epitome of socialist ambitions where society could be transformed at its very basis and the ideological system could most effectively become linked to everyday life. With the anti-bureaucratic policies (i.e. the self-management policies, autonomy of enterprises, ...) from the 1950's onward the state was to move out of the focus of urban developments. The two mayor buildings designed for state institutions – the *Federal Executive Council* and the *Building of Social*

308 Blagojević (2012): pp.231f.

309 cf. *Novi Beograd 1961 – ville nouvelle. (1961)*, p.9; This aim was even exceeded, according to the official homepage of the City of Belgrade Novi Beograd today has 236,000, cf. <http://www.beograd.rs/cms/view.php?id=202082>, last access 20.5.2014.

*Political Organisations* – as well as the *Museum of Contemporary Art* (1959-65)<sup>310</sup> were still finished but none of the plans to create an administrative district were put into practice.

In comparison to other housing developments that were mostly situated at the periphery of the city, Novi Beograd continued to be one of the most prestigious project of the country where a “surplus of symbolic value”<sup>311</sup> could be produced. The new urban core of the Yugoslav' capital was to become a “showcase of modern housing construction”.<sup>312</sup> In the course of the next two decades the Central Zone's super-blocks were erected following largely Le Corbusier's Athens Charter<sup>313</sup> and the socialist ideals to create a new form of community within the modern city. In how far ideals of collectivity and self-determination of the ‘working-class’ were translated into urban plans and how these affected and still affect everyday life in Novi Beograd is subject of the next section.

310 The construction of the so-called *Museum of the Revolution* was also started but never finished.

311 Münich (2013): pp.256 (transl. By J.W).

312 Ibid: pp.256 (transl. By J.W).

313 Blagojević (2005): p.6.

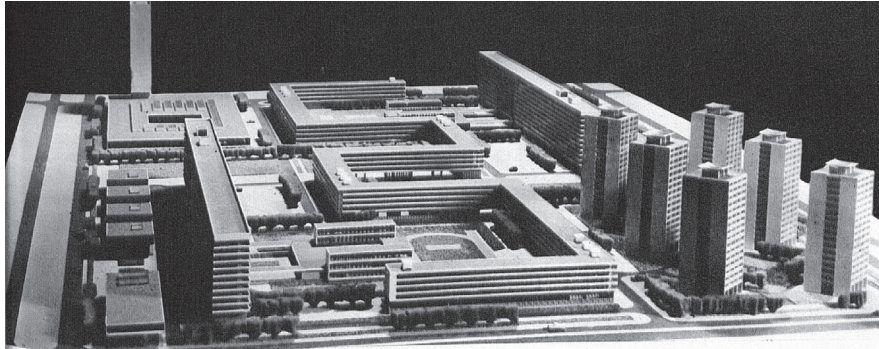


Fig. 21 Model of a Block in the Central Zone

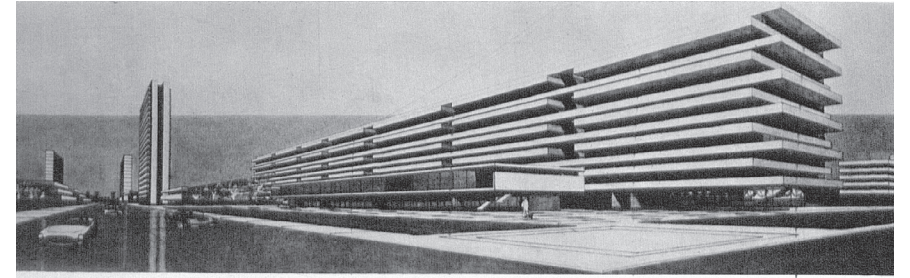


Fig. 24 Sketch for Novi Beograd's Central Zone

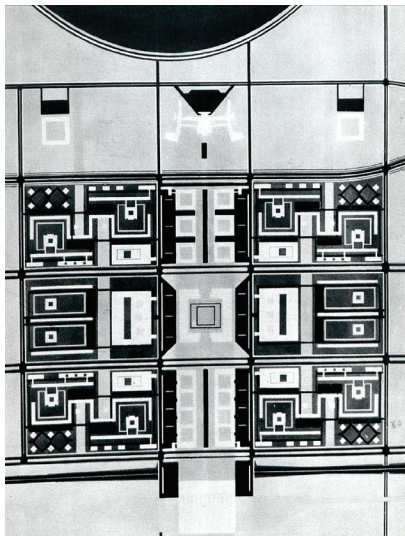


Fig. 22 'Plan of Novi Beograd's Central Zone', 1960, design by Uroš Martinović, Milutin Glavički, Milosav Mitić, Leonid Lenarčić and Dušan Milenković

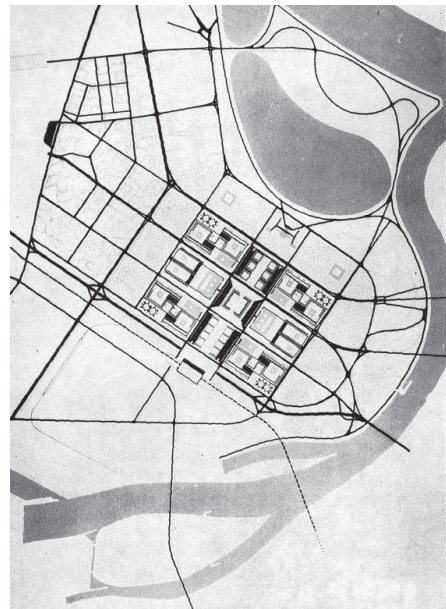


Fig. 23 'Plan of Novi Beograd's Central Zone', 1960

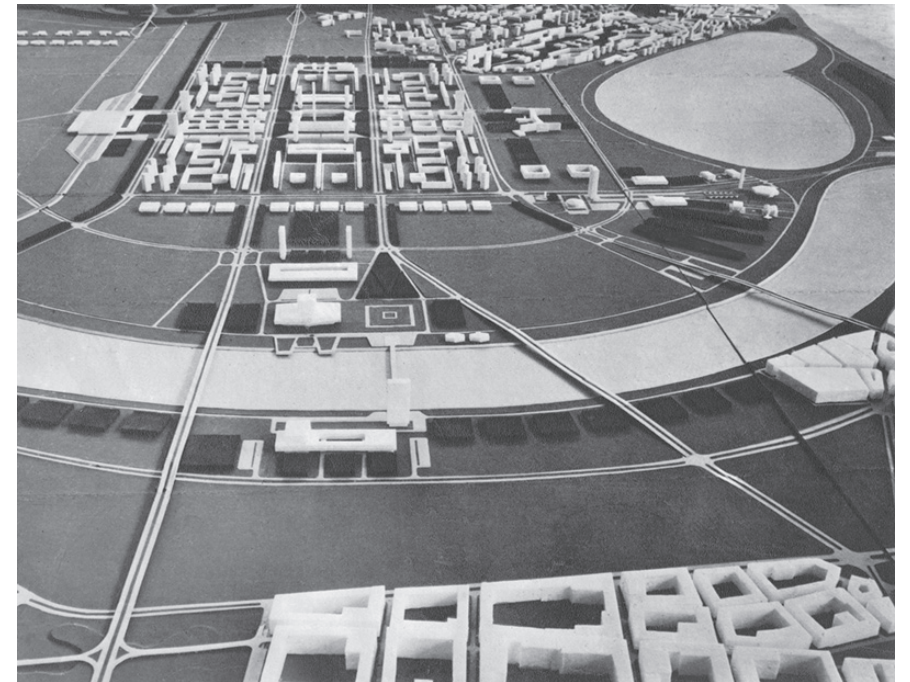


Fig. 25 Model of Novi Beograd's Central Zone, 1960

## 4

### *The Yugoslav Notion of Common Space*

The modernisation of the society and its economy were crucial parts of the development scheme of the socialist government. Industrialisation and urbanisation<sup>314</sup> were the main instruments in this process and should bring a high living-standard to all people in the federation. The “socialist modernisations in Yugoslavia”, Mrduljaš and Kulić write, “were built into a specific utopian vision of an egalitarian society based on the ideals of working class emancipation, unalienated work and the withering away of the state.”<sup>315</sup> In new city quarters like Novi Beograd this vision could supposedly be built from scratch and urban planning became an instrument that aimed at the reconfiguration of all facets of life. Where western planners struggled to implement their aims for a renewed city that would involve political, social and economic reforms into their urban plans, the socialist system demanded their inclusion in an all-encompassing way. The challenges of the rapid urbanisation and industrialisation as well as the societal development objectives were “deliberately directed and beforehand planned”.<sup>316</sup> The conceived bottom-up approach of the self-management ideology was to be comprehensibly planned from top-down.

314 See e.g. Vujošević, M./Nedović-Budić, Z. (2006): Planning and Societal Context – The case of Belgrade, Serbia. In *The Urban Mosaic of Post-Socialist Europe. Space, Institutions and Policy*. Edited by Tsenkova, S./Nedovic-Budic, Z.(2006): Heidelberg: Physica Verlag, pp.275-294, p.278.

315 Mrduljaš, M. and Kulić, V. (2012a): Between Utopia and Pragmatism: Architecture and Urban Planning in the Former Yugoslavia and the Successor States. In *Unfinished Modernisations between Utopia and Pragmatism*. Edited by Mrduljaš, M. and Kulić, V. (2012a), Zagreb: Croatian Architects' Association, pp.6-13, p.7.

316 *Stanbena Zajednica – Ilustrovana revija za ekonomska i društvena pitanja. Porodica i domaćinstvo 1958*. [Dwelling Community – Illustrated Review of Economic and Social Affairs, Family and Household] (1958), Ljubljana: Progres, see here the English introduction (pages not numbered); According to Milojević “the publication “Dwelling Community” was published under the sponsorship of the Organization of the Board of the Second International Magazines Exhibition “Family and Household 1958””, see Milojević, Milica (2009): Re-Conceptualization of the Idea of Neighbourhood in Post-Socialist Belgrade. In *Serbian Architecture Journal*, 2009 -1, pp.45-63, p.62, fn3.

The high level of collectivity that was envisioned by the political elites of Yugoslavia was to be reached through self-management in workplaces as well as in the ‘community’ one lived in. On the urban level this meant that the aim was to ‘plan’ social cohesion through spatial proximity and participation in the decision making process about local issues. Modern architecture and urban planning were the means that should facilitate these objectives. Once the material and institutional basis was created, citizens were to actively engage in the production of their living conditions. A circumstance that was seen as something lost in the course of modernity. The urban neighbourhood was seen as the realm where community was still possible within the modern city. In the 1950s and 60s the concept of the *Local Community (Mesna Zajednica)*<sup>317</sup> was introduced as the basic administrative unit of the city to complement the system of workers’ self-management with an organisational structure on the neighbourhood level. In the conception of the Yugoslav socialist theorists all inhabitants should have the right to engage in decision making about their living conditions and immediate environment.<sup>318</sup>

The participatory democratic system was on the one hand a point of entry for political influence of the individual and on the other hand the realm where the social life of the communist community should unfold. In a way this was an attempt to integrate two contrary ‘social-systems’ or life forms – the traditional village community into the modern urban society. The ties between the members of the community were intended to be close and decisions made together, it was even conceived as a “family extension”.<sup>319</sup> At the same time modern city living was advocated. The aims to modernise the

317 *Mesna zajednica*: from *mesto* – place and *zajednica* – community, for this definition cf. Martinović, Marija (2012): Social space, property and everyday life, Common areas in socialist Yugoslavia. In *Conference Proceedings: The Production of Place 2012*, University of East London, p.2.; in German this term gets usually translated as *Ortsgemeinschaft*.

318 cf. Milojević, Milica (2009): Re-Conceptualization of the Idea of Neighbourhood in Post-Socialist Belgrade. In *Serbian Architecture Journal*, 2009 -1, pp.45-63, p.48; Zukin (1975) pp.153ff.

319 *Stanbena Zajednica – Ilustrovana revija za ekonomska i društvena pitanja. Porodica i domaćinstvo 1958*. see here the English introduction (pages not numbered); for the definition of the local community as extended family see also Kardelj, Edvard (1981): *On the Commune. Offprint from Yugoslav Survey*, p. 74, see here: “the address [of E. Kardelj] to the annual assembly of the Standing Conference of Yugoslav Towns, Zagreb May 17, 1957”.

Yugoslav society were communicated through a variety of exhibitions and publications. Here living in the newly built apartment-buildings that offered the newest amenities, institutionalisation of childcare, living in the nuclear family, the division of labour, and so on was promoted.<sup>320</sup>

Through the introduction of self-management a certain type of behaviour by each citizen was presupposed that was based on the idea that a public sphere existed or would be created that functions as an *Agora*. Here all citizens, without class differentiation, would interact on the basis of solidarity and engage, on a mass basis, in the participatory-democratic councils and forums. As the writings of Edvard Kardelj show, the commune<sup>321</sup> was seen as “the most suitable political form of involving the largest possible number of working people in social government in a direct manner”. The commune was conceived as the “most important school of socialist democracy” where each citizen would “receive a sort of elementary training”.<sup>322</sup> Kardelj further writes:

*In the commune, the working people are introduced into a conscious social life and learn to view particular social issues and ways of resolving them not just with an eye to their current individual interests, but in the manner of qualified masters of their fate with a clear insight into both the needs and objective possibilities of satisfying them. As a community of producers, the commune is at once a community of consumers. This fact requires that the citizen should approach concrete issues not from the standpoint of this or that party demagoguery, such as often practised in other systems, but with consideration for the real material possibilities and for their optimal utilization and, on that basis, to decide matters in an autonomous and responsible manner.*<sup>323</sup>

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320 cf. Milojević (2009): pp.50ff, here her remarks on the illustrated magazine “Dwelling Community” (stanbena zajednica) from 1958 that should bring the “new way of living in the socialist self-management community and [...] its rules closer to its future dwellers”.

321 Commune and municipality are in this work used as synonymous. The Commune was the administrative- and self-management level higher than the Local Community.

322 Kardelj, Edvard (1981): p. 67, for quotes see here: “The exposé [by Edvard Kardelj] on the General Law concerning the organisation of districts and communes in the Federal People’s Assembly, June 16, 1955”.

323 Ibid.

This ideal, by the Yugoslav ideologist, was hardly ever realised. The top-down ordered system of bottom-up initiative often reached only those already interested in the system and part of the power structures.<sup>324</sup> The system had also some inherent contradictions in its definition of local self-government. While the commune-level was hardly adequate to actually involve the ‘largest possible number’ of people Kardelj was talking about, the lowest level of local self-government – the neighbourhood or *Local Community* – was only vaguely defined. Even though part of the self-management delegation structure it was more linked to the ideal of de-alienation and with that the creation of communal ties than a public sphere with real influence on political decisions. Kardelj expressed this idea himself in 1957 at the *Standing Conference of Yugoslav Towns* where he emphasised that Local Communities are not a “new type of organ of authority” but “are simply a convenient form in which the commune’s social function of providing for the everyday needs of the citizens find expression.”<sup>325</sup> Yet it was exactly within the Local Community where direct citizen participation was officially prescribed. A main ambiguity in the implementation of the direct democratic system can be seen in the size of communes and Local Communities. Since the municipalities within cities as well as in rural areas comprised of several tens of thousands of people and the Local Communities as their sub-units of several thousands, it is hard to imagine how direct self-government as well as communal ties were possible.<sup>326</sup> As ideas of direct democracy had a profound impact on urban and social planning the next section aims to provide some insights into the Yugoslav commune system.

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324 Zukin (1975).

325 Kardelj, Edvard (1981): Op. 74, for quote see here: “the address [of E. Kardelj] to the annual assembly of the Standing Conference of Yugoslav Towns, Zagreb May 17, 1957”.

326 On the problem of size of communes and Local Communities see Höpken, Wolfgang (1986): *Partizipation und kommunale Selbstverwaltung in jugoslawischen Gemeinden. In Jugoslawien am Ende der Ära Tito, Bd. 2: Innenpolitik*. Edited by Grothusen, Klaus-Detlev/Haberl, Othmar Nikola / Höpken Wolfgang (1986), München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, (Südosteuropa Jahrbuch, Bd. 12), pp.67-142.

#### 4.1 The Yugoslav Commune System

The development of the Yugoslav commune system is linked to the changes in social and economic policy but was also intended to be a category of its own and was seen as crucial in the development of the envisioned social relations. With the introduction of self-management the idea of communal self-government<sup>327</sup> was further implemented in the Yugoslav system. As mentioned above (see chapter 3.4) the self-government system in Yugoslavia originated in the *National Liberation Committees* of the Partisan war and their successor committees in the post-war period. After the introduction of self-management in workplaces (1950) the commune (*komuna* or *opština*) as administrative unit was reintroduced in 1952 and replaced the local committees. The same year self-government and participation organs were also implemented on the neighbourhood-level. In rural areas these were called 'local boards' (*mesni odbori*) and in cities 'residential communities' (*stanbene zajednice*) that should provide a system of direct citizen participation. From 1963 onward these were subsumed under the term 'Local Community' (*Mesna Zajednica*) but their character and status was hardly defined in this first period.<sup>328</sup>

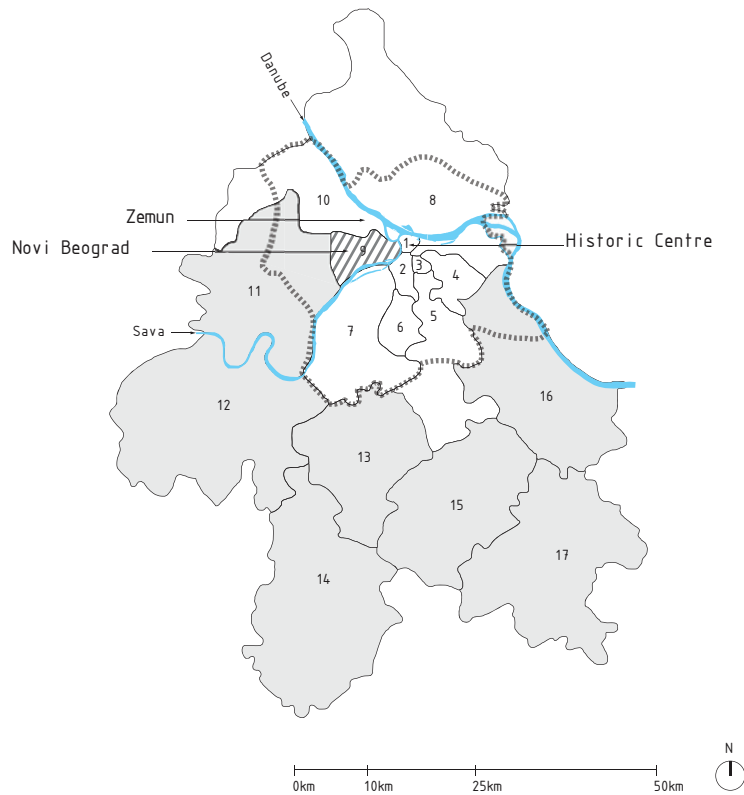
In 1955, through the *Law on the Organisation of the Communes the commune was established as the "basic (local) government unit in Yugoslavia"*.<sup>329</sup> Further it was defined as the "basic political-territorial organization of self-management (...) and the basic socio-economic community of the population in its territory"<sup>330</sup>. The commune was hence the place where

327 In Serbo-Croatian self-management and self-government were subsumed under the term *Samoupravljanje*. In accordance with Zukin (1975) I will use the term self-management for the political system as such as well as its implementation in work places, and self-government for the application of the system on the commune and Local Community level, cf. Zukin (1975): p.48, fn1.

328 Höpken (1986): pp.74-77.

329 Simmie, James (1989): Self-management and town planning in Yugoslavia. In *Town Planning Review*, 60 (3) 1989, pp.271-286, p.272.

330 Excerpt from the Program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, April 1958, presented at the Seventh Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Kultura, Belgrade, 1958, pp.294-298, 308-316, 322-332. In *Socialist Self-Management in Yugoslavia: 1950 - 1980 Documents*. Edited by Bošković/Dašić (1980), Belgrade: Socialist Thought and Practice, pp. 121-136, p.133 (The



Belgrade's Municipalities

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1 Stari Grad   | 11 Surčin     |
| 2 Savski Venac | 12 Obrenovac  |
| 3 Vračar       | 13 Barajevo   |
| 4 Zvezdara     | 14 Lazarevac  |
| 5 Voždovac     | 15 Sopot      |
| 6 Rakovica     | 16 Grocka     |
| 7 Čukarica     | 17 Mladenovac |
| 8 Palilula     |               |
| 9 Novi Beograd |               |
| 10 Zemun       |               |

Legend:

- ..... Planned City (Master Plan 2021)
- Urban Areas
- Suburban Areas

Fig. 26 Belgrade's Municipalities (urban and sub-urban) today

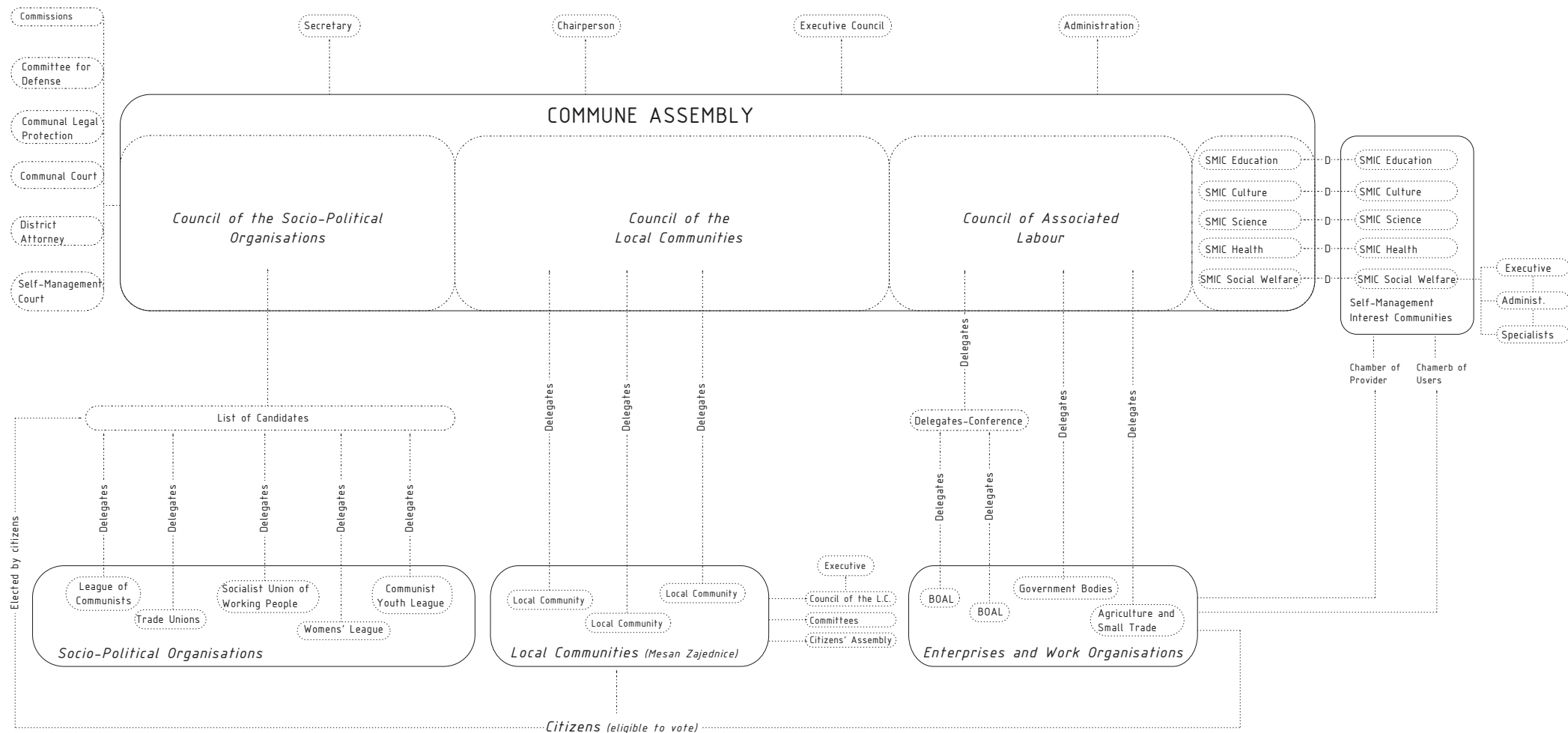


Fig. 27 Model of the Commune System 1974 (adapted from Höpken, 1986)



self-government was to take place and where economic developments were to be planned and coordinated. In the Program of the LCY from 1958 the commune was defined as “the most exemplary institution of direct socialist democracy”. It was not seen as a mere “school of democracy” but “democracy in action” where “individual and collective interests” were to be “reconciled”.<sup>331</sup> These functions were only vaguely defined though by the theorists Edvard Kardelje and Milentije Popović. According to Höpken the commune in practice was mostly seen as economically independent production- and distribution-unit. However the economic competence of the commune was soon restricted through the introduction of market mechanisms and the decentralisation of the economy.<sup>332</sup>

The economic reforms in 1965, that established enterprises as autonomous, limited the economic competences of the commune. Local enterprises were less and less dependent on the communes planning schemes and could act mostly independent. Also communal investment-funds were dissolved and banks took over the task to distribute funds. Already in 1962 self-management was applied to non-economic sectors like social-, educational-, health- and cultural institutions. Within these institutions ‘provider and users’ formed so-called *Self-management Interest Communities*, in which they could manage their affairs autonomously. This further reduced the communes’ competences.<sup>333</sup>

During the seventies, especially through the *1974 Constitution*, self-management was strengthened and the commune became mostly an umbrella organisation for self-management bodies that operated on the communes’ territory like local communities, self-management organs within enterprises (e.g. BOALs), self-management interest communities and socio-political organisations. All these organs sent delegates to the commune-assembly which then voted for an executive-council and a chairperson (see Fig.27).

.....  
 Commune); see also Höpken (1986): p.74.  
 331 Excerpt from the Programme of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, April 1958. In Bošković/Dašić (1980): pp. 121-136, p.133.  
 332 cf. Höpken (1986): pp.74, 76.  
 333 cf. *ibid.*: pp.77f.

The commune acquired its funding through local taxes on enterprises profits and or employees wages, as well as income through fees and services. The main objective in the Yugoslav system was that communes should act mostly independent from state interventions and manage its local affairs.<sup>334</sup>

#### 4.1.1

##### *The Mesna Zajednica – Self-Management and the Neighbourhood*

The *Local Community (Mesna Zajednica)*, as a spatial and socio-political organisation, was applied to all cities in Yugoslavia to break them up into administrative units, where “workers would exercise their rights”<sup>335</sup> to self-management. In the form of a “town meeting in each neighbourhood” that was open to “all citizens of voting age” a forum was created where common problems were supposed to be discussed, actions taken or suggestions passed on to the higher levels: the Commune or Municipal Assembly.<sup>336</sup> At the neighbourhood-level citizens should gain the ability to solve local issues autonomously from state-organs but also be able to influence politics of the commune through a delegation-system, which was expanded especially through the *1974 Constitution*. Here the issues and tasks the Local Community was to deal with were more closely defined:

*Working people and citizens in a local community shall decide on the realization of their common interests and on the satisfaction, on the basis of solidarity, of their common needs in the field of: physical improvements in their community, housing, communal services, child care and social security, education, culture, physical culture, consumer protection, conservation and improvement of the human environment, national defence, social self-protection, and in other spheres of life and work.*<sup>337</sup>

.....  
 334 cf. *ibid.*: p.82.  
 335 Erić (2009): p.16.  
 336 Zukin (1975) p.153  
 337 Excerpts from the Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of 1974, Article 114. In *Socialist Self-Management in Yugoslavia: 1950 – 1980 Documents*. Edited by Bošković/Dašić (1980), Belgrade: Socialist Thought and Practice, pp. 287-325, pp.323f.

The citizens of a local community elected a local board or council (*savet*) of 5 to 25 people and a chairperson who presided the meetings. Optional advisory boards, arbitration panels, consumer committees or similar consultative boards were appointed to aid their work. Besides the act of voting, citizens could participate in the neighbourhood meetings or in some questions referenda were used to find solutions. These were mandatory when financial contributions of the citizens were requested. The financial means of the *Mesna Zajednice* consisted mostly of citizens' contributions but also from local enterprises, taxes from socio-political organisations or fees from services as well as donations from the commune.<sup>338</sup>

The most important political organs for direct democratic influence on the commune-level were the delegations. The delegates were elected by the citizens of their Local Communities, at their workplaces or were delegates sent by the socio-political organisations<sup>339</sup> to the commune assembly. These delegates elected the representatives of the commune-assembly and were mediators between the citizens and the assembly's representatives. They could convey suggestions of the local residents to the assembly's executive-council and vice-versa inform citizens about the assembly's decisions. In theory this should have been a way to make the commune-assembly's work more transparent and enable citizens to monitor it.<sup>340</sup> In practice the influence of citizens on political decisions was rather low.

In her investigation of the Yugoslav system at the beginning of the seventies, Sharon Zukin gives an interesting insight into the communal system, especially the one in Belgrade. At the time of her research Belgrade's metropolitan area was divided into fifteen communes (six of which were rural),<sup>341</sup> each containing between seven and eighteen Local Communities with a population size that varied from 2,000 to 20,000.<sup>342</sup> The scope, Zukin

338 cf. Höpken (1986): pp.82f.

339 e.g. trade unions, League of Communists, Women's-Association, Communist Youth League, etc.

340 cf. Höpken (1986): p.83.

341 Today Belgrade consists of 17 urban municipalities; cf. the official homepage of the city of Belgrade: <http://www.beograd.rs/cms/view.php?id=520>; last accessed: 19.11.2013.

342 cf. Zukin (1975) p.154.

argues, of the *Mesna Zajednica* was limited since its budget was too small to establish "services and organs of its own" and its narrow scope of competence only allowed it to deal with questions directly regarding everyday needs of its citizens. General questions were to be avoided since its task was not to "overhaul or to modify the commune system". Rather the "citizens' initiatives from below" were to "fill any gaps which may exist between the functioning of public agencies and 'concrete, everyday needs'". Depending on the local communities' size, between one and five delegates were sent to the Commune Assembly and in urban areas to the Municipal Assembly, where "it had to compete with other mesna zajednicas for commune funds and attention". Another limitation she saw for the autonomy of the Local Community was "the rule of experts and administrators", a limitation that also applied to the Commune and Municipal level.<sup>343</sup>

Despite these limitations she describes the voters' meeting as a situation where different groups<sup>344</sup> meet to discuss common "issues and problems confronting them in everyday life" and "actual norms of public life are worked out". For her it's the place where political participation could be observed, since in order to partake in "political life" as such, one had to enter this "participatory structure".<sup>345</sup> One of the main problems of the system, she found, was that it reproduced the hierarchical power structures (that were meant to be abandoned), since the most active participants in the neighbourhood-meetings were "office-holders" that were already part of the establishment and often held "elective positions". Citizens who tried to actively engage often could not win recognition for their concerns, which lead to a general refusal to participate at all. The number of citizens was hence generally small and consisted mostly of male voters.<sup>346</sup>

Höpken conducted his research about the Yugoslav commune-system and citizen-participation more than a decade later than Zukin and well after

343 Ibid.: pp.155f.

344 Zukin writes: "leaders meet followers, representatives meet constituents, and relatively rich citizens meet their poorer neighbours", Zukin (1975): p.156.

345 Ibid.: pp.157f

346 Ibid.: pp 157ff

the constitutional changes of 1974 that aimed at the expansion of local self-government. He observed that while representatives at the commune-level were mostly well educated men and almost without exception members of League of Communists, workers and farmers as well as women and pensioners participated far more at in the meetings of the Local Communities and even held elective positions as delegates.<sup>347</sup> The Local Community, he writes, was the only municipal-level where the representative-structure corresponded with the local population and where Party members did not occupy the main share of elective positions. Since the Local Communities as well as their delegations had hardly any direct influence on the assembly's decisions, Höpken argued that the League of Communists, tried to maintain the semblance of direct self-government but still had the opportunity to control the local organs since there were still enough Party members involved.<sup>348</sup> Actual initiatives or proposals for the work of delegations or commune-representatives came hardly ever directly from the citizens. The same was true for referenda, which were mostly carried out when they were mandatory by law, as in the case of financial contributions of the citizens. The participation at referenda was generally high, around 80% in the mid-seventies, but they mostly confirmed resolutions higher levels suggested.<sup>349</sup>

Besides the Local Community's definition as a political participation organ, it was augmented with ideological objectives that were linked to the concept of 'de-alienation of social relations'. The main ideologist behind the self-management system Edvard Kardelj emphasised in many of his speeches and writings the importance of the Local Community for the creation of socialist living conditions. In 1966 he stated that "problems of dehumanization of human relations" that increasingly found "expression in the large urban settlements" could be resolved "at the basis of self-management", i.e. within the Local Community.<sup>350</sup> Later he claimed that the Local Community

347 cf. Höpken (1986): p.95.

348 cf. *ibid.*: pp.98, 100.

349 cf. *ibid.*: pp.104f.

350 Kardelj, Edvard (1981): On the Comune. Offprint from Yugoslav Survey, pp. 74f, for quotes see here: "From an address [of Edvard Kardelje] at the Standing Conference of Yugoslav Towns, in Mostar, November 9, 1966".

should be organised in a way "that it will operate as a promoter of humane relations between people". He also argued that even though "alienation of man is typical of all modern societies", because of the self-management system it was less so in Yugoslavia. In the same talk he suggested that self-management was not well developed in the Local Community yet but he had high hopes that if they would "provide cultural centres for the youth [...] children's day nurseries [...] and provide suitable premises where people could get together in the evenings to play chess and other social games or to discuss different matters" communal life could become reality.<sup>351</sup> As the quotes show the Yugoslav ideologist had concrete applications of the system in mind. Through urban planning, it was believed these objectives could be put into practice. The neighbourhood-unit became the spacial domain where self-government would lead to a community free of alienation – within urban as well as rural areas.

On a micro-level self-management was also introduced at the building level in form of a house-council (*kućni savet*). Since state property was transformed into social property<sup>352</sup> through the 1953 Constitution, apartment-buildings that consisted of at least two big or three small flats were to be managed by its inhabitants. This rule applied to buildings owned by social organisations (e.g. enterprises), cooperatives as well as ones in private property alike. Their task was to collect rents, manage all common affairs like building-maintenance and decide about new tenants.<sup>353</sup> According to Münnich, this practice was a way of the state to interfere in private property. "In this way a balance between the involvement of private capital and

351 Kardelj, Edvard (1981): On the Comune. Offprint from Yugoslav Survey, p. 75, for quotes see here: "From a talk [of Edvard Kardelje] with members of the City committee of the LCC [League of Communists of Croatia], Zagreb, November 12, 1977".

352 Social property was defined as property of society as a whole, in practice this could be interpreted as group-property. Mencinger in referring to Bajt ( Bajt, A, 1980: La propriete sociale en tant que propriete de tous et de chacun. In *Revue d'Etudes Comparatives Est-Ouest*, 11, 41-72.) for example interpreted the problems that accompanied the 1965 economic reforms and their political and social ramifications as follows: "Social property defined as property of 'each and all', meaning the free access of each and all to the existing means of production, "degenerated" into group property", Mencinger (1989): p.5, Mencinger therefore saw a degradation of the idea of common good in Yugoslavia connected to the liberalisation of the economy.

353 cf. Münnich (2013): pp.188f.

private property on the one hand and the interests of the state on the other hand was to be created.”<sup>354</sup>

## 4.2

### *The Yugoslav ‘Dwelling Communities’*

#### 4.2.1

##### *Historic Models*

The Yugoslav idea to bring back community into the urban environment was not new. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century the city as it was shaped by industrialisation and other modernisation processes was subject of a variety of researches and critiques.<sup>355</sup> As Tonkiss writes, “Approaches to the modern city frequently have described urban life as isolating, anonymous, degrading of social ties, hostile to community”.<sup>356</sup> The concerns connected to the problems of life in the modern city were often “offset by efforts to find new and different bases for community in the city”.<sup>357</sup> Community in these efforts is often used as a term to describe something that is an inherent human need that became alienated through modernity.<sup>358</sup> Also in the Yugoslav ideology in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this criticism was at the centre of attention. Kardelj for example speaks of the “problem of dehumanization of human relations, which is finding increasing expression in the large urban settlements”.<sup>359</sup>

For the solution of these problems the Yugoslav planners found prece-

354 Ibid.: p.191.

355 See e.g. Engels, Simmel, Wirth.

356 Tonkiss, Fran (2005): *Space the City and Social Theory: Social Relations and Urban Form*. Cambridge/ Malden: Polity Press, p.8.

357 Tonkiss (2005): p.8.

358 See e.g. Bauman’s interpretation of Ferdinand Tönnis work *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundbegriffe der reinen Soziologie*. from 1887, in Bauman, Zygmunt (2009) *Gemeinschaften, Auf der suche nach Sicherheit in einer bedrohlichen Welt*. Frankfurt am Main: Surkamp (1<sup>st</sup> publ. in engl. 2001), pp.15ff.

359 Kardelj, Edvard (1981): On the Comune. Offprint from Yugoslav Survey. pp. 74f, for quote see here: “From an address [of E. Kardelje] at the Standing Conference of Yugoslav Towns, in Mostar, November 9, 1966”.

dents in concept like Clarence A. Perry’s (1872-1944) *neighbourhood-unit* paradigm from 1929 and its later application in cities around the world. Perry aimed to find solutions for the emerging traffic problems and the loss of communal ties within neighbourhoods in American cities. The size of his neighbourhood-unit, 64ha, was based on the path a child can walk from its home to the playground and the population numbers of 5,000 – 7,500 were determined by the catchment area of a primary school and the predominance of single-family houses. Enclosed by an arterial road that determined the borders of the neighbourhood no major streets should cut through the area, allowing a safe environment for the inhabitants. An essential part of his program that should foster a communal spirit and social cohesion was the *civic centre* that consisted of a public school, a library, church, a theatre and other public buildings as well as a communal parks. A shopping district was to be aligned along the arterial road that also linked adjacent neigh-

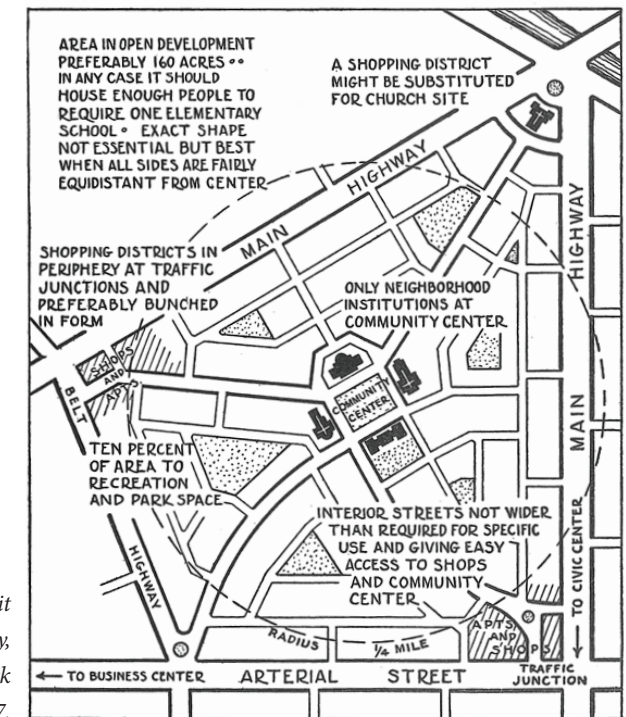


Fig. 28 Neighbourhood-Unit Scheme, by Clarence A. Perry, 1929 printed in *New York Regional Survey, Vol. 7*.

bourhoods with each other. When Perry translated his ideas into a diagrammatic plan (Fig.28) his principles were received by city planners and put into practice.<sup>360</sup>

Communal Spaces were also part of the CIAM debates. Walter Gropius for example postulated in his designs that he presented at CIAM 2 (1929) that each high-rise apartment building should contain a community-unit with a kitchen, laundry, offices and shops for the use of all inhabitants.<sup>361</sup> Especially after the war functions connected with communal living and the neighbourhood-unit became the focus of the CIAM congresses.<sup>362</sup> Influenced by the modern movement Yugoslav urban planners since the 1950s focused increasingly on the development of residential communities in accordance with the objectives to modernise the society, provide dwellings and introduce a functional set of uses that were to foster a communal spirit. A clear definition of these communities in spacial terms was also used as the basis for the creation the before mentioned of self-government units – the *Mesna Zajednice*.

#### 4.2.2

##### *Residential Communities in Novi Beograd – the Modern City between Neighbourhood-romanticism and Urbanity*

In new city-quarters of Yugoslavia like Novi Beograd were planned according to the new social schemes. The concept of the Local Community had a far more formative effect on the programmatic and physical design, of these

.....  
360 Domhardt, Konstanze S. (2012): *The Heart of the City. Die Stadt in der transatlantischen Debatten der CIAM 1933-51*. Zürich: gta-Verlag, ETH Zürich, pp.157-161, According to Domhardt (p.161) Lewis Mumford and Clarence S. Stein were among the first to translate Perry's concept into plans by using the neighbourhood-scheme as planning-units; According to Yodan Rofé, "the neighbourhood unit concept was widely adopted as a model for post World War II residential developments throughout the world", but its application has "consistently failed to create local spatial communities" and "has contributed to the fragmentation of cities", Rofé, Yodan (1995): *Space and Community – the Spacial Foundations of Urban Neighbourhoods: An Evaluation of Three Theories of Urban Form and Social Structure and Their Relevance of the Issue of Neighbourhoods*. In *Berkeley Planning Journal* 10 (1995): pp.107-125, pp.107f.

361 cf. Domhardt (2012): pp.32f.

362 cf. *ibid.*: chapter 5.

new quarters than the already existing neighbourhoods. The communities' material and institutional needs were yet to be created and should go hand in hand with the political program. As shown above, the ownership structures in socialist Yugoslavia were anything but clear. Some apartments were privately rented or self-built on squatted land, others were owned by enterprises or the commune, but there was no general system in which all dwellings belonged to the state. Novi Beograd in this regard was an exception. In comparison to the rest of the city Novi Beograd was owned almost entirely by socially-owned enterprises – the ideal housing-concept of the Yugoslav state. Responsible for the management of its construction was the *Directory for the Construction of Novi Beograd* that was established by the Assembly of the City of Belgrade.<sup>363</sup> The six housing blocks of the *Central Zone* – the most prestigious project within Belgrade – were owned by the *Belgrade Land Development Agency* and the *Yugoslav People's Army*. At the end of the socialist period almost 90% of Novi Beograd's housing stock was socially owned.<sup>364</sup> Here the urban planners aimed to implement their goals to create the material basis for the new society. However this vision was compromised as Novi Beograd was mostly inhabited by "well-to-do professionals from institutions and companies such as the army, the state and party administration, and the media." In comparison to this group there was, Topalović writes, "a smaller proportion of workers, and apartments were also allocated to families from vulnerable social groups such as the Roma."<sup>365</sup>

The ideal of the state was that all buildings should be social property. Novi Beograd's site was empty terrain with only a few houses, and did not belong to anyone as such. There were no apartment-buildings or land that would have had to be expropriated which was another reason for the political decision-makers to choose it for the creation of their ideal city. When the capital-city project was abandoned and exchanged with the concept of a new city centre for Belgrade the objectives of what was to be built and

.....  
363 Directorate for the Construction of Novi Beograd. In *Yugoslav Building Construction and Engineering, June 1971*, Belgrade: Export-Press, pages not numbered.

364 cf. Blagojević (2012): p.233.

365 Topalović (2012): p. 185.

what it should represent was re-defined. As the political regime wanted to be associated with workers-democracy and a dwindling state-apparatus in which the people would take over the management of their affairs they – the citizens – had to move into the focus of attention. How to dwell and live within the socialist society was meticulously defined and designed. Housing became a major factor in the production of identification with the Yugoslav state. The main objective was not to merely provide as many dwellings as possible but to create the material basis for the political system and with that society at large.

At the centre of Novi Beograd's design was the concept of the self-sufficient *Dwelling Community* (*stanbena zajednica*). According to this concept the new 'city' was designed in so-called 'Blocks' that each would house a separate *Local Community*<sup>366</sup>. Through 'scientific' planning the right mix of uses, their distribution and arrangement should provide the material basis the new society should grow in. Drawing on concepts like the neighbourhood-unit the modernist blocks were designed to offer all uses for every-day needs with the exception of workplaces. In New Belgrade strict zoning was applied, that strengthened the modern division of home and work in spatial terms. Communal living was not considered compatible with uses that were not directly linked to communal services or everyday-needs. Commercial uses in general were kept to a minimum and their dispersion calculated in order to eliminate economic competition within the Blocks.<sup>367</sup> In the publication: *Novi Beograd – Ville Nouvelle 1961*, published by the *Town Planning Institute of Belgrade* to convey its planning- and construction-progress to the wider international public, we find a description of the residential community in Novi Beograd:

*In contemporary urban theory "neighborhood units" i.e. "micro-rays" are*

366 According to Martinović, the 1974 Constitution a Local Community "could consist of a neighbourhood, a portion of a neighbourhood, or several mutually connected neighbourhoods and the numbers of inhabitants could vary from 4,500 to 11,000." Compared to the old city, she further argues the Local Communities in new neighbourhoods covered much larger areas, Martinović (2012): p.4.

367 See e.g. Milojević (2009): pp.50ff; Topalović (2012): pp. 186f

*known. In the social and political conditions of Yugoslavia these principles do not just represent a technical urbanistic theory, but are based on the housing blocks and the social organization of self-management citizens. The area of a block of flats houses about 6,000 people and is the basic urban unit. In addition to housing, the blocks include social and health institutions, center for children, child care centers, kindergartens, shops, various services like small-trades, restaurants, libraries, cultural centers, lawns and sports fields.*<sup>368</sup>



Fig. 29 Neighbourhood-Unit Scheme of Novi Beograd from 1961

The architects and planners of Novi Beograd followed closely planning principles of the *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM) and especially Le Corbusier's *Athens Charter* in the design of the Blocks.<sup>369</sup> Divided by wide roads each Block was to house between 5,000 and 10,000

368 Novi Beograd – Ville Nouvelle 1961 (1961): p.14 own translation

369 Blagojević (2009): p.29.

inhabitants living in “slabs and towers”<sup>370</sup> that were embedded into lush landscapes. Built for car-traffic and public transport, the ‘boulevards’ were to connect the Local Communities of Novi Beograd with each other and the rest of the city. Their scale created huge distances between the Blocks and created a fragmented or insulated urban structure. The edges of the Blocks were designed to create buffer-zones between the apartment-buildings and the roads. Devoid of any functions that would allow street-life they created physical boundaries to form enclosed communities. Leaving car traffic out of the Block, the inside was designed for the everyday-needs of the community.<sup>371</sup> Strict zoning separated the housing-blocks from those for other functions such as industry. Using Topalović’s words, none of Novi Beograd’s areas “adhered to the functionalist concept of proximity between the home and the workplace”.<sup>372</sup> The general lack of workplaces and commercial facilities in the new municipality meant that most inhabitants had to commute to the old city on a daily basis and thus Novi Beograd was often referred to as a huge dormitory that could not develop any “internal economic dynamics”<sup>373</sup>. The central axis of the *Central Zone* that was to constitute the central public space of Novi Beograd and the city as a whole was never built and lay derelict until the 1990s when the initial scheme was finally abandoned. Milica Topalović interprets the vacancy of the three public squares as a “kind of reassurance, a sign of unbroken intentions or some sort of future completion”.<sup>374</sup> For her, Novi Beograd however failed “to meld housing, city center, and government zone into a coherent urban form and functioning urban structure” which “took away the possibility of fully experiencing the potential of everyday life in the modern city. Compared to Brasilia, she further argues, Novi Beograd never successfully linked “architecture, modernism, and national identity”. Besides the *Federal Executive Council* (also called *Federation Palace*) and the

370 Topalović (2012) p.175  
 371 Milojević (2009) pp.53, 55  
 372 Topalović (2012) p.185.  
 373 Blagojević (2005) p.7.  
 374 Topalović (2012): p.161.

*Highway of Brotherhood and Unity* Yugoslav national identity (i.e. a ‘multi-cultural’ identity) found no expression in the new ‘city’.<sup>375</sup>

Yet compared to the modernist residential quarters that were built since the Khrushchev era (1953-64) in other communist countries in Europe, Novi Beograd was fairly well equipped with communal services like kindergartens, playgrounds, sports facilities, etc. and its open spaces and built structures were designed in a less monotonous fashion.<sup>376</sup> In retrospect the pre-war modernist movement resumed and adapted to the new political circumstances. In the words of Kulić and Mrduljaš: “If the iconic modernist villa was a nearly extinct species, the experimentation that used to be associated with it was shifted to the collective scale, in some instances producing unusual results. The housing of socialist Yugoslavia was thus, if anything, relatively diverse, in many instances defying the stereotype of the drearily monotonous prefabricated neighborhoods.”<sup>377</sup> This assessment can be applied to Novi Beograd only to some extent. While some of the Block, especially those in the Central Zone and near Zemun show a variety of building typologies, the ones built during the 1970s – the so-called Mega-Blocks – have ‘copied’ the same few building types over and over again, with the aim to create as many dwellings as possible in a short amount of time. Even here though, as Topalović argues, was “the blocks’ exaggerated scale linked to collectivity, which was further articulated in the unusually careful design of public amenities and open spaces, including artificial topography, landscaping, and public art arranged around intercrossing pedestrian promenades inscribed into the centre of each block.”<sup>378</sup> The proximity to the Sava river and the amply designed sports- and leisure spaces created throughout these blocks still today give the appearance of a suburban scene.

375 Ibid: p.162.  
 376 See e.g. Hirt (2012): p. 85-87 for her account on Sofia’s modernist housing-complexes  
 377 Kulić, Vladimir/Mrduljaš, Maroje/Thaler, Wolfgang (2012b): *Modernism In-between: the Mediatory Architectures of Socialist Yugoslavia*. Berlin: Jovis Verlag, p.174, According to Kulić (et al.) besides the standardized “modernist towers and slabs”, “individual houses (...) were built in large numbers as well”, ranging from self-built to designs from commercial catalogues, some but few even architect designed, ibid.: p.174.  
 378 Topalović (2012): p.184.



Fig. 30 Block 23 in Novi Beograd's Central Zone, today



Fig. 31 Block 63 one of Novi Beograd's so-called Mega-Blocks, today

Besides the translation of the modernist motto of “*soleil, espace et verdure*”<sup>379</sup> (‘sun, space and greenery’) to the Yugoslav context, ‘social engineering’ was used to fulfil the vision of the party officials and theorists. Besides industrial prefabrication and “a technocratic approach to managing things”, “a technical way of interpreting social relationships” was applied to “urban production”<sup>380</sup>. In the fifties the concept for the ‘*Dwelling Community for 5000 people*’ was developed by experts, including sociologists, economists, city-planners and architects, to accomplish the requirements for the new social order. Rational and scientific planning principles included economic and social factors to program the ‘communities’. The amount of commercial services were calculated and the distances between them and the dwellings defined by the respective user group. Different zones of activities and movement defined and connected to different building typologies. In short all everyday needs were to be accounted and planned for.<sup>381</sup>

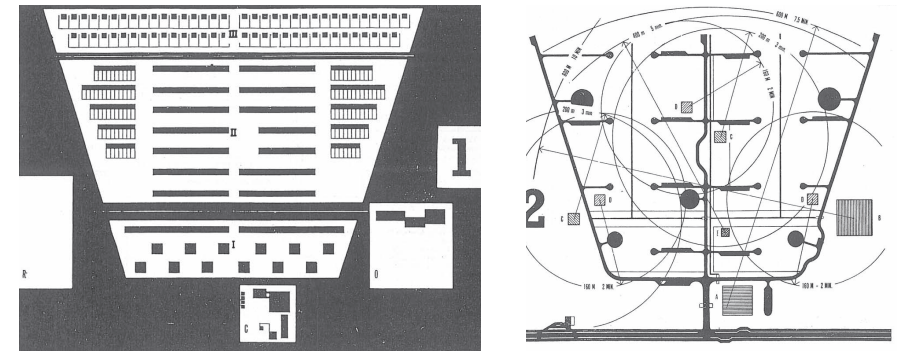


Fig.32 Diagrams showing the distribution of communal facilities in new settlements, published in *Stanbena Zajednica/Dwelling Community – Illustrated Review of Economic and Social Affairs, Family and Household* (1958)

379 Blagojević (2009); p.29.

380 Topalović (2012); p.185.

381 Milojević (2009) pp. 50-57.



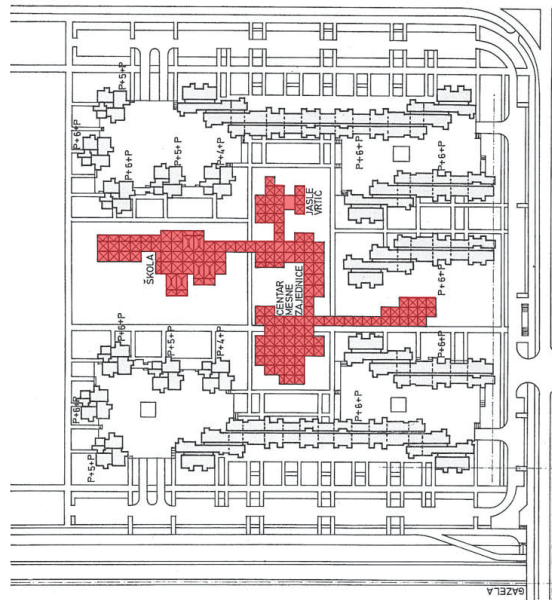
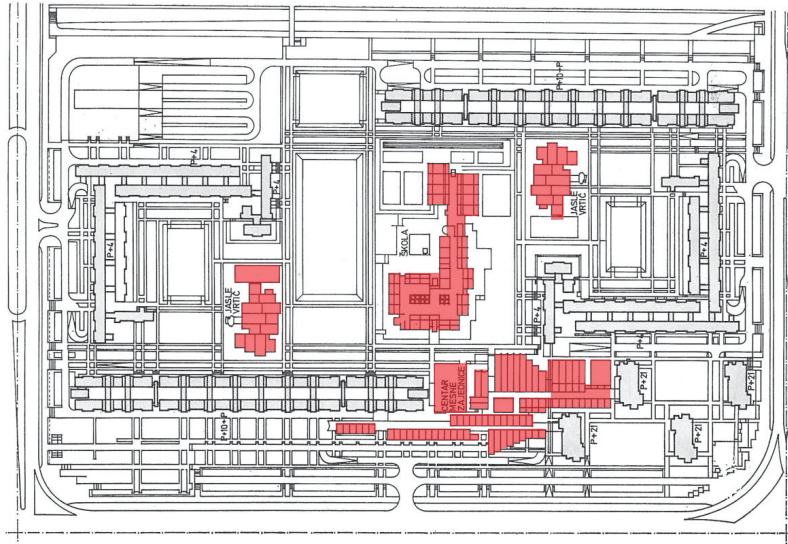


Fig 33. and 34. Plan, Block 23 (top) and Block 22 (bottom) in New Belgrade's Central Zone with communal spaces highlighted, both built in 1976

#### 4.2.3

#### The built form of the Mesna Zajednica – Novi Beograd's local community centres

The heart of each Dwelling Community was the *local community centre*<sup>382</sup> (also called *mesna zajednica*). Here the inhabitants could meet, buy their daily supplies, and get involved in the political organisation of their neighbourhood. They were designed as multifunctional spaces that included spaces for the political organisation (*Mesna Zajednica*) as well as a small shopping-mall for everyday needs. Their design and size varied from Block to Block but most neighbourhood-centres contained a post-office, grocery store, bank, restaurant or café, workshops, health-facilities, a library, spaces for the local administration, as well as spaces for group-meetings, festivities and celebrations. To complement the everyday services most Blocks in Novi Beograd had a nursery, kindergarten and a primary school as well as several playgrounds and sports-facilities. The communal facilities were to form the basis of the everyday life in the Blocks.<sup>383</sup> Time after work was generally programmed as time spent within the boundaries of the Block<sup>384</sup>, which leads to the question in how far the community was to be integrated into the broader network of the city and its society. The encapsulation of the communities, even though not comparable with today's gated communities, created a sense of fragmentation in Novi Beo-

382 According to Kulić, already "at the end of 1947, the Central Committee of the Party initiated a mass construction campaign for the so-called cooperative houses, several thousands of which were eventually built around the country. Usually containing a meeting room with a stage for small performances, a grocery store, a reading room, and several offices for the local agricultural cooperative and social organizations, the cooperative houses served as rural community centers. While their stylistic nuances ranged from modernist to more traditional ones, most contained certain vernacular overtones sensitive to their environment, if nothing else, at least pitches roofs and rustic stone walls. [...] Besides their practical purposes, in the predominantly unurbanized Yugoslavia cooperative houses were also the main loci of ideological indoctrination among the peasants, hosting state celebrations, public lectures, and various educational courses." Besides the cooperative houses being sites of Party-indoctrination they were, as Kulić argues, "the first significant battlegrounds of social conflict in the post-war Yugoslavia" when peasants sabotaged the "forced collectivization of agriculture" in 1948 when the CPY tried to prove its "orthodoxy" to the USSR before finally departing from Stalinism, Kulić (2009): pp.43f.

383 For the uses of the local community centres see e.g. Topalović (2012) pp. 186f; Erić (2009) p.16.

384 Milojević (2009) pp. 51

grad which got reinforced by the great distances between the Blocks making the district unsuitable for walking.

In practice the idea of an enclosed community that would function similar to a village became partly reality since most younger residents obtained their entire education there and spent most of their leisure time within their Block. This supported the territorial conception of the Blocks in every day life especially in the socialisation of children. Yet according to Le Normand, social scientists within Yugoslavia beginning in the 1960s argued that the Local Community in general was “too large to play an integrative role, as it contained several thousand people”.<sup>385</sup> In Novi Beograd the Blocks were comprised of between 4,000 and 15,000 inhabitants.

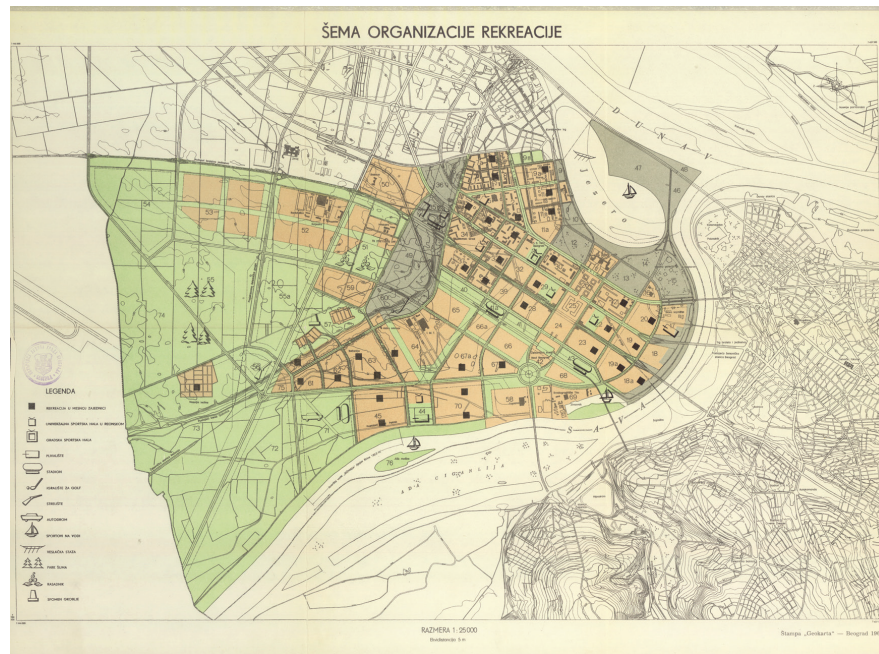


Fig. 35 Distribution of the Local Community Centres in Novi Beograd, scheme 1967

385 Le Normand (2008b): p.144.

While everyday life (with the exception of work) was, in theory, kept within the neighbourhood, the decisions or proposals made at the individual neighbourhood-meetings by the participating inhabitants for the Local Community left this realm and were brought forward at the municipal assembly. The political organisation within the neighbourhood can therefore be seen as a connection point of communal life with the greater public sphere, or at least its institutionalised part. Collective space within the Blocks was therefore also negotiated at the institutionally higher level. Here the needs of various Local Communities were negotiated and came into conflict with each other (see chapter 4.1.1). The lack of executive power at the neighbourhood-level that was mentioned above as well as the large numbers of inhabitants within one Local Community, might have added to the non-participation in this institutional part of citizen-participation. What was negotiated within the community, at least what required funds, left this realm and became something decided upon outside its sphere of influence. To what extent this antagonism within the self-management system was counterbalanced by local residents’ self-organisation outside the official system is not assessed in this research.

Today when one enters a Block in Novi Beograd, it does not feel like a space that offers something to the outsider. The intimacy a residential Block conveys does not invite strangers to linger nor are there many services that one could need. The *local community centre* in most cases is the only space where one feels a certain degree of publicness and offers a point of entry into this semi-private realm. The design of the centres, in terms of enclosed and open spaces, differs from Block to Block, in some cases because of the lack of funds a Block-centre was never built. Until the sixties their design was conceived by the architects as spaces open to experimentation. From the seventies onward they were mostly subject to standardized planning. This led to small variations in the construction-techniques and spatial configurations.<sup>386</sup>

386 Martinović (2012).

The first local community centre to be built in Yugoslavia was the “25<sup>th</sup> of May”, named after Tito’s birthday, in Novi Beograd’s *Block 1* (see chapter 3.8). Erected between 1963 and ‘67 it became the main social centre for the first inhabitants of the new municipality.<sup>387</sup> Between sand-dunes and swamps and the few finished apartment-buildings it was the only space in the area at the time where one could socialise. Besides the “offices of the local community” it offered a “small socialist version of a department store”<sup>388</sup>, a library, a restaurant and most of all a cinema – the *Fontana*, which soon became the unofficial name of the whole centre (Fig 37). According to Erić, “its symbolic importance for young generations was crucial, and many people from this part of the town say that they grew up in cinema ‘Fontana’”<sup>389</sup> Even though it was conceived of as a *local community centre* it became a *rayon-centre* (see Fig 29) that served the inhabitants of several Blocks. The *Fontana* “was one of the rare public spaces in New Belgrade and also a vital meeting place in a yet to be defined area where a neighbourhood could be formed.”<sup>390</sup>



Fig. 36 Local Community Centre ‘25th of May’ with Cinema *Fontana*, 2013

387 cf. Topalović (2012) p.187;

388 Erić (2009a): p.15.

389 Ibid: pp.15f.

390 Ibid.: p.15.



Fig. 37 Local Community Centre ‘25th of May’ with Cinema ‘*Fontana*’, around 1970



Fig. 38 Local Community Centre 'Sava' in Block 45, 1978



Fig. 39 Local Community Centre 'Sava' in Block 45, 2013

The year 1974, with the passing of the new constitution and the adoption of a new *General Urban Plan*, was “the decisive moment in the development of the Local Communities”.<sup>391</sup> By strengthening the system of self-government on the lowest level the construction of community centres became a high priority. According to Martinović, Belgrade’s city government concluded in accordance with its municipal governments that until 1980 37 new centres should be built on the territory of Belgrade.<sup>392</sup> Belgrade with its 16 municipalities at the time and a population of more than one million already had 286 community centres but in many of the new housing quarters, like Novi Beograd, they were still missing, as were basic services for daily supply.<sup>393</sup> As an example, Martinović names Novi Beograd’s Block 45, one of the Mega-Blocks built for 15,000 inhabitants in an area of 57ha in the early 1970s (see chapter 4.2.2.), which had “only four small grocery stores”<sup>394</sup> The lack of funds to build the designated centres led to the design of industrially prefabricated structures (Fig. 38). A practice that aroused criticism among the architectural profession<sup>395</sup> that was generally becoming more and more critical of the modern architecture.<sup>396</sup>

As an organisational unit of the city the Local Community was to deal with tasks such as the care for children and the old, offer adult education and deal with unemployment. The local communal institutions played a crucial role in the process to “mobilize human resources of the community”<sup>397</sup>. For example informal knowledge was harnessed by engaging untrained members of the community in service like housekeeping, care for children and the old. Literacy courses and courses to gain additional qualifications were also organised.<sup>398</sup> As Marija Martinović points out, “In-between public space and private space emerged a whole new category of common space”. With the

391 Martinović (2012): p.4.

392 cf. *ibid.*: pp.4f.

393 cf. *ibid.*: p.5.

394 *Ibid.*: p.5.

395 cf. *ibid.*: p.5f.

396 On the critique of modern architecture from within the profession see e.g. Blagojević (2009c); LeNormand (2008b).

397 Milojević (2009): p. 51.

398 *Ibid.*

“concept of the Local Community, one of the key categories of socialist Yugoslavia” an attempt was made to “produce a new social space”.<sup>399</sup> Besides the aim to provide housing and services, Novi Beograd’s socio-urban structure had to play an integrative role for the diverse incoming population<sup>400</sup>.

Communal and public spaces were supposed to play a crucial part in the socialist vision of communal living. The community-centre, schoolyards, park-lands and sport facilities were to provide space accessible to the whole ‘community’. On a semi-public level communal spaces were also provided within the apartment-buildings. Most had a communal roof-top terrace, laundries, storage spaces and some had whole floors allocated to the use of all inhabitants. The residents of an apartment-building or in cases of very long buildings the inhabitants of an entrance formed a *tenants’ assembly* or *house council* (*skupštine stanara*). It represented the self-management system “on a micro-level”<sup>401</sup> (see chapter 4.1.1). Here the inhabitants could deal with problems and needs concerning their building. All buildings including the apartments as well as the land they were built on in Novi Beograd were social property, i.e. owned by society as a whole. In practice this meant buildings were property of their enterprise or institution. Through the introduction of the house-council residents should get a feeling of ownership and responsibility. The inhabitants did not own their flat in the sense of private property but had the right to use them. Usually the apartments were not given to them by the state but the company they worked for (see chapter 3.7).

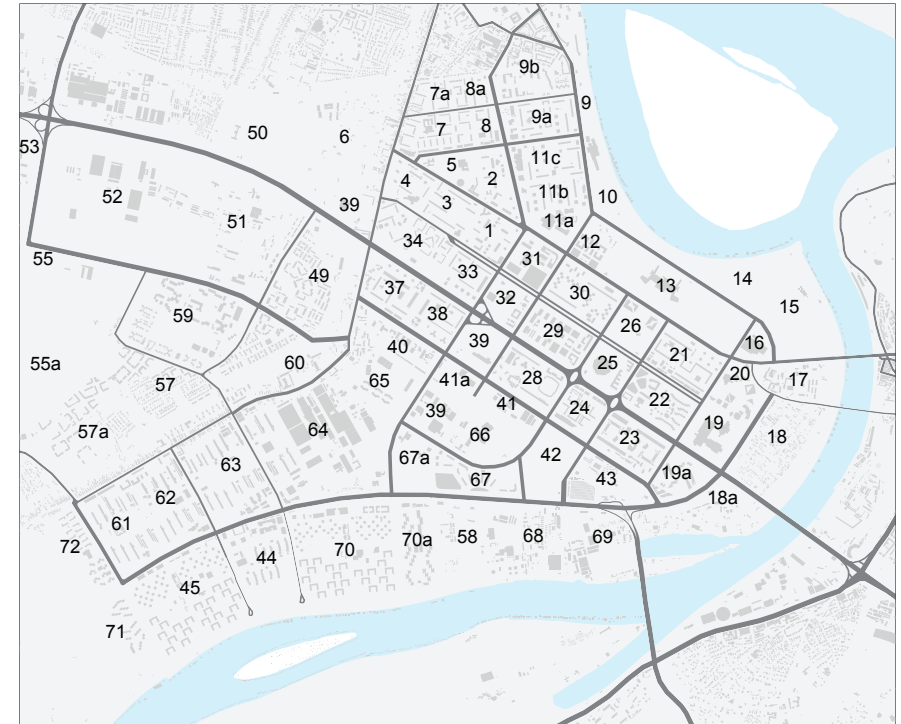


Fig. 40 Numbering System of Novi Beograd’s Blocks

399 Martinović, (2012): p.1.

400 Topalović (2012) p.185

401 Ibid.: p.186.



Fig. 41 Map of Novi Beograd

### 4.3

#### *Everyday-Life in Novi Beograd's Neighbourhoods and the Perception of the Mesna Zajednica today – Interviews with Local Residents*

Since the 1990s Novi Beograd, like the rest of the city has changed quite drastically. The 1990's were a time of political, economic and social crisis that was evoked by the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia between 1991 and 1999. The results in Serbia were international isolation, hyperinflation, and the collapse of the law system. During this time informal and illegal building practices were predominant in the urban development of all of Belgrade. Between 1992/93 almost the entire socially-owned housing stock of Novi Beograd was privatised by selling the apartments to their inhabitants at very low prices.<sup>402</sup> Functions that did not exist in Novi Beograd until then were created informally or illegally, especially small scale commercial facilities, within the modernist housing blocks and on public land like green-strips, on the water of the Danube and Sava. Around 2000, with the stabilisation of the country, local and soon foreign investors were attracted by Novi Beograd's central position within the city and the huge amounts of land that lay derelict. Office buildings, shopping malls, business parks and new luxurious apartments were built on the empty blocks or the open spaces next to the modernist apartment-buildings. Today New Belgrade is home to about 236,000 people and covers an area of around 4,100 hectare making it the most populous municipality of Belgrade<sup>403</sup>.

What did these changes mean for the residents of the *Blocks*? What happened to the socialist communities since the war-period and the system-transformation? During my stay in Belgrade in June 2013 I interviewed several inhabitants of Novi Beograd. In semi-structured, open-ended interviews of around one hour each I asked residents of the former socialist Blocks how they perceive the changes, what they like about living in Novi

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402 For the privatisation of housing in Yugoslavia and Belgrade see Petrović (2001).

403 For statistical data see the homepage of the City of Belgrade, here: <http://www.beograd.rs/cms/view.php?id=202082>, last access 20.5.2014

Beograd and what problems they are faced with. Most interesting for this research was the question about what the term *Mesna Zajednica* means to them. I received a variety of answers some of which are reproduced in parts in the following section.

**Interview with Balša and Tanja** (14<sup>th</sup> June 2013): Balša (law student) lives in Novi Beograd since his birth in 1989. First he lived in Block21 in the Central Zone and later he moved with his mother to Block 28. Tanja (student of economics, 28) moved to Belgrade in around 2009. The couple shares the flat with Balša's mother.

.....

J: So I'll ask you both: what does the term *Mesna Zajednica* mean for you? Because for me as an outsider I'm not entirely sure what it means for the people in New Belgrade.

Balša: It means nothing to us. Ahhm it was a good idea to have a – how do you say *Mesna Zajednica* in English?

Tanja: [speaks Serbian] community?

B: *Mesna Zajednica* okay. The idea was we have in every house – ahh building you know in every entrance of a building we have a *Skupštine Stanara* [house-council].

J: What does that mean?

B: Its like a *Mesna Zajednica* in little.

T: A little bit like board.

B: I'm a president of a *Skupštine Stanara* and we all work together and make some decisions about this entrance and *Mesna Zajednica* – ahh the idea was that all the presidents form the *Skupštine Stanara* from all the entrance go into the *Mesna Zajednica* and make decisions about our community you know but now nobody wants to do that because nobody got

time, ah you need money for that – well that's not really a problem – money, but mostly will – nobody wants to do it and ah people who work in *Mesna Zajednica* uhhh the main reason they are doing it is because of the personal achievings you know they have a lot of space they can rent it, they rent it to their friends make some money and stuff like that – you know I can make – ah like a president of Skupštine stanara – I can make a complaints, something of an idea what we could do in our community and I can go to the *Mesna Zajednica* and meet with the president of the *Mesna Zajednica* and I couldn't do nothing because ahh first of all they don't want to do anything except sit and takes a little money you know we are talking about 100 -200euros per month you know and they are uhh

T: Sto? [100 in Serbian]

B: Da. [yes]

J: Okay, what to rent or that's the money they are getting?

B: From all the renting and the all the criminal activity as well.

J: But so I'm not sure if I understand – so officially the president of the *Mesna Zajednica* works for the city? Do they get elected by the municipality of New Belgrade?

B: Nono we elect the president of the *Mesna Zajednica*.

J: You did?

B: But ah in the last of couple of years we don't know who is the president of the *Mesna Zajednica*. *Mesna Zajednica*. In 2007 – 2006 my friend was the president of the *Mesna Zajednica*, and all he did he made one fountain work and after after a month – the children played around they put trees in the holes and they broke it.

J: Okay, but he tried to do something at least.

B: Yes but the only – the thing he did he got a janitor from ah I don't know he found some guy he got the u-key – you know what is a u-key?

J: No? Its a tool?

T: [speaks Serbian]

B: Yes like a French key. Went to the fountain and turned it on with the key and that's the only thing. And that's the only thing we should do: go from this fountain to another, clean a little bit – but nobody wants to do it.

J: Okay okay, so when you became the president of this building – I don't know how long are you doing this?

B: Ahh pfhh, 1 year – 10months.

J: Okay, okay.

T: [speaks Serbian]. Around 10 months.

B: 10 months.

J: Okay, so you thought oh I want to do something or was there ahh.

B: Nonono, the city made a decision because we all have old elevators – lifts that they all must be repaired and ah every entrance – every *Skupštine Stanara* – ahh a report from the city that they must repair their elevators.

T: If they don't they turn them off.

B: If they don't do it they will turn them off.

J: Oh – when was that – a year ago?

B: mhm.

J: So what happened here – did you fix it?

B: Yes of course. but the problem was nobody wants to wanted to be the president and ah ...

T: We came from the vacation [speaks Serbian].

B: yes we came from the vacation ...

T: ... and then we wanted to – we walked to the 10<sup>th</sup> floor with bags and everything [laughs] disaster.

B: Its not a problem about bags I can carry her with the bags but Jalla [the



dog] has a problem with hips she cant go through the stairs.

T: She is old.

B: And I had a choice: I could walk ten floors with the stairs or I can become a president and go several times with the hmmm [to Tanja:] help me ...

T: [speaks Serbian]

B: ... with the institution that repair elevators and make a contract with them so they – and that's the whole story.

J: And everyone from this stairwell had to pay a certain amount?

B: Nono.

T: Well lucky for us we are renting some ah space.

B: Basement.

T: Ja basement. Because that we had to pay many said that they don't have money, they don't want to pay and that's the problem with many buildings that they don't have incomes they can't make arrangements.

B: Nonono, the people on lower stairs they don't want to pay for the elevator the people on higher stairs they don't want ehh they don't want to pay anything that has ahh that has no relationship with like plumbing and pipes and things like that.

J: Okay I see. But what is this space downstairs?

T: We are renting so we have money.

J: You are renting it out to someone.

T: Ja we are renting for some film company [speaks Serbian].

B: 'Nemex'.

J: What are they doing?

T: [speaks Serbian]

B: Trading.

J: Its a shop or something.

B: Nonono, they are using the basements for ahh storage, like a magazin.

J: Now I see. Okay so you can rent that out to them.

T: So we have money actually we have money on her [?] account so we paid fixing elevator with that. And also we have now to change electric boxes because the law is now that we can't use this format any-more, we have to have something other, so now we would have to change, that we need to change ah for a fire – fire hydrants something like that because its old and when it was fire in apartment just there – I wasn't there then – it was before me they had problem to find hydrant to come inside so they had to use other building – so we have lots of things to do, and like I said lucky for us we're renting that, but many buildings don't have anything to rent so they need to collect money from their neighbours.

B: Tenants.

T: Tenants, well they are like tenants but pfh.

J: Jaja I understand.

T: And then start problems – “I don't have money, I don't want to pay blablalba”.

J: Another thing I saw was advertising on the roofs of some buildings.

T: Jaja.

J: Also it's the same principle?

T: Ja also, yes yes, you're renting that space that's ok.

B: Which space?

T: On the terrace.

J: The roof-space.

T: When they have commercials – billboard.

B: Aha yes, yes.

T: That's also good – ahh also they now started in elevators to put panels like with commercials so its also good thing.

J: Okay so that money usually goes into the building.

T: Ja it goes into the building.

J: ah okay okay, its not like one person keeping it.

T: Nonono, ah with our law now we – every building have to have its personal number and – tax-number – like 'pdv' now we are paying tax – 10% – because we are renting. If you don't have anything any money from renting then you don't have to pay taxes but you still have to have personal number of your building [speaks Serbian] an agency of private ehhm ...

B: ... property

T: Its like a small private – like little small company.

J: Jajaja, interesting I didn't know that, its an interesting organisation of buildings.

T: Well they did it because the money they wanted to take money [laughs] not because of us, but also when you're paying taxes you can ask from ah the city to help you renovate your building – they said [can't understand] when you pay tax.

J: Okay, if you don't then ...

T: ... Then you can't have.

J: Cause ahmm, I mean I read that, I think in 92-93, they sold most of the apartments so before that the city had to repair everything like – someone told me even inside the apartment but now its all ...

T: private ja.

J: ... private.

T: [speaks Serbian]

B: When this building was made we had a space in lower basement for a jan-

itor and you – if you had a problem with you know like a bulb – breaks, you call him and he comes up and fix it.

J: ah really even light bulbs.

B: Like a handyman, and he takes care about the entire building.

J: Okay, okay interesting, so maybe one more question about the actual like community centre. You were saying that they don't do anything, the presidents you don't even know who it is at the moment but do you or both of you do you wish that there would be a place where you could actually go and complain, or maybe do something there ...

B: Yes of course.

J: ... like meet the neighbours, or is there something you would like to happen?

B: Yes of course and ah in *Mesna Zajednica* was the centre of the block everybody went there you know to eh ...

T: complain?

B: No to socially interact -interact, play chess, watch footballs ... drink, have fun you know.

T: Talk about something ...

J: You could meet your neighbours?

B: You could went there, you know when you are bored you went there meet someone talk with them.

J: Sounds nice. So when did that stop, I like that they didn't do that any-more – or when you didn't go there any-more?

T: [speaks Serbian]

B: uhhf around 2000, the only thing that worked in *Mesna Zajednica* was the bar you know and its not the bar like it used to you know to see my father, her father you know drunken alcoholics, scum, hobos

J: Ja, but does the bar still exist?

B: No.

J: No okay.

B: They rebuilt the entire space inside and made offices and they rent them – rent it. and nobody knows where the money goes.

J: Okay, I see I see. so you can't just go in there and ...

T: No usually if you want to do something you need to start partition [petition].

**Interview with Nikola (20<sup>th</sup> june 2013).** Nikola (architect, 31) Nikola lives in Novi Beograd since 1984. He lived in two Blocks: no 3 and later no. 11.

.....

J: So in the two blocks you grew up was there a *Mesna Zajednica*? Do you remember?

N: Yes I remember. The one in the first block [Block 3] when I was maybe 10 or 11 [~1992/93] they turned it into a billiard-club – the space I think it was no longer needed. But in the other block – in the Block 11 – I think it's still alive, I mean they change posters on the windows from time to time and I see some chairs moving inside but I never participated in any of the events and I never really understand what are they doing.

J: Jaja. And you were saying before that your parents they do remember that it was like an administrative unit.

N: yes they remember it like the smallest government unit and with the idea that it would better understand local needs from the people from the block and that they can transfer those needs ah or just pass it to municipality to do something, and apparently from time to time it was successful, their initiatives were realized but I don't think that was a very ah successful system or a system that always gain results I think it was just from time to time basis.

J: Do you know what kind of things they brought through with this system? Did they say anything?

N: They said something about these children playground could be renovated, we could do can you please help us or

J: but that was in the 80's or ...

N: Yes, that was earlier. Maybe these kind of activities continued through 90's but I don't think that government listened to any of those initiatives then ...

J: okay okay

N: so ... I think it was – their role was to listen to the people and to transfer their wishes or needs to authorities with power because I don't think *Mesna Zajednica* – I think it didn't have any kind of real executive power at the time. I think it was only ah body that would collect questions, needs and transfer it on. I don't think it ever ruled on any budget or any kind of ... didn't have any financial ... uhmm

J: like a budget they got from the municipality?

.....

N: But you should probably find out was there like a president of the *Mesna Zajednica* was he appointed or was he chosen?

[I tell him about Balsa and how he sees the organisation of the *Mesna Zajednica*, and the in-transparent activities that happen at his M.Z., that noone knows who the money goes to ....]

N: I think its almost that situation in every Block – I won't be surprised, actually I would be surprised if there is a *Mesna Zajednica* in any Block like really working like I previously described – that would be strange

J: Ja well I'll see – I'll speak to someone from the municipality in a few days  
.....

N: But now when I think, I think it was kind of a brilliant idea because ah this socialist eh system they were, we were, I mean my parents were

and maybe they influenced me, ahh they grew up in a system where you, the country or the government will provide for you that was the reasoning, you have to work but if you need something they will provide, like apartment or something like that, and they all work for a mutual benefit. So I think it was interesting that in that kind of collective spirit they felt need to be in touch with the local situations, to tell them what are the needs. So when to ehmm when I say it like this it sounds like a good – sounds like a great system actually [we both laugh] but what is funny, maybe not funny but strange is that this kind of collectivity maybe never catch in Novi Beograd – never caught ground – never grew on Novi Beograd. Because the – there is some kind of identification with people with the Block – “like this is my Block” – there were fight about from which Block you are. Ahh but the truth is the – some blocks are more vibrant than the others, they have better energy, they have more activity, and more social life than others. So I think the more Blocks are pretty much uhm – people are isolated to their buildings and their apartments with lack of that collective ahh identity that was common for a system they lived in – so that’s maybe ahhmh like the opposite of what *Mesna Zajednica* was.

J: Ja, instead of like isolating people from each other it should bring them together, but it didn’t?

Short break: our food at the restaurant is arriving ...

J: So what Blocks do you think like you know created this isolation, like which ones?

N: I can tell you which ones are better – are the best.

J: Okay

N: I think number 2 right across the New Belgrade municipality, number 23

J: Ja?

N: It’s right across Sava Centre.

J: hmhm ja

N: and maybe 45 or 70

J: Ah they work good? Okay.

N: Ja and they were ... And they have uhm like integration of people inside, they created the common events – in number 2 they have a football-tournament, they have all kinds of tournaments in sport and things like that [laughs]

J: Cool, still going?

N: Still going, yes yes. In 23 there is a big ah playgrounds around the school and the kindergarten and you can always find people there. And when I had couple, no I have couple of friends from 23 Block they all have friends from inside the Block – like Block-friends...I don’t think that’s the situation in many blocks.

.....

N: Maybe one part of your research could be what role *Mesna Zajednica* could be – ahh I am stopped because at the moment all kind of initiative is almost definitely not going to work

J: Why not?

N: Because there is so much worrying about everyday survival that anything out of the survival doesn’t have a chance, I mean it does but its very very hard. And most of the activities they really live on the power of the individual behind them – ahh I’m worrying that that kind of collective spirit that organized them just isn’t there any more. I think they can work only if you have one or two individuals willing to put their time and money – maybe not money, but just time and all energy and efforts in them.

J: Do you think they could make other people participate?

N: Yes, I think they can. But it will require enormous amount of their effort. And I don’t think ahh anyone is now willing to put that much effort in anything. I’m speaking including me, because I tried some of these things.

J: it’s probably individualization as well ...

N: I think there is still a will and a need because you can always hear talks like ohh this doesn't look good, if we could just group all from building and clean that behind the street or there is all kind of talks ... And – I mean they are right [laughs]. Just nobody wants to be the one who says lets do it.

J: Jaja

N: Or nobody wants to be the one who will go out there and do it first. Ahh so I'm just thinking will it be any different if *Mesna Zajednica* is no longer like self-organized, if it's government regulated. It somehow feels that maybe in a better system it will work but [laughs]

J: okay where there is lots of money and you can just get someone to clean ...

N: of course ... I'm not just thinking about money I'm thinking about a system that isn't so much in corruption and a system that really values [values] personal effort.

J: Okay, you feel like that's not?

N: I feel like it's not value ah – its not appreciated enough. So if you start an action, most of the time – now I'm talking from my experience – most of the time you just after a while just say it isn't worth that much effort because you don't see the approval around you

J: Okay, but I'm kind of thinking if it was different lets say in the 60's and 70's where maybe more people actually went to the *Mesna Zajednica* and discussed [these issues] things ...

N: I think it was, I think it was.

J: ... and it was maybe not mandatory but it was one of things you could do because there wasn't much else to do maybe you know in New Belgrade

N: I think there was, but they have this spirit or way of thinking ehmm like we are building this for ourselves – like we are building the country for ourselves we – just give me a second to phrase it properly

J: Jaja

N: actually it was maybe a propaganda that formed that kind of feeling, maybe it wasn't really into people but eh propaganda was all about working together and giving yourself to *kolektiv* – do you know the word *kolektiv*?

J: Jaja– collectivism

N: Collectivism but. So you had to give yourself to, which now I'm thinking the Communist Party they eh not banned but disapproved everything that had to do with the church and Christianity but that kind of thinking – giving yourself to the collective its pretty rooted in Christianity – or particular in Orthodox one. So that's maybe a strange connection.

.....

**Interview with Bojan** (27<sup>th</sup> June 2013): Bojan (student of spatial planning, 27) lives in Novi Beograd's Block 62, one of the Mega-Blocks, since he was born. He lives in an apartment with his parents and his brother.

Julia: Since when do you live in Novi Beograd (NBG)?

Bojan: Since I was born [laughs]

J: Okay

B: 1986

J: and in which block did you live then?

B: always in Block 62 ... probably I will die there [laughs] same apartment.

J: So how did your parents get the apartment?

B: Ahh well, my father worked as a civilian in the army. Lots of apartments in this part of NBG was property of the army so he got this apartment like for free

J: Ja okay and did your parents buy the apartment?

B: Ah yes, yes when the communism fall in Yugoslavia. You know in 1993 or 1992 you already could buy ah the right to own this flat and ah my father had small luck, he win on some kind of lottery you know so ah in that time because of ah the inflation you know he bought this flat like maybe for 250 or 500 Deutschmarks or something like that.

J: 500DM?

B: ja [laughs]

J: that's a cheap apartment

B: yeah [laughs]

J: and now he owns it forever?

B: yeah.

J: okay

B: I mean technically because buy the law in Serbia you know you just own the, how to say, the flat but not the land – the land is always the property of the country so building is on the land of the country so.

J: so once the building is gone

B: if they decide to smash it to build some road or something like that. But they must pay reasonable prize for the flat you know something like that

J: and do you know is the building now owned by all the apartment owners or is the building still like state owned?

B: well you know that's one of the biggest problems which people who live in my building have. ah that's the strange because for example ahhm the city or the country recognize you are only the owner of the flat and they are the owner of everything outside of the building but the problem is what about the elevators, stairs, façade, inside of the building. you know they counted that this ah surface belongs to all people in the building

J: okay, so you have to maintain it?

B: yes and that's the problem because when you want to fix something you

have lots of people who don't want to pay they expect that country will pay for it so and we have really stupid law for example if you want to change something in a building you must have 100% of votes. But that's impossible because on the meetings you will never have 100% of people who live in the building of course nobody ... somebody will vote against it and that's the reason why our buildings look like ah awful [laughs]

J: Okay okay. and is there a building assembly? Like ahh ...

B: Jaja

J: And do you or your parents go to that?

B: Well we don't have president ... maybe ahh almost 3 or 4 years or something like that. we had couple of meetings and yes my parents were there but ah nothing happened, you know lots of fights between people arguments and stuff like that ah everything starts because some elevators in my building and how ah people would pay for the reconstruction of the elevators you know. so that was the main problem you know lots of old people who don't understand the capitalistic way of making business or something like that and ah from that point everything collapsed, like for example interphone in my building doesn't work for like 2 or 3 years or something like that.

J: Okay, so nothing gets fixed now.

B: Jaja

J: Okay but before that like 4 years ago there was a president who was trying ...

B: well ah yeah ja we had lets say last president was a woman from my building but ahm lets say she was not so much dedicated to this work you know lets say the president before her he was dedicated but you could see that ah he will work more if he has some interest for himself and if something is against his interest he will not do it at all. so that was one of the main problems ah for example he was living on the 13th floor maybe the highest level in our building we are living on the 1st floor we don'T use

elevators for example and he was totally for that we reconstruct the elevators but ah on the other hand he was against that ahh to shut down one canal in our building. because we have one canal and ahm architect imagined that if you want to throw your garbage you know you will use this canal and garbage will fall directly to the container but the main problem was that this canal was how to say ah have lots of iron inside corroded ...

J: corrode?

B: ja lots of rust you know and it was broken, so ah people were throwing you know ah plastic bags with garbage and you know in one moment it was totally full. I don't know till 6th or 7th floor you know and it smells awful and stuff like that. but he didn't want to shut it down because he is using this from 13th floor. For him it was too much to go into elevator and go down 13 floors and throw garbage into container. and ah for example my parents were ah supporting this idea of reconstruction of elevators – it doesn't matter we don't use it but the problem was about the prizes. so ah this president said i got the best ways to pay per person because he has only 2 person in his flat you know on the first floor we have 3 families 12 persons on 13th floor 3 flats 4 persons. so it doesn't make sense that people from 1st floor pay 20000dinars and people from 13th floor pay only 4000 something like that.

.....

Julia: Now before we started talking about the *Mesna Zajednica*. What does that mean for you? Does it mean anything for you? What do you connect with it?

B: I just connect like ah *Mesna Zajednica* with two things: the first one is the people are using these space of this *Mesna Zajednica* just to go there and vote when we have elections and the second ah thing which I think about *Mesna Zajednica* is some really really small well lets not say shopping mall but some place where you have like post office, pharmacy, restaurant or I don't know something like that, supermarket, you know ah.

J: basic?

B: jaja basic stuff.

J: Which one is your *Mesna Zajednica*? like in terms of administrative unit?

B: well pffh – I don't know. Maybe it's called '*Republica*' because of the primary school that's that was the name of the primary school.

J: Where is it?

B: Its just in Block 62.

J: Wait a minute is it just at the end ahh wait no. [we look at the map]

...

J: Okay and the, so there is no ... is there a mesna zajednica with a little shopping mall?

B: nono not in my Block. maybe if I quite understood we gravitate around for this – this is the *Mesna Zajednica* 'Cozera' maybe these blocks – block 45 have this one 70 has this one [he shows on the map where they are]

J: jaja I know these two. I haven't been at 'Cozera'

B: Its interesting because 'Cozera' have the cinema and it was one of the rare that our neighbourhood have our own cinema, but nobody goes you know

J: is it still open?

B: I don't know – its privatized, somebody bought it and I know that it was, they reconstructed it as cinema for the kids – they were playing only cartoons and stuff like that, but I just passed by I never saw some, in my life I was there only once to see some movie as a kid.

J: Do you know if it was more popular in the past?

B: Nono

J: And you go there to vote?

B: Nono, I vote in other *Mesna Zajednica* because I'm registered that I'm living in other Block, Block 23 my papers are for this flat.

J: and is it a nice *Mesna Zajednica* there?

B: nono, I mean its nice because for example when I was a kid ahh how to explain – now we have two flats in Block23 my grandparents lived [there] so often I went there to see my grandma you know and I always liked because it looks nice they have some small cafés, supermarket you know basic things, but for me it was always interesting because everything is done in red bricks – and in my neighbourhood they are all white lets say as a kid that is the first impression and they during 90s had a really really cool shop for toys for kids and I always ran there to see some new toys [laughs] something like that. But *Mesna Zajednica* as only the space its only the space you went in 1973 or something

J: You mean it stayed the same?

B: Ja like the chairs and everything inside.

J: Did your parents hang out there to socialize and meet their friends, was it like a meeting point for them?

B: In *Mesna Zajednica*? Nonono how to say uhmm my grandparents first got flat near *Fontana*.

J: So really early?

B: I think that they came 1962 or something 1961 I don't know.

J: I think that's early for New Belgrade.

B: I know that when my father came [to New Belgrade] he went to primary school here so he had less than 15 years, I don't know when because they were changing lots of flats because my grandpa was a military official and travelling in the country a lot you know if army said you must go to live in Zagreb and work there he could not say no.

J: Jajaj I understand.

B: stuff like that. And my father lived there for a really long time. When my mother came to study here on university they often you know went there to socialize with other people around 'Fontana' place because it was

ahh my fathers neighbourhood you know he knew all the people and my mum was renting a flat in block 28 so it is near, its close so they were much more in that part and ahh then my grandparents moved to Block 62 in 1979 my parents married and started to live with them but then my father got the apartment in Block 23 but they just changed – my grandparents went to live in Block 23 and we um my parents stayed here.

J: Okay okay. But uhm. I was just wondering because your grandparents are from this older generation and if – I'm assuming that your grandpa because he was in the army I thought maybe he was into the system of socialism more – he had more connections to it

B: Definitely, personally he saw himself as a real communist and he died as a communist. Till the end of his life he was against capitalism so uhm of course in that time and after the break-up of Yugoslavia he was always supporting this kind of politic – you know people should have free flats, country must pay attention on everything and stuff like that so.

.....

**Interview with Vera and Đujo** (8<sup>th</sup> June 2013): Vera and Đujo are a married couple, they are both former workers at IMT – tractor factory in Novi Beograd and are retired today. Vera was born in Novi Beograd in 1953 where she lived in the so-called 'Pioneer'-Block that became known under the name *Paviljoni*. Đujo moved to Novi Beograd in the 60s to work and lived in a so-called singles-hotel for workers. During the 1980s they moved to Block 70a and in 2000 they moved to a smaller apartment in Block 63 where they still live. Their son Nikola (29) and his flat-mate Dahmir are translating and adding their knowledge.

.....

Julia: Is there or was there a *Mesna Zajednica* in this [your] Block?

Dahmir: translates into Serbian



Vera: da [yes]

Đujo: speaks Serbian

D: [translates] Every Block have their own *Mesna Zajednica*.

Nikola: and it still exist.

J: so the local community centre?

V: speaks Serbian

J: And did you go there or do you still go there?

N: translates into Serbian

V: speaks Serbian

D: [transl.] They go for voting.

N: [transl.] For elections.

J: Okay okay, but not to do any social activities?

N: No. translates into Serbian

V: Na

Đujo: speaks Serbian.

Dahmir: [transl.] There is some manifestation but they don't go.

Đujo: speaks Serbian

Dahmir: [transl.] There is also some law.

Đujo: speaks Serbian

D: [transl.] If you have some like problems regarding living in the Blocks you can go to complain.

N: some kind of [can't understand]advisor.

J: At every *Mesna Zajednica*?

D: On [at] your own.

N: This is much more like administration centre not like community centre.

J: okay

V + N: speaking Serbian

N: [transl.] In some *Mesna Zajednica* exist place for persons in pension – retired person.

J: Okay

D: For older persons.

N: They organise some meetings.

D: yeah but I think mostly its like administration centre so go there if you need you personal ID and your passport

J: Oh okay.

N: Nonono, in *Mesna Zajednica* you can not do this, [speaks Serbian and asks Vera]

V: speaks Serbian

Đujo: speaks Serbian

D: [transl.] So they can help you if you have any problems in the living in this specific part of city.

N: To facilitate the everyday activities.

J: Sorry?

N: To facilitate everyday activities in community.

J: Okay.

N: much more like this to solve some problems ah and that's is.

J: And was it always like that or was it different like in the 60's and 70's?

D: translates into Serbian

N: translates into Serbian

Đujo: speaks Serbian

D: [transl.] Ja in the 80's there was much more social contact and people did go in the *Mesna Zajednica* for – I don't know how to say – speaks Serbian

N: To socialize.

Đujo: speaks Serbian

D: [transl.] Ja but after 90s there was like a crisis and you know in the Serbia so people just start going out and you know so that was the difference.

J: Okay. What about the 'Fontana', cause you lived near there, and you as well [Vera and Đujo], was it an important place for Novi Beograd?

N: translates into Serbian

V: speaks Serbian

D: [transl.] There was cinema

V: speaks Serbian

Đujo: speaks Serbian

D: [transl.] There was a bigger shop you know drug-store.

N: This was like a centre of New Belgrade.

J: ja

V: speaks Serbian

Đujo: speaks Serbian

D: [transl.] There was also restaurant, so yeah people did go there to meet other people.

Đujo: speaks Serbian

D: [transl.] *Robna kuća* thats tricky [laughs] okay *robna kuća* was ...

N: ... its like commercial centre but small – this is a house with goods – this is the translation

V: speaks Serbian

D: [transl.] And there was a hall of sport – for sport activities you also [?]

J: This one? [point on the map]

D: its still there

J: Ja

Dahmir: so ja it was really like centre

J: Mhh, okay and the Merkator was here too?

N + V: speak Serbian

N: [transl.] They built later

J: Okay okay so first it was the 'Fontana' and the sports hall okay

N: translates into Serbian

V + Đujo: speak Serbian

Đujo: speaks Serbian

N: [19]71

Đujo: speaks Serbian

D: [transl.] And they started building the mall

J: Ja the 'Merkator'?

D: Ja

J: okay okay. and what else hmm

N: speaks Serbian

V: speaks Serbian

N: [transl.] They also meet in front of the ah- this building [points on the map]- this is *Palace of Federation of Yugoslavia* and there was big fountain in front with different lights and they ah from pavilions [name of neighbourhood of Block 7, where Vera grew up] they walk here and spend

some time around the fountain.

N: Some kind of place for meeting, walking, chatting [laughs]

J: okay, but that stopped cause its always empty now

D: Its quite empty now.

N: Now this is some when some foreign higher delegation came they.

Đujo: speaks Serbian

N: [transl.] Administration of Ex-Yugoslavia was in this building and now this is Palace of Serbia but the main hall is called Room Yugoslavia, and when some delegation come there you see them and some ministries are still inside

J: Okay, but not the parliament?

N: Nono

J: And in every housing block [apartment-building] the people have to organise themselves to ahh – like all the flat owners have to organise themselves to fix things is that true?

D: translates into Serbian

V: speaks Serbian

D: speaks Serbian

V: speaks Serbian

D: So the heating and the water is kind of organised.

N: From some institution.

D: Some institution

N: In building where we are now this is under of military

D: Under [ownership?] of military so the military kind of organise heating and water.

N: They still repair all this stuff. But now we need pay for this.

J: Jaja. But its owned by the military?

N: Jaja. the building its ownership of the military.

D: Some building its not universal.

J: Aha ja like this block for example ...

N: Like this block is ownership of factory IMT.

J: Still?

N: still I think not ... [asks in Serbian]

V: speaks Serbian

Đujo: speaks Serbian

Dahmir: [transl.] The apartment was not from just IMT there was like several fabriks [factories ] that owned – its not whole building from IMT.

J: Okay.

N: IMT bought only few apartments in this building and because of this all of this stuff uhmmm heating and communal stuff done by public uhmmm [speaks Serbian] – housing uhmm organisation something like this

D: [speaks Serbian] Just like ...

N: ... city housing

D: Ja city housing. So its the organisation that usually do that.

N: and we pay every month for this stuff.

D: And there is – how do you say – unity in every building and they have like president of the ehm

J: Ja that's what I wanted to ask

D: So they can [speaks Serbian]

N: This is system of some ahmm ... [speaks Serbian: samouprava] – self-management system. Because in all Yugoslavia everything functioned like this and people vote for the one person who will be the president and

if they need some other persons like financial advi... – helper, secretary they decide who of this people from this building will be on this function.

D: They choose another one when the old don't want to do this any more.

N: and they have some meetings – [speaks Serbian]

V+D: speak Serbian

N: [transl.] Every building have some common space uhhm common spaces and in this places they have some meetings and

D: it depends on the building ...

Đujo: speaks Serbian

D: [transl.] And usually if you need to repair like whole roof or you need new mail boxes and stuff like this they raised money together and he organise everything and they just buy the new one and stuff like that.

J: Okay.

N: But I think this is changed from the period of socialism and today [speaks Serbian]

All speaking Serbian

D: [transl.] So in the beginning they actually didn't do anything because everything was ahh ... done by the military it was free and so the president of the house [speaks Serbian]

N: House council

D: House council ja actually didn't do anything [laughs]

N: just decide what they need and

D: ... and now because they need to pay for everything form repairing and cleaning now he have more function

N: and to decide about money and to find the best offer for this

Đujo: speaks Serbian

N: [transl.] If its exist any need to do something around the building they call the house council and decide what they want, collect the money and

V: speaks Serbian

N: [transl.] Before they don't have ownership of their flat, factory or military or who is owner of the flat they need to repair everything in your flat, even inside

D: Inside and outside

N: But now because they are owners they need to repair everything by themselves [laughs]

V: speaks Serbian

Đujo: speaks Serbian

N: [transl.] But now they need to pay everything. Outside of the flat because we have some problems with isolation from outside – the rain go inside. And we need to call some [can't understand] to repair this part – only this part of the building and pay from our pocket.

J: Ja so the government or the factory built the buildings but now the owners have to pay for every ..., for all the mistakes they did before.

D: In the past actually when you received building ah apartment, flat from your factory you are still not really the owner.

J: Ja

D: Ja so they need to repair everything, you can buy it for lower prize and [can't understand] from your factory and then you became owner you need to pay for everything

J: Okay, okay. When you read about Novi Beograd or all of Ex-Yugoslavia there is a lot of talk about self-management.

N: Aha system.

J: I wonder, it seems like in the buildings now its kind of happening – like you have to organize yourselves but I also read that the *Mesna Zajednica*

should be like a centre for self-management but I don't know if this ever happened.

N: speaks Serbian

Đujo: speaks Serbian with Nikola

N: [transl.] He [Đujo] think that before the *Mesna Zajednica* have much more power and responsibility. ah and now because of change in the system that they loose their responsibilities and before they can decide and realise some actions but now this is today they organise in the buildings but ahh to do something is not so easy because of money and also because they don't have so many connections between *Mesna Zajednica* and some government of the municipality.

J: Okay so the connection is gone?

N: It's gone its still uhm

J: ja?

D: That's also the problem because even if some people want to do something in the building they need to raise the money form all apartments and some people don't have money.

N: But maybe its for this things because nobody asks us what really happened maybe you can talk to someone from municipality to check how they communicate between *Mesna Zajednica* and municipality

J: Ja that would be interesting.

N: Because here in 'Savski Venac' [a district near the city centre, where Nikola and Dahmir now live] ah we receive some municipality news in the news papers every six months and I read that they have some meetings of all presidents of the houses [buildings] in municipality.

J: from this district? ['Savski Venac']

N: From this district jaja.

N: speaks Serbian with his parents

N: They think that all functions of the *Mesna Zajednica* move to municipality on the higher level and they say still exist people who working in *Mesna Zajednica* but they don't know what they work

Đujo: speaks Serbian

N: This is some kind of small department of municipality now

J: Okay but before it was also part of the municipality but like an ...

N: much more responsibility

J: more independent from the upper level?

N: I think yes.

J: Okay

N: speaks Serbian

V: speaks Serbian

N: speaks Serbian

Đujo: speaks Serbian

N: They are not sure how it functions.

J: Ja it seems quite confusing and no one really knows and ...

N: She said that we had before 10 years some situation ah when one guy want to build petrol-station, uhh gas-station near the – in our block and people protesting ah and go outside and don't want to move from this place ah and on the end he buit this and ah

J: He did?

D: Ja he did, usually it ends like that.

N: And because of this they don't belief in power of ahh self-management system, power of citizens and power of *Mesna Zajednica* and they think that if people go outside and said we don't want to do this ah he can not build this near the area where our children play because this is dangerous

uhhm on the end its nothing happened and they loose any ahhm hope that they can choose anything if they don't agree with higher level

V: [speaks Serbian]

N: [speaks Serbian]

N: Because uhm Roma people live before around Delta City [a shopping centre opened in 20?? near their Block] in this area and they want to move them ah from that area – they want to sell that land and they want to move ahh here and put it in some metal ahhh boxes

J: Containers?

N: Containers, ja and all of this whole – cause everyday they blocked the main ahh the main street

D: they succeed

J: They just didn't want the Roma there or they didn't want them to live in boxes [laughs]

D: They didn't care about boxes

N: Because they think they are so dirty and they don't want to this kind of settlement near

D: Is not so much dirty, there is lots of stereotypical thinking about Roma, they are dirty, they are beggars, and they will you know

N: Their argument was like this, and she said that this time ah this municipality – *Mesna Zajednica* – ah succeeded in protest

J: So it was actually the *Mesna Zajednica* organising

N: Organised

D: They were really organised

J: So then it worked so where did the Roma get moved to?

D: They moved them to some village I guess, outside the Belgrade but that was complete failure so

N: Yes because they put them in a police car and ahh put them outside of the city

D: [?] they just put them all it the cars and just moved them out the city

N: and after that they come back here and because they are working here with the second ahh i don't know material

J: recycling material?

**Interview with Vladan (30<sup>th</sup> of June 2013):** Vladan (student, 27) lives in Block 21 since he was born. He still lives in the same Block but has changed apartment once. He lives with his parents. His girl-friend Vladana is there as well and also comments a few questions. She is an art historian and researches modernist architecture.

...

Julia: ... What does this word or two words *Mesna Zajednica* mean for you? or do they have any meaning?

Vladan: well they do. *Mesna Zajednica* is ahh relatively hard to translate at ah almost means the, if I were to not properly translate the words but the meaning behind them when you say it, it's almost like small towns unity place ah ah that's.

J: Small Towns Unity Place? okay

V: because you have *Mesto* – that is uhm a place it really is – you could describe any dot on the map as ahh *mestre* and it's usually used for very small places and ahh *zajednica* means also community and unity almost at the same time. so ahh I really through, through the really wonderful neighbours in this area that I had luck of meeting and growing up with ah even now we have really good relations with our neighbours and uhm that always meant to me that ah as I was a kid I had that idea that I know my neighbours and I like them and I like their kids and I of course my first and primary thoughts were about their kids because I hung out with

them and played with them and done everything with them and ah of course uhm I thought that as we have this unity between us this great friendship because we used to hang out and our parents used to hang out at the same time, then I had this mental image of big party over here, this is not just our little piece of the world but ahuhm I expressed myself wrong not ah [speaks Serbian] not our street number ah not our little part of the building that's got together and hangs out does everything but all the surrounding, buildings the entire neighbourhood the Block gets over here and they hang out – that was the meaning of it for me.

J: ja so you mean like this whole kind of area [I refer to the little shopping-mall / the community centre] or the whole Block as such?

V: ja well it was like uh me and my friends go to the park to play or to uhh or to uh some other place to play and this was the place where everybody goes to play with each other so.

J: okay, uhm so for you it really means like your neighbourhood, cause also like where we went before, the office from the uh the municipality office – also called the mesna zajednica – like was that a meeting point? or was there anything happening?

V: not that I know of because I was ah as almost every kid I was really self-centred at that time and really just ah didn't think too hard. when I thought about it this almost covered what I thought it was one big playground but I really haven't thought about that that much.

J: ja I wondered if your parents would go to this place to like socialize or your grandparents when, you know, during the socialist time.

V: probably uhh I was going to day probably not, not when I was born anyway but my father used to tell me before I was born when he was young and everything ah it was something like that actually ah you had uhh a lot of different things going on a lot of

Vladana: excuse me, I just remembered he [Vladan's father] was in the uhh Youth Communist Party

V: oh ja.

Vladana: in the Youth of the Communist Party so they had meetings here ...

V: amongst other things.

Vladana: ... I remember that he told us that well ...

.....

J: ... so this one you have kind of answered like do you go to your local community centre like this place we saw before or do you know what is happening there now? [we went to the mesna zajednica office of his Block before the interview]

V: well No

J: okay

V: no well I have actually never gone to my community centre in any form or shape ever.

J: okay okay

V: no I was really surprised when I read the schedule today cause I almost didn't know it existed.

J: right

V: we had a couple of smaller places like ah schools rent out space for ah karate clubs for ahh any type of sports that go after school and also there are a couple of places uhm like one improvised building that was here we call it the barracks because it was here to house the workers while they were building one part of our Block and when they moved out instead of tearing it down they redun it into a uhmm sort of a small ah 'shopping centre'.

J: which one is it – like here in this ahh?

V: like miniature shopping centre ... ahh yes I'll show it to you.

J: ja lets walk past it maybe ...

V: ja because it has ah it used to have a video-club, it changes like everything over here changes one thing stay the same though as the coffee-shop – it's actually not a coffee-shop it's a real *Kafana* [Serbian café].

J: where is it also in this place – oh in the barracks jaja okay.

V: in the barracks, and it has a car-mechanic and a shooting range and ah ... because from the one side it has just windows ... so it really has one long hallway ... I used to practise competitive arrow-rifle shooting

J: in there?

V: in there ja. So they made a shooting range inside a couple of rooms they just

J: were there more collective activities when you were younger?

V: well ah that's hard to appraise, to really say I think there weren't a lot because collective activities rested upon the kids to organise themselves mostly or when they were [?] I think socialization of very young kids has perhaps moved out of the parks and the open spaces because I don't see as much of them outside in my neighbourhood

**Interview with Vesna (23<sup>rd</sup> June 2013):** Vesna (electrical engineer, journalist and photographer, 42), lives in Block 28 since 1971

.....

Julia: What do you like about your neighbourhood, or your Block lets say?

Vesna: Well what I enjoyed as a kid it was very, very big green space inside it, it's like a big park and car doesn't go around – lately I don't go inside so much – but ah that is what I enjoyed most when I was kid and it has a little I should say architecture I mean but ah for a paysage – I don't know how is it in English – landscape architecture.

J: Ja landscape architecture.

V: Because there are small hills and trees and its with lot of space for sitting

and when I was a kid there were lots of made space for playing like something from woods that was very interesting and we all played there – they called it wooden-city. so it was very interesting for kids and also there were some ah playgrounds for basketball, for football and for tennis so it was really a great thing for a kid.

J: Were these things like you know tennis-courts was that organised by the city or was the inhabitants

V: It was for free – just for inhabitants.

J: But did the inhabitants organise it? Make it or was the city.

V: No it was the city who built all that

J: Okay.

V: I think this block had an ah prize for architecture for the whole block and to be honest I think its one of the best planned block for all the – for all the buildings and those little parks inside and those little hills its all very well planned with the walking ah tracks how should I call it and that it was very nice and very safe for kids. also my kid went here in the school and it was also good for her I mean she could (don't understand her)

J: how old is she now?

V: she is 22, she will be in September

J: okay so she is an adult now. so you went to school here in this block and your daughter as well

V: yes

J: – wow its ahhm like in a village – you do everything in your Block

V: well yes its just like that because we have a market place here, we have I don't know we used to have a bank now there isn't any more, but its changing a bit those shops there below the building and around that is changing – well its a bit crazy times so lots of those shops are closed, there used to be more #00:13:08-6#



J: were these shops always here in the ground floor level? or is that [new] ...

V: yes

J: so when you were a child there were always shops?

V: yes, yes,

J: okay I wasn't sure

V: or some offices, yes, there were always shops and offices

J: so they had like a mixed use like housing and shops

V: yes that was from the beginning

J: I didn't know that, cause i heard that in some Blocks [phone – sms tone rings] I heard that in some Blocks there were no shops at the bottom, and now since the 90's they started to move in there

V: well actually now there is less shops than there were when I was kid because I guess its big competition with VERO and this market and those big shops

J: so people go to the big ones more

V: yes

.....

J: okay okay. What does this term “*Mesna Zajednica*” mean to you?

V: To be honest not much. [laughs] Because well actually Tito died on my birthday – [laughs] well that is not something that is important but I wanted to say that he died when I was 10 so I was still not very old enough to know it all and to be old enough to understand it and already at that time it was a bit ah kind of anti-socialist – anti-communist atmosphere here so. to be honest, ah and my parents weren't so into that – nobody was member of communist or socialist party

J: okay okay.

V: so I wasn't [laughs] very aware of that

J: okay you didn't go to the *Mesna Zajednica* to do any social activities

V: no ...

J: ... did other people you knew go there as a meeting place or ...

V: no, not that I know I mean I knew it existed and there were always some ah kind of organisation around it but ah for example they used it also recently – well recently maybe 10 or 15 years ago to give money to give pensions for example the post-officer would come there and then give them pensions or what ever they need so they and also it used to be used for elections and that's as far as I know. I wasn't very interested in politics then or now so.

J: okay. cause I saw when I interviews those other people from the other television building that uhmm we went there and we saw that private firms were renting places at

V: yes I think they rented everything also its not used. well I think there were some that were more – how should I say – more active this block is a bit – how should I say its a bit different because lots of the apartments were in fact military – or military people so I guess that's also what made it a bit different and those apartments are a bit bigger in fact I heard talks that all of those apartments should be twice as bigger. and when they decided to give it to working people I don't know usual people not military they made it two so

.....

J: ...I heard a lot about that in every building the people from like every entrance have to kind of form a like a board like you have to meet and like repair things together now. Is that happening in your [building]?

V: yes we have that very good. there is one woman who is the president and she – well you can see the entrance is quite in a good state, if you went to other buildings I'm not sure if they are all in quite a good state so she does it – i mean the painting of the entrance were regularly I mean every 2 or 3 years and also the lift it was painted recently and she put some things also

those postboxes they are new they were replaced maybe one year ago or 2 year ago. and so that flowers it happened that they got stolen – that's the not good part about new Belgrade that happens a lot

J: things go missing?

V: yes so that's quite often here in NBG.

J: so that's a problem

V: yes also cars stealing and things like that

J: okay okay I thought that was maybe in the 90ies and now it stopped

V: no its still and they also steal gas, i heard that a few times recently i mean also this year maybe a few months ago and before that i heard it a few times in a row. so that is a problem here.

J: ja i understand. So but when something gets repaired or painted like the walls get painted do does your 'president' go around and collect money or?

V: well actually we had one agreement that somebody well who didn't use the basement we rent this place and from this money it got repaired and every month we pay for cleaning of the entrance so thats she collets money for that so thats what we pay every month

J: do you guys meet a lot?

V: do you mean that board?

J: ja

V: to be honest i don't know cause i never was on that board but i think they have regular meetings because my good neighbour was memeber and he mentioned a few times but that woman that took it over she is doing a good job so she is whenever something needs to be ah how should i say signed from us she comes and collect signiture. so

J: she is really active and takes it seriously. Is it a payed position?

V: uff I don't know, maybe a bit something I think she gets a little bit. though

she had some sort of interest in that because her daughter made an apartment on top of the building so that's when she took over that position.

J: But you can still go up there or is it all an apartment

V: no

J: its all an apartment

V: yes

J: so you lost your terrace?

V: yes

J: okay that's a bit sad.

V: yes

J: cause in the other apartment the same happened but there was still a part of the terrace where they could go to and the other part was an apartment. okay so its all an apartment

V: not one they built 3. Three families built apartments there.

J: see i never understand how that works. do they just get together and go ah we'll built apartments there

V: well they they need to ask permission from all the owners of the other apartments. so if they get signed then they need permission from the community and then they can built the apartment

J: okay, with community you mean the municipality

V: yes, yes

V: but for a lot of year it was a more like wild, anybody could build anything anywhere. now somewhere they're destroying those buildings that were built like that but mostly not and there are parts of Belgrade that are built not very good [laughs], ...it existed for a long time, there was a lot of corruption and people built things without permission and then I guess its hard to when they

.....

V: here in NBG its not really present, only those top-floors that were terraces at some building there they built some apartments but I guess that's not so much stress for the building but

J: Yes i've heard about this block identity like that people feel very strongly about their block, do you feel that too or do you know people that are very: this is my block or

V: yes that existed very much when i was little well i'm not very raised in that manner and I'm not very territorial also not nationalist so i didn't feel – but for example i bought some there was some sort of for writing souvenir shop in Belgrade g and it had block 28 written on a sketchblock ... we called some parts blocks other we called some ah ... normally there is a school in every block so you don't mix,



Fig. 42 Local Community Centre Block 23, 2013



Fig. 43 Sign for the Local Community Centre 'Sava', 2013



Fig. 44 Photo with caption 'Mesna Zajednica – Extended Family', in the office of the Local Community Centre 'Sava', 2013



Fig. 46 Local Community Centre Block 21, 2013



Fig. 45 Notice board in the office of the Local Community in Block 30, 2013



Fig. 47 'Big Hall' in the Local Community Centre, Block 30, 2013



Fig. 48 'Local Community Centre and Cinema 'Fontana' in Block 1, 2007 before renovation



Fig. 51 A new Business Centre on formerly open green space next to apartment-building, 2012



Fig. 49 'Local Community Centre and Cinema 'Fontana' in Block 1, 2013 after renovation



Fig. 52 New sports-facilities in Novi Beograd'S Central Zone, 2012



Fig. 53 View from roof-top over Block 28, 2013



Fig. 55 view onto Block 21 in Novi Beograd's Central Zone, 2012



Fig. 54 Kiosk Block 63, 2013



Fig. 56 Former CK-Tower (Building of Political and Social Organisations), Ušće -Shopping Mall



*Fig. 57 Palace of Serbia (former Falace of the Federation/Federal Executive Council)*



*Fig. 59 'Airport-City', Block 65*



*Fig. 58 view onto Office-building in the 'Central Axis' of the Central Zone*



*Fig. 60 'Belville' Apartment-Blocks, finished 2009, Block 67*

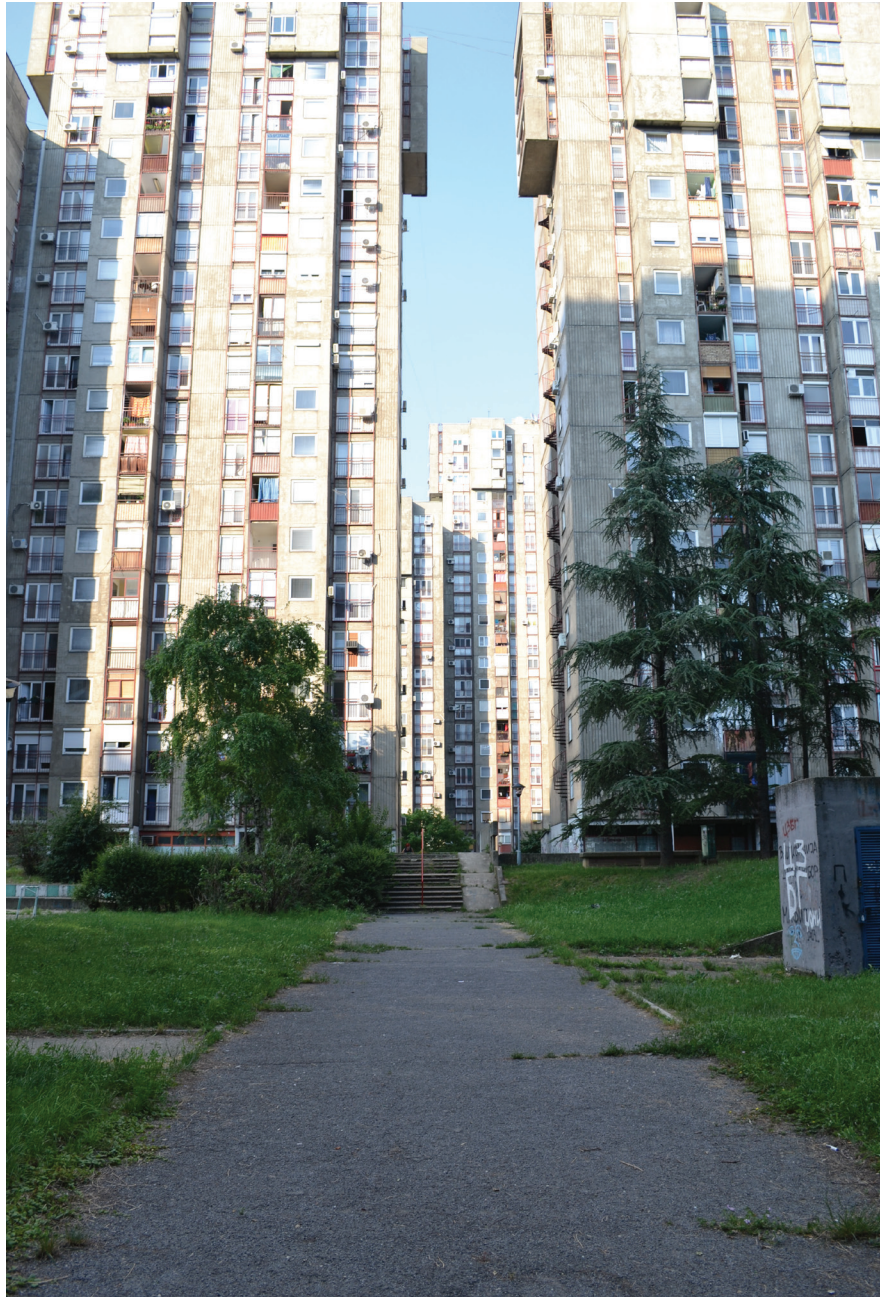


Fig. 61 Apartment-buildings Block 62, 2013

#### 4.4

#### *The 'Architecture' of Direct Democracy – A Critical Review*

The Yugoslav state aimed to plan its cities in an 'orderly' fashion by using technocratic planning to achieve its objectives of creating a society based on the principles of equality and self-determination. These objectives were compromised in a variety of ways. First of all the ideal to plan and provide all 'needs' beforehand and in an all-encompassing way was rather unrealistic in basic material terms as well as social terms. There were neither enough funds to build all the structures in the conceived way (housing as well as communal facilities) nor did the social ideals of citizen-participation unfold to the desired extent.

The system of local self-government in socialist Yugoslavia had some inherent contradictions. The first being the discrepancy between the envisioned and the lived political culture. Zukin (1975) has shown that the Local Community in practice was not supposed to discuss any general social questions or issues regarding higher political levels at the neighbourhood meetings. Broader social questions were not welcomed at the meetings even though their discussion was demanded by some interested participants. The Mesna Zajednica mainly deal with practical problems and solutions, which is a legitimate practice for neighbourhood initiatives but did not realize the state's ideal of direct democracy to a full extent. The high influence of Party members and the lack of participation by the majority of the population created a political atmosphere that was highly different from the state's conception. The demands by the communist leaders that the Yugoslav society should reproduce itself from the bottom-up was in stark contrast to the actual workings of the system which allowed little leeway for the influence of civil society.



The Mesna Zajednica in its conception was synonymous for a variety of functions that I believe stayed unclear throughout the socialist period, even after the 1974 Constitution Act. The dissolution of the law system during the 1990s crisis seems to have added to this confusion about its legal status and how it is perceived by the population. Even though the Mesna Zajednica is still existing today as the smallest administrative unit, I have found hardly anyone that knew about its legal status or about its function as a local government institution or a community centre. While the term itself is still known even to the younger generation (born before 1990) it has become an unclear concept, which probably originates in the lack of clear definition or the manifold usage of the term itself in the socialist conception.

The political function as part of the bottom-up delegate system until the late eighties was one of the Mesna Zajednica's tasks, another was that of social cohesion that was to be created through the 'design' of social relations. Alienation within modern societies and especially within cities was seen as a main problem that the socialist project aimed to overcome. The Mesna Zajednica was conceived as the sphere that could resolve this task. In a time of social upheaval caused by the fast urbanisation process (triggered by the socialist state itself) the state had to bring housing provision and social objectives in line. The modernist *Blocks* needed to provide spaces for the integration of people from different backgrounds, most notably migrants from rural areas.<sup>404</sup> In Novi Beograd this objective was weakened to a certain degree since, as Petrović put it, the municipality "was populated mostly by middle class members" that were "primarily (...) employed in state or communist party administration, military and police services".<sup>405</sup> Untrained newcomers from rural areas had to find accommodation in other parts of the city or build illegally (see chapter 3.7). The prevalence of employees of the army and other pan-Yugoslav institutions meant that people from all over

.....  
404 Le Normand (2008b).

405 Petrović, Mina (2007): Diversification of Urban Neighbourhoods: The Case Study in New Belgrade. Paper presented at the International Conference Sustainable Urban Areas, Rotterdam June 2007, Workshop: East European housing & Urban Policy, (pages not numbered); on this subject see also Topalović (2012): pp.185ff.

the country with "different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds"<sup>406</sup> lived in Novi Beograd. Seen in this light Novi Beograd, in symbolic terms, adhered to some degree to the Yugoslav concept of 'brotherhood and unity' but with the addition that social inequalities were accepted.

Modern architecture, as it was proposed by the CIAM movement, was chosen as the ideal 'style' that could represent the state and its ideology on the one hand and provide affordable housing for a huge number of people on the other. In addition to the 'towers in the park-concept' the scheme of the 'neighbourhood-unit' should provide facilities to foster social ties and a sense of belonging. The provision of social services and leisure spaces was seen as something provided for a specific group of people – the inhabitants of a Block. It is interesting to note that the planners felt the need to clearly demarcate the Dwelling Communities from each other in order to create a territorial unity. On the one hand this made planning easier and more efficient, as the tools established for the designs of the Dwelling Communities (amounts of services, distances between them, etc.) could simply get applied to each Block. The wide streets separating them allowed for large numbers of car and bus traffic<sup>407</sup>. The clear boundaries between the Blocks were furthermore seen as beneficial in creating a communal spirit that was seen as necessary for the political system of self-management on the level of everyday life the neighbourhood represented. In Novi Beograd I would argue that this 'ideal' of communal ties became partly reality to the extent that there was a certain degree of identification with one's Block. Most interviewees have stated that they spent most of their childhood within their Block. Kindergarten and primary school were located within the Block and leisure time was also spent there or in neighbouring areas, creating enclosed friends-circles. The interviews however have also shown that this identification was mostly part of youth-culture and ganglands during the 1990s.

.....  
406 Topalović (2012): p.185.

407 Today, compared to the old city parts, Novi Beograd is well equipped for the amount of individual car-traffic, in terms of public transport however are lots of inefficiencies which is also due to the lack of a metro line but also due to the large distances created by Novi Beograd's urban scheme. For bicycling however, Novi Beograd is way better suited (also in terms of infrastructure like bike-paths) than the old city street-scape.

The Block-identity has been a way to create a more or less artificial factor in building collective identities connected with one's neighbourhood. From my point of view this has been fostered by low possibilities for mobility within the city due to the economic situation of most residents. Hardly any of my interviewees, even though mostly well educated, have moved out of their Block since they were born or since they moved there. This of course can be due to the high standard of living several interviewees have connected with their neighbourhoods. The strong identification with the Block however seems to be dissolving. New housing-estates and other functions such as educational-, leisure- or commercial facilities that were built in Novi Beograd since 2000 have created greater intermixing with people from other parts of the municipality and the city.

The 'social design' applied to Novi Beograd until the 1980s<sup>408</sup> was based on several aspects: to create the material basis of the community, convey modern lifestyles to the inhabitants like the institutionalisation of childcare, new household technologies, etc., and create facilities that were to allow the development of social ties – e.g. youth-clubs, pensioners-clubs, spaces for festivities, small scale trade, etc.. This design strategy assumed that society can be shaped from top-down. It can not be denied that material provisions like apartments, social- and educational facilities, transport infrastructures, etc. have a great impact on how everyday-life of the individual and the group is structured. Yet, I would argue in accordance with Läßle, that these material aspects are interconnected with other social modes of production like social practices, the normative or institutional system, as well as the symbolic and representational dimensions as related to material aspects.<sup>409</sup> The complex and constantly evolving urban culture that is shaped by all these aspects has

408 During the 1970 and especially the 1980 there was a paradigm change in urban planning that considered modernist planning as creating "inhuman scales" (see Milos Perović's critique as discussed in Blagojević, 2009c) which lead to a return to more traditional building typologies, the building of collective housing-estates were not abandoned though, on this matter see e.g. Blagojević (2009c), (2012), Hirt (2009). The competition for Novi Beograd's restructuring in 1986 (see chapter 1.1) was part of this critique. On the critique of social scientists see Le Normand (2008b).

409 cf. Läßle, Dieter (1991): Gesellschaftszentriertes Raumkonzept. In *Stadt-Räume, Die Zukunft des Städtischen, Band 2*. Edited by Wentz, Martin (1991), Frankfurt am Main: Campus-Verl., pp. 35-46, p.42.

made the technocratic planning of the socialist urbanists partly redundant. New uses emerged throughout the socialist period and especially since the 1990s. For example many of the spaces that were planned for the use of the 'community' within apartment-buildings and the Blocks were occupied and appropriated for other, 'unplanned' uses. Milica Topalović writes about the "specific kind of urban space"<sup>410</sup> of Novi Beograd that unfolded there:

*(...) the blocks urbanity followed its own rules, being sometimes close to the normative ideological projections, sometimes independent of them, and sometimes even clandestine. The typical scenes of everyday life in the blocks alternated between collective rituals marking important dates in the socialist calendar and privately held religious celebrations in highrise apartments; other, scarcely registered youth culture activities developed around basketball courts, A-bomb shelters, parking lots, riverbanks, and still undeveloped sand fields between the blocks.*<sup>411</sup>

Besides these cultural appropriations of Novi Beograd, the prevalent urban restructurings of the last two and a half decades are connected to an increase of commercial functions<sup>412</sup> that range from small scale kiosks, bars and restaurants on land and water (Danube and Sava rivers), large scale shopping-malls and business parks, to bank- and office-buildings. These developments affected Novi Beograd's image as a dormitory. Instead of commuting from Novi Beograd to other parts of the city for work many inhabitants of Belgrade travel to Novi Beograd today. In Belgrade's Master Plan 2021 adopted in 2003, Novi Beograd is envisioned as the city's "new commercial hub"<sup>413</sup>. According to Petrović the municipality has attracted the "greatest share of foreign investments at Belgrade real estate market."<sup>414</sup> The large amounts of derelict land in close proximity to the historic city core

410 Topalović (2012): p.186.

411 Ibid.

412 According to Hirt the number of retail outlets in Belgrade increased from 4,899 in 1980, to 7,732 in 1990 and reached 24,600 in 2000, cf. Hirt, Sonia (2008): Landscapes of Postmodernity: Changes in the built fabric of Belgrade and Sofia since the End of Socialism. *Urban Geography*, 2008, 29, 8, pp. 785-810, pp.796 (Fig4).

413 Petrović (2007): pages not numbered.

414 Ibid.

and the good connection to the highway have been used to attract investors that built functional commercial architectures, usually found only at the periphery of European cities.<sup>415</sup>

The Central Zone has been especially subject to urban ‘upgrading’. According to Petrović “blocks of lower quality are exposed to further downgrading in both physical and social terms”<sup>416</sup>. For Erić, the urban restructuring of Novi Beograd has brought two mayor problems: “a loss of public space that was never fully developed in New Belgrade and is now overtaken by big supermarkets and shopping malls” and “new segregation, which is driven by mostly economic, social or even racial distinctions” that have “created homogenized neighbourhoods and even new ‘urban ghettos’”<sup>417</sup>. New, up-scale housing-estates often lack communal and cultural infrastructures like playgrounds, schools, parks, etc. and are ‘dependent’ on the facilities built in neighbouring Blocks that were built during socialism.<sup>418</sup> In the light of such investment strategies that aim merely at lucrativeness, the socialist Blocks have created a better social mix<sup>419</sup> and created common spaces that go beyond profitability. The preservation and revival of socialist built communal spaces, especially in times where little is invested in non-profit infrastructures, is crucial for the development of collective cultural spaces of everyday life and civil-society initiatives alike.

Despite the socio-economic transformations since the break-down of the SFRY, the former system continues to have an effect on everyday-life in so far as the lived urban culture of Novi Beograd as well as the institutional system (city administration) are built upon the socialist legacy. The concept of the Mesna Zajednica in its different facets is still existing to some ex-

415 See eg. <http://www.airportcitybelgrade.com/location.php> last accessed 18.th 5.2014.

416 Petrović (2007).

417 Erić (2009a): p.14f.

418 Personal conversation with Milica Joksić, Deputy Director of the *Strategic Planning and Development Department* at the *Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade*. On 7<sup>th</sup> 6. 2013.

419 According to Topalović “New Belgrade’s population has remained relatively stable over the years, with a large share of well-educated people, senior citizens, and original residents.” She further argues that because of the crisis situation of the 1990s people were reluctant to move, hence preserving “New Belgrade’s collective housing model” to some extend. Topalović (2012): p.196.

tent. The very idea of decentralisation was not completely given up on. Even throughout the re-centralisation tendencies during the Milošević era (1987-2000), the Mesna Zajednica stayed the lowest level of local governance, but self-management by the citizens and the delegation system was abolished. Today the Mesna Zajednica has no citizens assembly and is part of the representational democratic structures of the city-administration. Following Zoran Stamenković, secretary of the *Municipal Assembly of Novi Beograd*, the power of the municipality and its assembly was generally weakened since the system change. The function of the Mesna Zajednica as smallest administrative unit got reduced to a service centre of the municipality, where people can complain if they have a problem and also the maintenance of public facilities like park lands is coordinated from there. In addition all local organisations of political parties that have a seat in the parliament can use the space of the Mesna Zajednica for their weekly or monthly meetings for free.<sup>420</sup>

For Belgrade’s city government citizen-participation is still part of the program: “Pursuant to the Constitution, legislation, present Charter and bylaws of the urban municipality, the citizens participate in conducting operations of the urban municipality through the councilors elected to the City municipal assembly, civil initiative, local citizens’ meeting and referendum.”<sup>421</sup> In general I have found that the Mesna Zajednica in Novi Beograd, where it still exists as a local-government office<sup>422</sup>, has generally become an a-political space but is still seen as a space where cultural or leisure activities take place<sup>423</sup>. The idea of a community centre has not been abandoned in

420 Interview with Stamenković, Zoran (Secretary of the Municipal Assembly of Novi Beograd) on 28.6.2013

421 Official homepage of the City of Belgrade, here: <http://www.beograd.rs/cms/view.php?id=201906>, last accessed 15.6.2014.

422 According to Stamenković, from the 28 Mesna Zajednice that at the end of the socialist period within the municipality of Novi Beograd 18 are still existing today, some of them have between 25,000 and 30,000 residents, cf. Interview with Stamenković.

423 Cultural institutions that use the spaces of the mesna zajednica in Novi Beograd are e.g. Mesna Zajednica ‘Studenski Grad’: *ApsArt Community Theatre*, *Scena Carina Fringe Theatre*, *Kontekst gallery* (in 2010), Mesna Zajednica ‘Ikarus’ in Block 2 has a ‘*National Kitchen*’ – a soup kitchen for people in need on weekdays, Mesna Zajednica ‘Sava’ in Block 45: *Cultural Network of Novi Beograd (Novobeogradska kulturna mreža)* with ‘*Blok Gallery*’.

this regard and can be acknowledged as a form of social continuity from the socialist to the post-socialist period. While the shops built within the centres during the socialist period have mostly been privatised, the community hall and the offices for the administration of the Mesna Zajednica are in many cases still part of the public infrastructure. One such example is the Mesna Zajednica 'Sava' in Block 45 (one of the 'Mega-Blocks from the 1970's). Here in the foyer we find a photo from the late 70s or early 80s that shows about one hundred people, most likely inhabitants of the Block, with the caption: *Mesna Zajednica: Produžen Porodica – Local Community: Extended Family* (Fig 44). If not the citizens themselves, the personnel from the city-administration that work at this Mesna Zajednica today, seem to have some affiliation to the former ideals of a Local Community.

However some citizens and organisations actively try to use these spaces for cultural or leisure activities and engage other local residents. One of them is the *Cultural Network of Novi Beograd* with its *Block Gallery* that was found between 2007 and 2009. It is using spaces of the Mesna Zajednica 'Sava' and got some additional spaces for stage-performances next to it. The *Fontana*, Novi Beograd's former in-official centre, has become partly privatised and was left to decay for most of the 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>424</sup> The cinema however was recently renovated by the city and reopened in 2012. The former cinema 'Jugoslavija' was also renovated is now the space of a puppet-theatre for children. All these efforts to revitalise the local community centres in recent years show that the existing communal-infrastructure that was entirely built during the socialist period, plays a crucial role in the (future) development of public and cultural infrastructures.

Another institutional continuity is the house-council. The interviewees have expressed different opinions on how they worked during the socialist times, in terms of who paid for maintenance of socially-owned flats, communal spaces, elevators etc.. While some residents have stated that the enterprise or enterprises that 'owned' the buildings were responsible, others

.....  
424 Erić (2009a).

explained that all inhabitants had to contribute financially. In 1992 however, during the Milošević era, a *Law on Housing* was passed that allowed the privatisation of socially-owned apartments. For exceptionally small prices the residents obtained the right to buy their apartment. In the ensuing years almost the entire housing-stock of Novi Beograd was sold to the residents<sup>425</sup>, making them co-owners of the entire building as well and legally responsible for its maintenance. During the crisis of the 1990s this led to a mayor deterioration of the housing stock.<sup>426</sup>

According to Petrović, in her survey on neighbourhood perception in Novi Beograd, the house-council is "stipulated by the law and mostly practiced."<sup>427</sup> Here residents get together to discuss and organise collective issues such as maintenance and repairs of common spaces within the building, roofs and elevators, cleaning, etc. As the interviews have shown above, the functioning of the house-council differs from building to building and are often dependent on individuals effort.<sup>428</sup> Not all residents participate in the meetings or want to pay for certain services and is often reason for conflict or leaving problems unresolved. In other cases, where possible, the issue of financing gets resolved by renting out spaces like basements or allowing advertising on roof-tops or in elevators. This commodification of semi-private spaces allows on the one hand to resolve common issues, but it also shows that financial aid from local authorities is needed in order to keep common spaces usable for the house-collective. Since the system-transformation the ones that were responsible for the construction and maintenance have been relieved of their responsibility which has been put into the hands of the tenants.

.....  
425 According to Mina Petrović the hyper-inflation of 1993 made buying socially-owned apartments increasingly attractive for a huge number of people. By 1993 almost 98% of Yugoslavia's and 95% of Belgrade's socially-owned housing-stock was privatized, Petrović (2001): p.222.

426 Ibid.

427 Petrović (2007).

428 These findings correspond to the results of Petrović (2007).

## 5 *Conclusion*

The research has shown that theory and practice of the Yugoslav common space diverged from each other in a variety of ways. The conception of the political culture and its actual workings is one of the them. The technocratic interpretations of self-management for social and urban planning also created several contradictions. The attempted planning of informality is one of them, the aim to concentrate civil-society into an institutional and (bottom-up) hierarchical system another. However the material basis created during the socialist period is still an important infrastructure for the inhabitants of Novi Beograd – in terms of dwellings as well as communal spaces. Even though the municipality has seen a rise in functions during the last two decades, hardly any aim to create non-profit public or communal spaces. In this regard the common spaces built during socialism are the only anchor points for collective needs.

The institutional organisation of the city also shows some continuity from the socialist period. The self-management system was abolished but the structures were incorporated into the representational democratic structures. The *Local Community (Mesna Zajednica)* is still seen as a realm where the municipal government can get in touch with its local residents and vice-versa. The system-change during the 1990s and after 2000 has not created a 'tabula rasa' but a basis for institutions. The Mesna Zajednica, as specific category of Yugoslav socialism, has become integral part of the political and cultural understanding of the city and its neighbourhoods today. The interviews with local residents of Novi Beograd have shown that almost all inhabitants connect one or more of the former state's ideals (positive or negative) with the term Mesna Zajednica. However the system-change has also brought some confusion as to the legal status and actual workings of this institution. Even though citizen-participation is still part of the program of Belgrade's city government there are hardly any civil-society initiatives that question

neoliberal urban developments. The preservation and revival of socialist built communal spaces, especially in times where little is invested in non-profit infrastructures, is crucial for the development of collective cultural spaces of everyday life and civil-society initiatives alike.

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- Beim layoutieren der Diplomarbeit ist ein Fehler in der Formatierung der Fußnoten passiert. Die Quellenangabe der Fußnote 65 auf Seite 29 fehlt in der Fußzeile. Das Zitat "*Singidunum Novissima*" (FN 65) ist aus **Münnich (2013): p.118.** entnommen und soll hiermit nachgereicht werden. Zwischen Fußnote Nr. 65 und Nr. 99 haben sich durch diesen Fehler die Texte in der Fußzeile um eine Stelle verschoben und stimmen nicht mit der Zahl im Text überein (z.B.: FN 80 im Text gehört zur Zahl 79 in der Fußzeile). Ab Fußnote 100 (Kapitel 3.2) stimmen Zahl und Fußzeile wieder überein. Auf Grund des oben genannten Fehlers wird die letzte Fußnote des Kapitels 3.1 (S.38) im Text nicht als Zahl angezeigt. Sie stimmt mit der Quellenangabe der Fußnote 99 überein.
- Im Inhaltsverzeichnis ist das Kapitel 2.1 falsch betitelt. Der Titel sollte wie im Text lauten:  
***2.1 Overview – Pre-History until Serbian Independence***
- Die Quellenangabe der Abbildung (Fig.) 2: *Belgrade and Zemun (Semlin) around 1910.* fehlt im Abbildungsverzeichnis und soll hiermit nachgereicht werden:  
3<sup>rd</sup> Military Mapping Survey of Austria-Hungary:  
<http://lazarus.elte.hu/hun/digkonyv/topo/200e/38-45.jpg>, last accessed: May 2014.