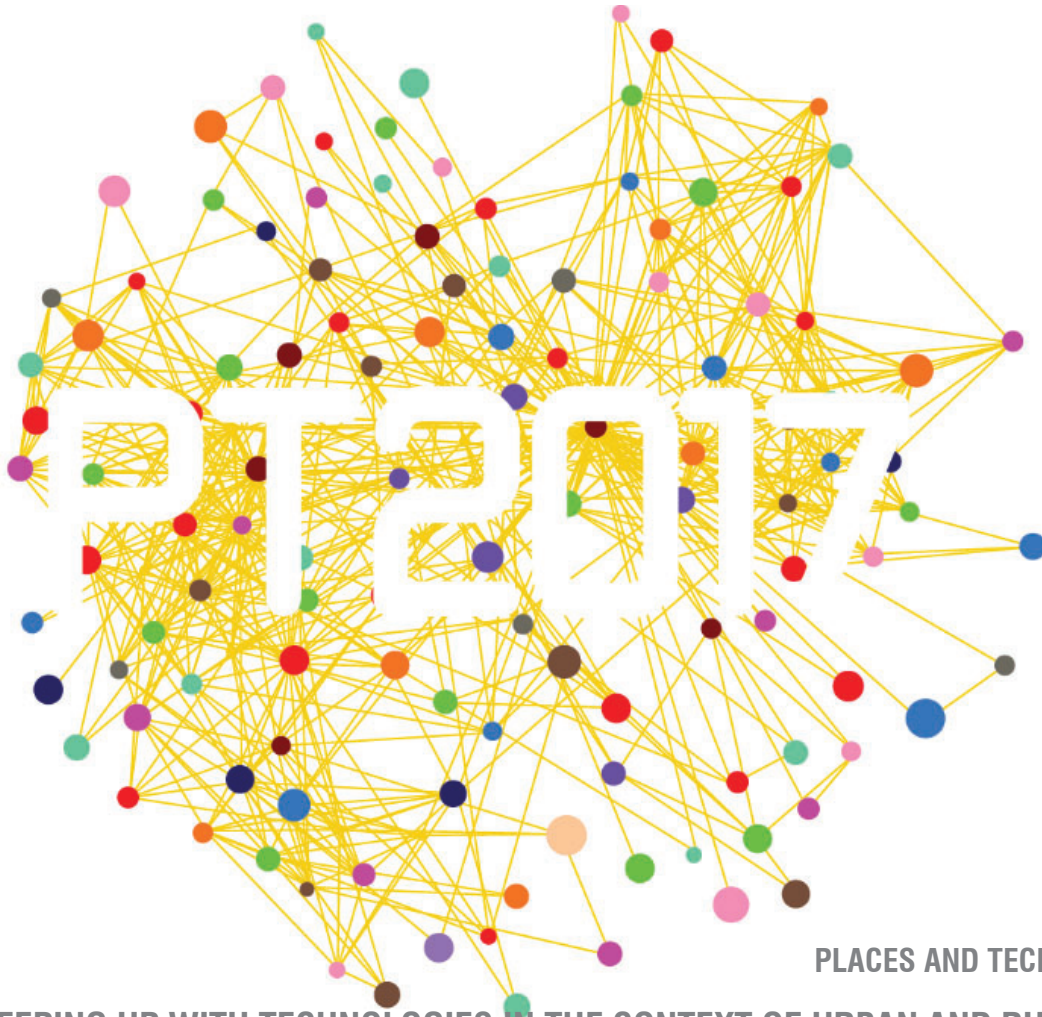


4th International Academic Conference



PLACES AND TECHNOLOGIES 2017
KEEPING UP WITH TECHNOLOGIES IN THE CONTEXT OF URBAN AND RURAL SYNERGY
Book of Conference Proceedings

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, June, 08th - 09th, 2017

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SYNERGY

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Dženana Bijedić, Aleksandra Krstić-Furundžić, Mevludin Zečević



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RELATION BETWEEN PLANNING AND REALIZATION OF OPEN SPACES IN NEW BELGRADE SUPER-BLOCKS: CASE STUDIES OF BLOCKS 45 AND 70

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ABSTRACT

During the postwar period, from the 1960s to the 1980s, very large area of today's New Belgrade was built using the concept of the Functional city, which a lot of professionals consider as a successful example of modern urbanism. Still, with a change of socio-political situation in the Republic of Serbia during the 1990s and 2000s, a number of New Belgrade's super-blocs started to be replanned. Having that in mind, this paper argues that there has been a substantial difference between planning intentions and real needs of the inhabitants, considering the treatment of open spaces inside the modernistic blocks. The main aim of this research is to show this potential conflict on the case studies of super-blocks number 45 and 70. After review of the plan making process, there will be shown some real needs of the local community that manifest themselves through open spaces, and comparative analyzes will be made. This research examines the question of the direction in which the process of planning should be addressed in order to include the real needs of the local community.

Keywords: Urban planning, New Belgrade, Super-block, Open spaces, Local community needs

INTRODUCTION

First of all it is important to highlight the main characteristics of *Functional city* concept in order for better understanding the structure of the open spaces in New Belgrade. This concept was the main theme in *CIAM*⁶⁵ *IV* in 1933, and as a result of work during several weeks, *Athens Charter* was formed (Mašić, 1965). The modernists did it as a response to the situation in the cities, which they have called *the bitter fruit of a hundred years of machinism*. They had suggested that the open space in modern cities should be designed as an extension of an apartment or as

⁶⁴ Corresponding author

⁶⁵ *Congres Internationaux d' Architecture Moderne - International Congress on Modern Architecture*



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a green area with all necessary facilities of collective character. Professor Perović (1985, p. 26-27) states that the tone of the *Athens Charter* was dogmatic and generalized, which gave its ideas the illusion of universal applicability. Roughly highlighting main points of this document, it can be said that it was concluded that the functional city needs to have: four strictly separated activities - housing, working, transportation and recreation; housing in the form of high freestanding buildings; strict separation of pedestrians and cars.

As the main result of this planning approach *super-block* was made. It is an open city block outlined with natural boundaries or streets and with large green areas in the form of a public space. According to Le Corbusier *Radiat city*, their dimensions should be 400x400m, with self standing buildings standardized to 12 floors, and with sport facilities, a nursery and primary school in the open space, but he did not include commercial and cultural activities in the residential area (Perović, 1985, p. 26).

Critique of the *Functional city* concept has started to emerge from the 60s until today from the authors such as Jane Jacobs, Jan Gehl and Christopher Alexander. Jacobs (1961) concludes that planners and architects of her time have stayed unaware of the functioning of cities, as well as that the perfect neighborhood based on the *Functional city* concept is too large to be a neighborhood of the street, and too small to become a district. Gehl (2011) stresses out that this concept was purely physical and material planning-oriented ideology with the main goal of the separation of functions. Its main imperfection is the disappearance of the streets and squares as the basic elements around which the cities were organized in the past. In these large structures we see more cars than people, and outdoor spaces are large and impersonalized with wide streets and tall buildings that are causing feelings of coldness. Also, large distances between people and activities constantly reducing the possibility of closer contact, and mass media and shopping centers have become the only city contacts with the outside world. Alexander (2002-2005) discusses that in the last century, the streets and squares of the past, which contain 15 geometric properties that are making living structure, are neglected in the process of planning and construction.

We should have in mind that New Belgrade's super-blocks, which have been emerged in the 1970s, are based on the *Functional city* concept. This paper will try to explain the difference between planned and spontaneous/unplanned development approach in the treatment of super-blocks 45 and 70 open space that has occurred over the last few decades, which can actually be seen just as criticism of their original ideas and execution. On the one side there will be analyzing the process of re-planning of these blocks that started with the making of additions to the original detailed urban plan in the 1990s, to be continued at the beginning of the 2000s by launching a new detailed regulation plan whose development is still going on. On the other hand, there will be analyzed spontaneous and unplanned interventions that have begun to shape undeveloped open spaces within blocks during this period. For this kind of development, *placemaking process* and *place attachment* are significant themes.

First, the short review about the historical development of the New Belgrade will be shown as well as the development of plans for this area. Research methodology considers comparative analysis between the planned and realized

activities in open spaces. Analysis of community movements on the virtual social networks was useful for this research for showing the local community actual needs as well as their activities in open spaces.

DEVELOPMENT OF SUPER-BLOCKS 45 AND 70 FROM 1970s UNTIL TODAY

Development of New Belgrade during the 1970s

After the Second World War the Yugoslav Republic ceases to be a monarchy. New Belgrade was planned as a capitol of the new modern city, but he was also influenced by the ideology of communism. The social and political system during the 1970s played a major role in fostering the principles of local communities. This assumption is tested by the method of content analysis. The local community stands out as the basis for the front of the municipality, city, republic and the Federation, and Višnjić (1977) even named community *extended organized family*.

Articles⁶⁶ from the period of the 1970s are talking about New Belgrade as a modern city, which was the largest construction site in Yugoslavia, and one of the largest in Europe. They are highlighting that the inhabitants were brought together, especially by community centers (with the dominance of commercial function) in the middle of the neighborhood, where entire social life inside one super-block was taking place. But in the 1960s and 1970s, there was not enough money for development of cultural activities because everything was invested in the development of the residential units. That is why until the 1990s New Belgrade was called *the big dormitory*.

Planning process of super-blocks 45 and 70

In 1960s, two super-blocks (45 and 70) were planned for development on the Sava river coast. There was a planned residential area of 115ha for 9000 apartments in which should live 32000 inhabitants. Between the super-blocks 45 and 70 there was also planed rayon center on the area of 45ha in the super-block 44. The general Yugoslav competition was announced in 1965 for the preliminary urban design of blocks 45 and 70. Based on the winning project of the author architects Tepeš and Gradelj, detailed urban plan was made by architects Mišković and Glavički. After the adoption of the plan, its implementation has started and *Directorate of Construction of New Belgrade* gave the land for building to a business association "Jinpros" and development company "Komgrap" in 1967. That same year, competition for the architectural design of buildings was announced. Further development and building of blocks was based on the project made by group of author architects Popović, Šekerinski, Čanak and Aleksić (Stojanović, 1975).

⁶⁶ Kulturni centar Beograda, 1977; Višnjić, 1977



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Realization of these blocks was made as two distinct urban areas at the level of extended local community. The main land use was residential with residential buildings and following green and recreational areas, then areas with service buildings on the level of the rayon center with appropriate land use, areas with a local community center, schools, healthcare and social protection and areas for traffic - streets, sidewalks and open parking lots. But the significant part of the planned non-residential structures in super-block has stayed unrealized – commercial contents along Juri Gagarin Street and one half of the public contents inside the blocks (3 kindergartens and two primary schools).

Amendments to the detailed urban plan of super-blocks 45 and 70 in New Belgrade were made in the beginning of the 1990s for the part of blocks along the street Jurij Gagarin, where the major part of a local community center was not built. This plan enabled the implementation of planned capacities in several phases - in the low-rise buildings with mainly commercial activities (shopping centers). In that sense, these plan additions did not treat the unbuilt areas i.e. open spaces, but only remodeling formerly planned commercial zone, in the sense of these zone land lot making and possibility of realization in phases.

After that, decisions about preparing of new regulation plans for super-blocks 45 and 70 were made in 2001, but until today these plans have not been adopted. Because of that we cannot talk about the new urban plan for these super-blocks, but about planning process which lasts more than 15 years, during which there were shifting different tendencies in the treatment of open and free block areas. In that sense, we can divide this long period in three phases.

The first phase is a period of preparation of plans from 2001 to 2009, when the planning of super-blocks reconstruction was based on increasing their building capacity in accordance with the parameters of the then Master Plan of Belgrade until 2021. By entering in a period of transition it came to market liberalization and privatization of construction land. For the New Belgrade increase of building capacity in the super-blocks meant the definition of land in public ownership and land for new construction that would be privately owned. Based on that, the determination of a public and private interest relation becomes the main theme of plan-making process for blocks 45 and 70 in this period⁶⁷.

Considering that owner of the unbuilt areas i.e. open spaces in super-block 45 was the city, and in super-block 70 business association "Jinpros", the two plans have given the significantly different treatment of open spaces and their contents: plan for super-block 45 predicted all undeveloped public contents (schools and kindergartens) and included new commercial contents "punctual" along main vertical axes of super-block, while all other open spaces (playgrounds, sport terrains, greenery) were planned for public ownership; plan for super-block 70 was lower the capacities of formerly planned public contents and some of them dislocated in the place of built playgrounds inside super-blocks, while the central part of the super-block for a considerable new residential structure development, and free open areas of land in private ownership. Plans for reconstruction of these two super-blocks are going to *Belgrade*

⁶⁷ In the New Belgrade, cadastre determine only the ground area of a building, which leaves large areas of construction land to be owned by the city without defined status.

*city assembly's planning committee*⁶⁸ in 2009. The committee was criticizing the different approach to problems and non existence of unique principle for the reconstruction and the clear stand about the main questions that were arising during the making of plans. The plan was returned in the conceptual phase, with a clear goal that all future structure development inside super-blocks should be with public land use and of public interest.

The second phase of detailed regulation plan making process for the super-blocks 45 and 70 was a period from 2009 to 2014, when the new conceptual plan for these super-blocks was based on the characteristics of the original plan, respecting the specificity of the site and understanding the problems of urban transformations of New Belgrade's open block, as well as the preservation and improvement of the achieved high standards of housing and perception of the local community emerging needs.

The main recognized problems in the super-blocks are: the lack of the required number of parking places, space for a variety of recreational functions and recreation in the winter, cultural and entertainment facilities, undefined jurisdiction over the management and maintenance of existing transportation and green spaces. For these reasons, all new facilities are planned to respond to the perceived needs of the existing local population:

- Needs caused by changing social standards, values and way of life since the dawn of blocks until today;
- Needs which are additionally identified and which are not taken into consideration at the time of blocks development for which the capacities built in the blocks are not enough;
- Needs as a result of the failure to implement planned large capacity complexes in the environment;
- Needs caused by changes in the block's age structure, the education system and the applicable standards.

With this conceptual plan the housing in this spatial whole is unchanged, without the possibility of adding structure onto buildings, while the public service facilities, buildings and complexes (kindergartens, primary school, cultural center, and poly-functional center), sport and recreational complexes, worship and public garages are newly planned. The planning committee has adopted the concept of detailed regulation plans for blocks 45 and 70 in December of 2014, after which the making of the plan draft begun, but also was suspended shortly afterwards.

However, it can be said that the planning process is entering into its **third phase** during 2017 when *Belgrade city assembly's planning committee* adopted new capacities for planned public facilities (kindergarten, primary and secondary schools) and their distribution in blocks 45, 44, 70 and 70a, on which the opportunities for planning new housing facilities in block 70 are starting to re-open.

It would be interesting, from the point of view of this paper, to note that during a long period, in which lasts the development of plans, in accordance with the then applicable *Law on planning and construction*, the early public insight procedures have not been defined. The plan was never once been exposed to the public insight and the opinion of blocks inhabitants.

⁶⁸ In original: *Komisija za planove Skupštine grada Beograda*



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LOCAL COMMUNITY-ORIENTED PLANNING TENDENCIES

Place attachment

The one of the very important topics linked to this research is the local community attachment to places within one super-block. As stated in Mazo and Perkins article (2006), place identity consists of personal dimensions which are developing in relation to the physical environment by means of a pattern of beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, and goals, and this dynamic phenomenon grows and transforms through lived experience. The literature that they were researching suggests that processes of collective action work better when emotional ties to places and their inhabitants exist. In that way place attachment, place identity, and sense of community can provide a greater understanding how neighborhood spaces can motivate ordinary residents to act collectively to preserve, protect, or improve their community and participate in local planning processes. They are highlighting the importance of integrating different approaches from different scientific fields in order to understand the values of a community and how place meanings can be strengthened in the planning and design process. This could provide us with an understanding of how to create and develop successful communities.

Placemaking approach

Jacobs (1961) was writing that the city is a laboratory in which planning should be learning, the formation and the testing of theories. She pointed to the importance of different spatial levels of managing city neighborhoods. Whyte (1980) stresses out that people like the best least crowded and most restful small spaces, marked by a high density of people and a very efficient use of space. As the most important elements of the square he highlighted seats, natural elements, and streets with commercial activities. Gehl (2011) states that for *life between the buildings* five principles in the design of open public spaces are important: absence of walls, short distance, low speed, similar levels, and orientation towards other users. Alexander (2002-2005) defines positive place through 15 geometrical properties of space. All this authors and theories represent the basis for a contemporary approach in urban planning - *placemaking* (PPS, 2009), which is “a collaborative process of shaping the public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place⁶⁹”. This research considers, among other things, possibility of implementation of the placemaking approach in the urban planning process in New Belgrade as well as its potential in contemporary situation.

Local community significant places and activities

⁶⁹ UN-Habitat, 2015, p. 1

It is impossible to predict some significant places and activities for community inside one neighborhood before life start to manifest itself, especially with planning approach that was taking place in Belgrade. In order to better understand the needs of local communities, local government should be established, which contemporary tendencies suggest⁷⁰. When we look at all plans for block 45, from the original detailed urban plan to the last draft version, we can see that instead of the schools and kindergartens in the super-block 45 which plan suggests, the craftsman center and football terrain have been developed. A similar situation has happened in the super-block 70 – instead of school and kindergarten the craftsman center has also been developed, the unplanned tennis balloon was built in the school courtyard, as well as playgrounds which Municipality of New Belgrade developed a few years ago. In the process of spontaneous redevelopment of these neighborhoods, local community organizations have significant roles. For example, local community of super-block 45, also known as *Fortyfivers*, has made a web presentation of their neighborhood. As a significant place inside block 45 they are emphasizing “a little hill”⁷¹, which is very popular during the winter among kids. They are especially proud of their *graffiti culture* which has been emerging in different places inside the super-block. This short review is highlighting the blog as an important tool for the future research, which should be directed in a more detailed way to such places through observation and interviews with local community.

CONCLUSIONS

Planning and re-planning process of New Belgrade’s super-blocks 45 and 70 is taking place without the participation of the local community. Early public insight was established as a legal obligation only in 2014, while the plan is exposed in its final phase on public insight. The form of the early public insight implies exposition of the preliminary plan and critique and opinion of the citizens, but not their active participation through workshops, forums, groups and so on. Participation of citizens through the placemaking process does not have institutional support – the instrument of urban policy does not exist for this process to be conducted and linked to the conventional planning.

Many attitudes related to the issue of New Belgrade’s super-blocks have crystallized over time through planning (the issue of land and other public purposes, allotment, authentic urban structure protection and upgrading of existing facilities), but it is exactly the duration of the planning process of super-blocks 45 and 70 which indicates that it has not yet found the key interest which would have been enough for plans to be completed.

However, inhabitants of these two super-blocks, about 12 000 in each of them, are not informed about making the plans for their close urban environment, because under the legally defined procedure they did not even get to the public insight. In this fact, we may seek a place for a new, inclusive approach to urban planning through the possibility of articulation and implementation of the different social groups’ needs of all super-block residents as well as potential

⁷⁰ ICLEI, 2015; UN-Habitat, 2016

⁷¹ *Fortyfivers*, 2015



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investors to whom has not yet been given the importance in the current plan-making process, but which may be the impulse for one more shift, which would take these two plans to their finish.

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⁷² Retrieved on: 14 July 2016 from <http://jpl.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/20/4/335>

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