

ISBN: 978 - 88 - 96951 - 23 - 1

PECOB'S VOLUMES

**SARAJEVO IN THE WILDERNESS OF POST-
SOCIALIST TRANSITION: THE NEOLIBERAL URBAN
TRANSFORMATION OF THE CITY**

Cecilia Borrini

European Regional Master's Programme in
Democracy and Human Rights in South East Europe

GRADUATION THESIS

PECOB

Portal on Central Eastern and Balkan Europe
University of Bologna - Forlì Campus

www.pecob.eu

**SARAJEVO IN THE WILDERNESS OF POST-
SOCIALIST TRANSITION: THE NEOLIBERAL URBAN
TRANSFORMATION OF THE CITY**

Cecilia Borrini

*European Regional Master's Programme in
Democracy and Human Rights in South East Europe*

Graduation thesis

Table of Contents

Abstract	7
Keywords	7
Introduction	9
1. Cities: Key Sites for the Economic Growth and Contestation	13
1.1 A Lefebvrian Approach to the City: the Urban Claim for the Right to the City	13
1.2 The Current Phase of Capitalism: Neoliberalism and Globalization	19
1.3 The Contemporary Revival of the Right to the City: A Claim against Neoliberalism	22
2. Urban development trends in Central and South Eastern Europe	27
2.1 The Post-Socialist City and its Peculiarity	28
2.2 Capital Cities and Private Investments in the Balkans: Belgrade and Zagreb, Iconic Examples of a New Urban Phase	32
3. A Case of Post-Socialist and Post-Conflict City: Sarajevo and its Contested Urban Development	37
3.1 A General View on the Spatial Planning Legal Framework	38
3.2 The Urban Neoliberal Phase and its Trend in Malls Construction	40
3.3 An Analysis of the Chaotic Urban Scenario of Sarajevo	48
4. Public Participation and Urban Local Activism in Sarajevo	53

4.1 Citizens' Participation in the Urban Planning Decision-Making Process	53
4.2 Urban Grassroots Initiatives in the City of Sarajevo	56
4.3 An Analysis on the Activist Scenario	59
Conclusions	62
Bibliography	65

Abstract

The topic of this thesis is the post-war and post-socialist urban development of the City of Sarajevo. After four years of a draining siege in the mid-1990s, Sarajevo underwent a reconstruction sponsored mainly by international donations and run by the international community in a fragmented political panorama constituted of political parties divided along ethnic lines. The reconstruction phase is today followed by a neoliberal urban development phase which is the specific object of my analysis. Among all the political issues widely explored by the academia, urban planning and development in Bosnia and Herzegovina received a relatively modest interest, which makes this topic highly relevant to investigate. Urban development of Sarajevo today is chaotic, with an unregulated legal framework and subjected to private interest to the detriment of public spaces. Political management of its development is characterized by instability resulting from intertwining private interests supported by a colluding political élite, eager to profit from urban projects planned in the city. The incomplete legal framework has allowed the definition of a general urban chaos dominated by the symbolic architecture of this phase, the shopping mall. On the other side, the urban activist scene is in formation and society is slowly rising up against the urban political mismanagement.

Keywords

Sarajevo, urban development, right to the city, public spaces, urban activists

Introduction

Over the last three decades, the economic and political paradigm shift towards neoliberalism has progressively brought about radical changes in the redefinition of global spaces. In this global restructured context, the city acquired a pivotal role in the global financial and economic trade-exchanging network, deepening internal contradictions and tensions in the urban society. The category of the post-socialist city is peculiar for its political past and the implementation of neoliberal reforms in the delicate phase of transition.

The case analysed in this dissertation is the post-socialist city of Sarajevo, as the capital city of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH). It is a city that experienced the longest siege in modern European history from which it emerged as a divided city with a very complex political administration. In the post-war analysis of the city, along with the reconciliation issue and the related process of coming to terms with the past, another element is to be taken into account. It is the wave of privatization of urban spaces in the city that is silently imposing a supposed-to-be neutral urban consumeristic model, by mainly building new retail-oriented constructions. The controversial side of it concerns the absence of a coordinated system of urban plans that is to the detriment of city dwellers who powerlessly see a restriction of public spaces detached from the logic of consumption and a general condition of degradation for the rest of the city. To analyse the abovementioned, the thesis intends to raise and answer to the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the contemporary urban development of Sarajevo?
2. How do urban dwellers respond to such urban development of the city? Is there resistance?
3. How and why Sarajevo differs from the broader context of the Balkan region, Zagreb and Belgrade in particular, in terms of both urban development and citizens responses?

I claim that the urban development of Sarajevo is marked by three main characteristics. The first characteristic is its neoliberal orientation that profoundly influences urban plans and projects in following the logic of profit and the offer of private investors. Urban development is driven mainly by capitalist interests and the primary proof of this trend is the mushrooming of malls in the centre as well as in the outskirts of the city. The ruins in the city are themselves a sign of this trend as their state of abandonment is not resolved mainly for their non-profitable nature. Another relevant characteristic is the chaotic legal frame that regulates the urban development issues. The legal loopholes reinforce and sustain widespread exploitation of the urban space in favour of profitable private interests supported by

the lenient public institutions that in turn profit from the investments. In particular, urban plans are adjusted to the will and needs of private investors, regardless of the citizens' opinion. The third characteristic concerns the weak citizens' participation in the decision-making process allowed by a non-complete legal ground that in turn impede citizens to be a strong counterpart in the process. The lack of information about public hearings seems to be a common feature of the organization of public hearings. With these conditions, the citizens' bargaining power is weak and compromised, namely by those legal flaws.

Furthermore, I also claim that a response from the urban society against the shady urban development is being organized recently. Groups of activists are promoting and resisting the current *status quo* in different ways. A common target is usually an abandoned or a neglected space or building. Indeed, some of the groups committed themselves to the rescuing of neglected urban places in the city and giving them back to the urban community. At the same time they are sensitizing the latter to a different approach to the city and to the temporary occupation of the buildings' ground floors for art exhibitions with the goal of creating collective movements without the money motivation. Further initiatives are oriented towards political interventions such as participation in public hearings in order to raise thorny issues and the long-term project of creating a political front able to defeat the dominant powers leading the city and its urban issues. Although it is not possible to talk of a social movement, several grassroots groups of differing natures are trying to make the difference by promoting a distinctive idea of living and sharing the city.

Lastly, the gentrification process that is interesting other capital cities of the Balkan region, as it is for the case of Zagreb and Belgrade, is not characterizing the urban context in Sarajevo. Speculation and clientism seem to be the main forces driving the urban development of the city as these trends are highlighted in the analysis concerning the inefficient implementation of urban policies and the related decisional delays and consequent legal loopholes and the discussion about the construction of malls in the city and the dodgy interventions in urban plans.

I conducted my research at the local NGO "Crvena", in the Gradologija project to be precise, as it is focused on the analysis of the urban dynamics and issues in the city of Sarajevo. During the research, I wanted to cover the legal and technical aspect of urban development, the academic analysis on the current situation of the city and the activists' contributions and initiatives in the urban territory. Concerning the first two aspects, I interviewed Aida Miraščić from the office of the Ministry of Spatial Planning of the Canton of Sarajevo and a technician who preferred to remain anonymous from the Spatial Planning Institute of the Canton of Sarajevo. To expand the legal knowledge, I also consulted laws and regulations regarding the urban planning of the Canton and of the city.

In the academic sphere, I was able to reach Tijana Tufek-Memišević, PhD candidate in architecture at the Cracow University of Technology, Poland and lecturer at the International University of Sarajevo and Professor Vesna Hercegovac-Pašić at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Sarajevo. Their contributions gave me some insights on the development of the urban territory in Sarajevo mainly from an architectural point of view. I also got some papers and documents by Professor Rahman Nurković, specifically regarding the research on the tertiary sector expansion and the trend in mall construction. However, I was

not able to get a socio-political analysis on the post-war urban development from academic figures, as a Faculty of Urban Sociology does not exist at the University of Sarajevo.

Concerning the research on the activist scene, I interviewed some of the activists who are part of the urban grassroots groups that emerged recently in Sarajevo. My interest concentrated on the nature of the groups, their initiatives and actions, main targets and goals, possible political affiliation and networking in order to explore the level of resistance they're opposed to and their critique of the political institutional urban management. The activists I interviewed are members of the informal groups H:ART, Dobre Kote, Borba za život, Slobodna Zona and Gradologija itself.

Another part of my research concerns the ruins as the other side of the same coin in the current neoliberal urban development. Starting from mapping work of Gradologija, I decided to explore better the neglected sites in the city. In order to present their potential for the community and support this in my argument, I took some pictures of the ruins around the city and I then selected four of them on the basis of their large size and their good state. I profiled them by using the national cadastre online from which I retrieved the information about their location and property status (private or public).

The dissertation opens with a theoretical discussion developed along the first chapter. Specifically, I discuss the contribution of the French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre to the analysis of the city and the urban space in the capitalist era. To do that, I rely on his major works in which those three concepts are discussed. These are *Writings on Cities*, *The Production of Space* and a collection of his essays *State, Space and World: Selected Essays*. In support of them, I also used a work dedicated to the Lefebvrian philosophical contributions, *Space, Difference, Everyday Life* edited by Goowerdana Kanishka et al.

In the second chapter, I narrow the discussion down to Central and South Eastern Europe, especially focusing on the Balkan region and its cities. Firstly, I integrate the concept of a post-socialist city in the discussion by tracing its general characteristics and stressing its peculiarity. After that, the discussion moves to the observation of common urban trends in the Balkan region specifically. Therefore, the interest is directed to two capital cities: Zagreb and Belgrade. These cities have been and still are the theatre for debated cases of gigantic and expensive urban projects, deemed too distant to the needs of people, but so much so as to trigger protests that have culminated in the emergence of social movements. This presentation serves to point out the similar or different characteristics they have when compared to Sarajevo. The main literature refers to Kiril Stanilov and its edited volume *The Post-Socialist City- Urban Form and Space*, Sonia Hirt's insightful book *Iron Curtains: Gates, Suburbs and Privatization of Space in the Post-Socialist City* and the study published by Kiril Stanilov and Sonia Hirt, *Revisiting Urban Planning in the Transitional Countries*.

In the third chapter, I enter into the core of the thesis. The urban development of Sarajevo is analysed in its current neoliberal phase and in particular, the incomplete legal framework and the proliferation of shopping centres in the city is investigated as a symbolic characteristic of the phase. In particular, four malls located in the centre of the city will be analysed. In order to build this discussion I refer to the few authors that have contributed to the analysis of urban planning and urban development in Sarajevo as well as in the country as a whole, such as Ajda Korjenić, Rahman Nurković, and Jordi Martín-Díaz. I also refer to

the interviews I took to the Professor Vesna Hercegovic-Pasić and the PhD candidate Tijana Tufek-Memišević and an anonymous technician of the Spatial Planning Institute. A small section in the chapter introduces the issue of the ruins as part of my research, by proposing a selected collection of four sites where buildings are located.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, I define the citizens' participation in the urban decision-making process, underscoring the legal weaknesses from which the lack of transparency that in turn, worsen the already scarce interest toward politics. In particular, I use the analysis offered by Boriša Mraović. It is followed by the discussion on the recent self-organization of the urban society against the described status quo. This aspect is investigated through the semi-structured interviews conducted during the internship period. I describe and discuss the activist groups' engagement in the city and the related activities organized in the city, especially focusing on their methods of activism in the territory, their targets, goals and the effort of networking among them, beyond their different approaches.

1. Cities: Key Sites for the Economic Growth and Contestation

Over the last number of decades, the development of technology boosted the global economy that in turn has affected deeply the role of cities in the global market. Due to the high concentration of commercial activities and the expansion of the tertiary sector, cities have become the main sites of economic growth at the global level. For the same reason, they have become a significant political arena interposed between the national and the local level where different interests weave together or oppose each other. The correlation between the city and its processes of urbanization, and the intervention of capitalism in the re-shaping of the urban territory, as well as the dwellers' lives, has tightened especially with the introduction of the neoliberal doctrine. With the explosion of the global economic crisis in 2007/08 and the implementation of the related austerity measures, a determined critical response from the people who have seen their lives overturned by those top-down decisions was raised in several cities around the world. Relatedly, the claim for the right to the city has resounded over cities.

In the first sub-chapter, I will investigate the philosophical analysis of Henri Lefebvre from which three pivotal concepts can be extrapolated: the right to the city, the social space and the everyday life. In the second sub-chapter, I will move the discussion into a more contemporary scenery by defining the current neoliberal phase and its intrinsic relation with the city as a terrain of profits. For this purpose, I will refer to Neil Brenner, Nik Theodor and Saskia Sassen. In the third sub-chapter, I will present the analysis offered by a number of academics concerning the recent resurgence of interest for the *lefebvrian* right to the city as a guiding political concept in the struggle for taking back cities against the capitalist disruption of the urban territory as well as society. I will discuss the contemporary right to the city with David Harvey, Mark Purcell and Peter Marcuse primarily.

1.1 A Lefebvrian Approach to the City: the Urban Claim for the Right to the City

According to the UN report *2014 Revision World Urbanization Prospects*, 54 per cent of the world's population is urban. Furthermore, the report offers a prediction of the future evolution of the global urbanization, according to which "The urban population is expected

to continue to grow, so that by 2050, the world will be one third rural (34 per cent) and two-thirds urban (66 per cent), roughly the reverse of the global rural-urban population distribution of the mid-twentieth century”.¹ Globalization encouraged by the improvement of Information, Communication and Technologies (thereinafter ICTs) in particular, has generated vast and growing economic and financial networks between and within countries that in turn have had the effect of rising the levels of concentration of economic and financial activities in places fertile for their development, like they are cities.

Moreover, the increasing number of mega-cities in the world is indicative of this striking global trend. Over the last number of decades, megacities have almost tripled: while there were 10 megacities in the 1990s, today the data reports 28 megacities in the world.² Indeed, the city, historically a dynamic environment for trade and exchanges, has currently acquired a crucial importance for the world economy as well as politics, being a terrain of constant confrontation of a myriad of different and sometimes starkly opposed interests.

The French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre already foresaw this contemporary stunning picture of the globalized urban world decades ago. In his precious work “*Le droit à la ville*” published in 1967, Lefebvre detected a global strategy conceived as a unitary system and total planning to which architects and writers, the State and the developers are dedicated to, in order to establish a directed consumer society. This depicts a mission of generalized consumption that promises a renewed city and that has endured until our days, although the different neoliberal orientation of capitalism compared to the Keynesian economy dominating those times.

With the expansion of decision-making centres in cities and the explosion of peripheries around them, the philosopher described the situation as a “perfect domination, for a refined exploitation of people as producers, consumers of products, consumers of space”³, acknowledging that “[T]he convergence of these projects therefore entails the greatest dangers, for it raises *politically* the problem of urban society”.⁴ Against the general perception and conception that urban issues are to be approached only from a technical point of view in the form of urbanism as a discipline, Lefebvre offers an acute philosophical analysis of the city and its space, addressing the discussion towards an unveiling action of the inner political characteristics of the dynamics interesting urban changes over time. In particular, he looks in depth at the tight connection between capitalism and its forces and their domination over the city. A city that with the advent of industrialization, enters into a phase of crisis. His studies on the Western city trace its origin back to the Ancient Greek time, through the Middle Ages up until the advent of the Industrial Age in which it recorded its powerful economic boom. The closure to such a prosperous age was followed by the dark end of the World Wars, culminating in the affirmation of the Welfare State guided by the liberal Keynesian economic doctrine. In making this historical *excursus* of the evolution of the city, Lefebvre declares the transformation of the city and he finally asserts that:

1 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2014). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision, Highlights. 7.

2 Ibid. 13.

3 Lefebvre, Henri, *Writings on Cities*, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, edited by Eleonor Kofman, Elizabeth Lebas, 1996. 85.

4 Ibid.

The city historically constructed is no longer lived and is no longer understood practically. It is an object of cultural consumption for tourists, for a estheticism, avid for spectacles and the picturesque. Even for those who seek to understand its warmth is gone. Yet the urban remains in a state of dispersed and alienated actuality, as kernel and virtuality.⁵

According to him, the global crisis of the city related to explicit forms of rationality (state, bureaucratic and economic rationality precisely) does not completely compromise the existence of the urban that still holds in itself the meaning of the use, although it has been affected by the industrial production. Lefebvre invests on the urban because of its specific character, being “a mental and social form, that of simultaneity, of gathering, of convergence, of encounter (or rather encounters). It is *quality* born from quantities (spaces, objects, products). It is a *difference*, or rather, an ensemble of differences”,⁶ leaving open the possibility of changing.

By adopting a Marxist analytical framework as well as vocabulary, Lefebvre ascertained a crucial difference between the pre-industrial city and the industrial one: while in the former stage, the city is still conceived of as an *oeuvre*, in the latter the city becomes a product to be sold. As he says by referring to the medieval city in contrast to the industrial city:

This city is itself *oeuvre*, a feature that contrasts with the irreversible tendency towards money and commerce, towards exchange and *products*. Indeed, the *oeuvre* is the use of value and the product is exchange value. The eminent of use of the city, that is, of its streets and squares, edifices and monuments is *la Fête* (a celebration which consumes unproductively, without other advantage but the pleasure and prestige and enormous riches in money and objects).⁷

The crisis mentioned above lies exactly in the fading away from the mere use of the city, which is now replaced by the imperative of consumption in a logic of “place of consumption and consumption of place”.⁸ The city becomes a commodity to be exchanged for making it productive and creating a surplus in favour of the dominant élite. Moreover, an important element that cannot be neglected is the intentionality underpinning the interventions in the urban territory. Behind urban plans, transportation networks, building construction, delivery of urban services and so on and so forth, there is a very specific will to fulfil these by that dominant part of society which detains power. In his words, “[T]he ruling class or fractions of the ruling classes intervene actively and voluntarily in this process, possessing capital (means of production) and managing not only the economic use of capital and productive investments, but also the whole society, using part of the wealth produced in ‘culture’, art, knowledge, ideology”.⁹ Indeed, although Lefebvre’s analysis is specifically implementing an economic vocabulary that is borrowed by the Marxist political economic theorization of capitalism, it is not limited to the conception of the urban fabric to its morphological form but, on the other hand, it embraces the social and cultural life all together.¹⁰

5 Lefebvre, *Writings on cities*, 148.

6 Ibid. 131.

7 Ibid. 66.

8 Ibid. 73.

9 Ibid. 74.

10 Ibid. 72.

By accepting this conceptual framework, the political meaning of the city and the urban becomes clearer, shedding light on an issue that is presented as neutral and for this reason, needs to be unravelled and re-thought. In order to build a science of the city, Lefebvre restores the role of philosophy for its close relation with the city and its capacity of overcoming the fragmentation of the knowledge that happened to be with the emergence and consequent development of the social sciences two centuries ago. However, in his works, it is not only the city that needs to be addressed as an issue but together with it, the notion of space is challenged against the previous restrained conception to its geometrical or mental sphere. This does not mean that city and space are discussed separately. On the contrary, they are observed through the same lens that looks at capitalism and the specific mode of production developed in each country in a critical way. In a speech held at Boston University in 1970, Lefebvre summarizes the link between city, space and capitalism by asserting that:

Space as whole enters into the modernized mode of capitalist production: it is utilized to produce surplus value. The ground, the underground, the air, even the light enter into both the productive forces and the products. The urban fabric, with its multiple networks of communication and exchange, is part of the means of production. The city and its various installations (ports, train stations etc.) are part of the capital.¹¹

Although his major work on space would be published in 1974, seven years later the publication of his most popular work “*Le droit à la ville*”, *The Production of Space* formulates an extended philosophical conception of space that will offer relevant insights for future academic elaborations on this topic. First and foremost, it is again fundamental to stress the main claim of the philosopher for analysing and approaching the issue of space and considering it as a political issue. Thus, Lefebvre asserts that the “Space is political and ideological. It is a product literally populated with ideologies. There is an ideology of space. Why? Because space, which seems homogeneous, which appears given as a whole in its objectivity, in its pure form, such as we determine it, is a social product”.¹² With that statement, which is fully developed in his book, he opens up a new horizon in the conception of space, not anymore plain physical space but a social space. Indeed, Lefebvre declares that what was needed at that time was not a replacement for the dominant tendency but a reversal of that tendency, by shifting the object of interest from products to production.¹³ Thus, he put forward a dialectical reading of space and he did that in a very peculiar way, by adding a third moment in the process.

Before introducing and discussing the triadic dialectics and the consequent implications supported by the philosopher, the notion of social space must be slightly deepened in order to understand the three main concepts that are indicated to concur with the production of space. Social space is then analysed as both a means of production, of thought and action as well as a means of control, meaning that it is strictly marked by relations of pow-

11 Lefebvre, Henri *State, Space and World: Selected Essays*, edited by Brenner Neil, Elden Stuart, Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press, 2009. 187.

12 Lefebvre, *State, Space and World: Selected Essays*, 171.

13 Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Wiley-Blackwell, 1991, 26.

er and relations of production and reproduction.¹⁴ All these forces work together to come up with its definition, maintaining specific characteristics according to the mode of production developed in each society.

From this relational conceptualization of space, he indicates three dialectical moments or processes which together make up our understanding of space in a process of continuous production and reproduction. Against the philosophical tradition of dialectics, Lefebvre opposes a *trialectics*:

1 *Spatial practice*. The spatial practice of a society secretes that society's space; it produces and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces slowly and surely it masters and appropriates it. (...) What is spatial practice under neocapitalism? It embodies association, within perceived space, between the daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and the networks which link up the places set aside for work, 'private life' and leisure).

2 *Representations of space*: conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent- all of whom identify what is lived and perceived with what is conceived. (...) This is the dominant space in any society.

3 *Representational spaces*: space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users' (...), [T]his is the dominated- and hence passively experienced- space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate.¹⁵

The related set of concepts (perceived, conceived and lived) that correspond each of them to each moment of the trialectics aims at offering a complete approach to space that ties together senses, thought and feelings.¹⁶ Furthermore, the reasons why Lefebvre builds a new dialectics is already detectable in the following sentence to the presentation of the three moments when he explicitly states that the "[R]elations with two elements boil down to oppositions, contrasts and antagonism",¹⁷ suggesting a critical issue that is instead approached in a different way in his philosophical elaboration.

Relatedly, Christian Schmid offers an extended explanation of the Lefebvrian trialectics. Schmid stresses the philosopher's critique of the Hegelian dialectical process and its inner process of production and reproduction of contradictions that in the moment of resolution are not only negated in order to be overcome but at the same time preserved in the transformation to the higher level. Therefore, they are retained in the forthcoming contradiction. According to Schmid, Lefebvre refutes that dialectical process because he sees the possibility of expressing "a creative activity not so much a *real* but much more a *realization*: a becoming", so that "[b]etween the two determinations, the negation and the conservation, lies, according to Lefebvre, the indefinite, the opening: the possibility of realizing, through an

14 Ibid. 31-33.

15 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38-39.

16 Schmid Christian, "Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space: towards a three-dimensional dialectics, in *Space, Difference, Everyday Life*, edited by Goowerdana Kanishka et al., New York: Routledge, 2008. 41.

17 Ibid. 39.

action, the project”¹⁸. By breaking up the traditional dialectics, Lefebvre proposes a different dialectics that does not lead to the synthesis because all moments can be referred to as thesis and they relate to each other in different ways, ranging from interaction, conflict and alliance. Although each moment can unfold independently, it cannot exist without the other two.

Among the three moments, the one coinciding with *representational spaces* holds in itself that possibility of change quoted above, as well as of revolution. It is here that the concept of *everyday life* becomes crucial for the understanding of the Lefebvrian urban project. Klaus Ronneberger discusses the concept by pointing out the philosopher’s specific move within the communist ideology from a rigid Marxist goal of seizing the State apparatus for establishing a centralized planning of production to the activation of the everyday as a category capable of bringing together economy and individual life experiences and therefore, becoming a revolutionary terrain.¹⁹ Thus, the subject in a collective context would then become “a new revolutionary subject that would revolt not only against the exploitation of labor-power but against the destruction of its entire living environment”,²⁰ thus pointing at the creation of self-managed spaces supported by the principles of creativity and autonomy.

Going back to the discussion and analysis that he elaborated in his *Droit à la Ville*, almost at the end of the book, Lefebvre calls for making “an effort to reach out towards a new humanism, another man, that of urban society”.²¹ The urban society is then expected to fight for the realization of the Right to the City, a claim for a city free from the capitalist grip. How to make it? By taking back the centre of the city occupied by the decision-making powers of the capitalist economy and reasserting the needs and desires of the dwellers without any mediation made by the action of exchange. Hence, the tools in the hands of any ‘*citadin*’²² to fight back the imposition of other interests that are compromising the nature of our existence and the one of the city, have to be found in the right to participate and the right to appropriation. The latter enforces the right to the city as it calls for actions of occupation of places in order to challenge the right to private property (the pillar right of capitalism) and to rebuild a new city, the one based on the main value of direct democracy against the democratic oligarchy in which we live today.²³ Moreover, Lefebvre specifies that the city we should struggle for is not the old one that belongs to the past, because as he stated, “the right to the city cannot be conceived of a simple visiting right or as a return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed *right to urban life*”.²⁴

The right to the city is the philosopher’s call for taking a determined stance against those forces that are taking over and ravaging at times, the urban territory with considerable consequences on the urban living since the interests of public and private institutions and

18 Ibid. 31.

19 Ronneberger Klaus, “Henri Lefebvre and the urban everyday life: in search of the possible, in *Space, Difference, Everyday Life*, edited by Goowerdana Kanishka et al., New York: Routledge, 2008. 135.

20 Ibid.

21 Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 150.

22 This term is used by Lefebvre throughout the book “*Le droit à la ville*” to bring together the notions of urban dweller and citizen as the subject entitled of the Right to the City.

23 Lefebvre, *Writings on cities*, 174.

24 Ibid., 158.

developers win over those of the city dwellers. But the message he wanted to convey is not limited to that because it also implied a complete subversion of the reading frame that would finally open a new approach to the city and politics as well. The urban society would then be able to defeat the threat of total destruction of its creative core and to turn alternative political practices into that everyday life he discussed. According to the will, also needs and desires which specifically spring out of each urban society will become declinations of political practice.

Finally, Lefebvre offered a unique philosophical analysis that shed a light on a topic in general disregarded at that time. The Lefebvrian analysis around the urban as a concept including and concerning the other elements he pointed out, gained a new profound and widespread impetus only recently, showing to be a framework to be translated in the current differently developed capitalist doctrine, presently dominated by a preponderant neoliberal ideology. Thus, in the next sub-chapter, I will firstly introduce the current neoliberal phase and its implications for cities and the consequent acceleration of the urbanization process as a whole by relying on the prestigious works of Neil Brenner, Nik Theodore, Saskia Sassen and Neil Smith. I will then proceed with the introduction of some of the main academics who draw their analysis, interpretations and comment on the Lefebvre's philosophy, by borrowing his vocabulary. Among them are radical geographers and urban sociologists such as David Harvey, Mark Purcell, Peter Marcuse, Margit Mayer.

1.2 The Current Phase of Capitalism: Neoliberalism and Globalization

Since Lefebvre produced his main works debating on the relevance of space together with issue of the urban and the city, the global economy has radically changed in its nature. The Lefebvrian analysis is plunged in a context characterized by a political and economic model based on the centrality of the State functioning as the main actor of the global economy, with its borders marking the national and international levels of interplay on the global scale. A gradual shift towards a new paradigm will start at the end of the 70s and beginning of the 80s when the Fordist-Keynesian model appeared to be cumbersome to the new impulses of the global economy, having already experienced two dramatic economic and financial crises over the 70s. In stark opposition to the welfare State intervening in the national economy, the restructuring of capitalism was oriented toward the reduction of the state to an institutional framework by and within which implemented the neoliberal policies supporting private agents and diminishing the role of society.

According to Neil Brenner²⁵, neoliberalism can be summarized with the characteristics described below that have been commonly detected over the last three decades of its evolution. Accordingly, neoliberalism appears to be a process in continuous transformation, suffering from a systematic crisis from which it appears to regenerate any time instead of ac-

25 Neil, Brenner and Theodore, Nik, "Neoliberalism and the urban condition", *City*, Vol.9, No.1, April 2005. 102-103.

knowledging the failure and working for a complete revision. Moreover, it does not produce a single specific strategy universally applicable and for this reason the outcomes are different according to the specific context is considered and analysed. Within this scheme, the role of the state is retained by making it a channel for the promotion of market-based regulatory arrangements. For those and other reasons, it is an ideology highly contested from those parts of society aware of its nature and for that, against it.

With the consolidation of neoliberalism, a reconfiguration of the geography of capitalism occurred. In particular, it has been defined by processes of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation for which the national boundaries lose their dominance, fusing in a more fluid global scenario in which the relentless improvement of technologies makes the former limits of time and space redundant so that the state figures as one actor among the others. At the same time, new territorial agglomerations are configured and empowered, constituting fixed spaces in contrast to the former character, with a relevant role in the global economic chessboard.²⁶ Especially in the 1990s, the field of urban studies enriched its sphere of research by focusing on significant characters of this new phase that at time began to be seen in a clearer manner due to the definitive constitution of the neoliberal paradigm.²⁷ A consistent part of the academic research focused on the contemporary trend of concentration of the global economy in specific territories and challenged the mainstream idea of an economy that would have lost its territoriality.

Indeed, contrary to the general assumption of neoliberalism as a doctrine driven by absolute laws from which it derives equal results, regardless of the place of implementation, the observations on the global neoliberal restructuring stages have led Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore to define the neoliberal paradigm as an “*actually existing neoliberalism*”.²⁸ This concept aims at redressing the analysis of global neoliberal processes as political and economic policies strictly bound and specifically to national, regional and local contexts in which they are developed and applied, stressing in particular on the continuity with the previous system’s framework and regulatory practices to show its real implications.²⁹

In this way, it is possible to underline the concrete aspects of neoliberalism, confuting the ideal of its dogmatic functionality. In relation to it, the two authors bring up another intertwined concept always referring to neoliberalism, the one of “*creative destruction*”, understood as the capacity of facing its inner crisis, failures and the consequent resistance through continuous actions of destructive interventions on institutions in order to produce a new creative socio-spatial framework in which regenerate itself.³⁰ This dialectical process takes place in all socio-spatial levels, assuring capitalism to develop through the mobilization of particular territories, places, and scales.

Similarly, Saskia Sassen addresses her critics to that literature that all over the last two decades has focused on the character of hypermobility and liquidity of capital mainly, inca-

26 For a discussion on the re-scaling process of neoliberalism, see Brenner Neil, “Globalisation as reterritorialization: The re-scaling of Urban Governance in the European Union”, *Urban Studies*, Vol.36, No.3 (1999): 431-451.

27 Brenner, Neil, “The Urban Question as a Scale Question: Reflections of Henri Lefebvre, Urban Theory and Politics of Scale”, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol.24, No.2 (2000): 361-378.

28 Brenner, Neil and Theodor, Nik, “Cities and the Geographies of “Actually Existing Neoliberalism”, *Antipode*, Vol. 34, Issue 3 (July 2002): 349-379.

29 *Ibid.*, 351-357.

30 *Ibid.*, 362-367.

pable of looking into other fundamental aspects of the global economy.³¹ The re-scaled current economic system offers us the chance to grasp an unrevealed aspect, linked to the affirmation of the sub-national level as a crucial playground of economies. According to Sassen, it is not possible anymore to accept the pure idea of neutralisation of place and distance as effect of telecommunications revolution in economy, because the latter has had an impact on the redefinition of global geography of transnational corporations (TNC's) and interconnected activities, which are marked by both a dynamic of dispersal and of centralization.³² Sassen introduces the concept of a *global city* as the new major actor in global economy in which agglomeration economies are located with their centers of commands and control of production.³³ Drawing the attention to it, it allowed for opening a new path of investigation on the categories of place and production process, unearthing the forgotten other side of the same coin; all those low-wage non-mobile jobs (cleaning services, clerks, peddlers and so on) that make possible profitable service and finance sector to function.³⁴

Because of the resulting striking social and economic contrasts in the urban society, Sassen asserts that “if we consider that global cities concentrate both the leading sectors of global capital and a growing share of disadvantaged populations then we can see that cities have become a strategic terrain for a whole series of conflicts and contradictions”.³⁵ From this consideration, it is then clear how cities are not only strategically economic sites but also a potential terrain for political struggles. Definition and structure of urban spaces become a fundamental point of discussion, being the urban scale the current terrain on which neoliberal restructuring takes place and produces a rampant inequality among cities and within cities.

The attention here is predominantly paid to the gentrification process as it represents a concrete example of manipulation of the urban space to the interests of capitalism. The term was coined by Ruth Glass in 1964 during her research on the London real estate market and the city neighbourhoods' dynamics of transformation marked by deep and well-hidden class strategy at that time. Over the last century and even until our current times, gentrification has acquired a central element of analysis in urban studies, especially since cities have become a vital protagonist of the global economy. Some areas of a city are likely to be more interested by this phenomenon because, according to Tom Slater, “gentrification commonly occurs in urban areas where prior disinvestment in the urban infrastructure creates opportunities for profitable redevelopment, where the needs and concerns of business and policy elites are met at the expense of urban residents affected by work instability, unemployment, and stigmatization. It also occurs in those societies where a loss of manufacturing employment and an increase in service employment has led to expansion in the amount of middle-class professionals with a disposition towards central city living and an associated rejection of suburbia”.³⁶

31 Sassen Saskia, *Cities in the World Economy*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, updated 2nd edition (1st ed. 1991), 2000.

32 Sassen Saskia, “The Global City: Strategic Frontier/ New Frontier”, *American Studies*, 41, n.2-3 (Summer/Fall 2000).

33 Sassen Saskia, “The Global City: Introducing a concept”, *Brown Journal Affairs*, vol. 11(2) (2005): 27-43.

34 Ibid. 32.

35 Ibid. 39.

36 Slater Tom, The Gentrification of the City, in *The City*, edited by Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson, Blackwell Publishing, 2011. 572.

Although it is not a recent phenomenon, gentrification has evolved into a different form, following the historical pattern of the primary need of capital's expansion. Neil Smith claims that gentrification has to be considered as an urban global strategy, a generalized phenomenon issuing from the re-scaling of the world economy that sees the city as a territory of conquest for insatiable capitalists.³⁷ Sharing the same critical ground of radical geographers committed to the revealing of neoliberal urbanization, Smith wants to focus on a new urbanism as a direct consequence of a new globalism. The connecting thread of cities is the dynamic of constant redefinition of centre and periphery, where the latter is constantly pushed out the further to the external margins of the city.

Nowadays, the cause of this dynamic has to be searched for in the newly disguised policies of "regeneration", which call for the re-creation of a more liveable neighbourhood, currently lying in socio-economical deprived conditions instead.³⁸ As a result, land and housing prices rise and the resettlement of the area is accomplished in favour of those residents who can afford those high standards and that represent the middle class, in other words the class that has the capacity to support the capital. What Smith emphasises is the different form compared to the past. He affirms that "retaking the city for middle classes involves a lot more than simply providing gentrified housing" but it embraces "whole new complexes of recreation, consumption, production, and pleasure, as well as residence".³⁹ Consequently, the city turned to be a lucrative terrain in all its aspects.

1.3 The Contemporary Revival of the Right to the City: A Claim against Neoliberalism

From the above overview of new urban traits of neoliberalism, it is possible to grasp the real issue at stake, such as the concentration of activities and profitable interests on cities and the emergence of protesting movements and actions against the exploiting neoliberalism. Cities have already demonstrated to be a pot in constant ferment with the recent long wave of Occupy movements all over the world and the continuous commitment of political and social groups on a local level. Because of the powerful contents of their claims, different discussions have concentrated on the resurrected Lefebvrian Right to the City.

The following discussion on the contemporary reception and interpretation of the Lefebvrian analysis needs to be preceded by a short premise, fundamental for not fall into the trap of the legal reference of the term 'right'. In order to do so, I rely on Purcell's specification of right to the city. The author emphasizes an important aspect of his

37 Smith Neil, "New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy", *Antipode*, vol. 34, issue 3 (2002): 427-450.

38 Ibid. 438-439.

39 Ibid. 443.

radical democratic project, namely the character of its nature that has nothing to do with the liberal-democratic state system and its related capitalist mode of production and social relations.⁴⁰ The contrasting and alternative democratic model would be in form of self-management, so that “as the mass of people come to realize their own power, as they demonstrate to themselves that they are capable of managing their own affairs, the state apparatus begins to appear increasingly less necessary, and it progressively withers away”.⁴¹ In addition, Purcell continuously reminds us that the Lefebvrian democracy cannot be seen as “an end goal but rather a perpetual struggle”.⁴² Bearing this relevant clarification in mind, it is then possible to move on towards the discussion of the recent historical context in which have grown the contributions of some respectable academics researching in the field of urban sociology.

The implications of neoliberal policies have shown their aggressive and oppressive nature when not surprisingly, the worldwide economic crisis started in 2007/08. Once again, the inner contradictions of the system have been proved to be to the detriment of ordinary people. The financial crack has had a direct effect on the real economy, by creating debt-induced situations, either on state level or on individual one. Immediately, a new keyword in political discourses resounded everywhere: austerity. It was championed as the only solution to this grave crisis. The consequent negative impact on social policies was and still is overwhelming.

As it is acknowledged by Marcuse, a “growing disillusionment, growing criticism, growing search for alternatives by the excluded, the exploited and the discontented”⁴³ have arisen loudly in the form of public gatherings of self-organized people in squares, becoming the political arena of expression of their claims against an institutional political class completely colluded with private actors. As Purcell argues “a shift from local government to local governance is underway”⁴⁴, as a consequence of the recently gained cities’ active role of political local entities in the vast national and international arena and the need to prove their competitiveness in order to survive economically. Against the violence of political and economic powers, movements have opposed resistance, reclaiming and retaking what makes people’s everyday life.

The widespread Occupy movements from 2011 onwards are the starting point of David Harvey’s discussion on the Right to the City, letting him to consider that “there is something political in the city air struggling to be expressed”.⁴⁵ Harvey reads the current dynamics of struggles that are animating cities’ life through the lens of the Lefebvre’s philosophy regarding the conception of city and urban space. In its original conception, the Right to the City was not understood as a legal right codified in a judicial system⁴⁶ but in Lefebvre’s words as

40 Purcell Mark, “The Right to the City: the Struggle for Democracy in the Urban Public Realm”, *Policy & Politics*, vol.43, no.3 (2013): 311-327.

41 Ibid. 317.

42 Ibid. 317.

43 Marcuse, Peter, “Reading the Right to the City”, *City*, vol.18, No. 1 (2014). 4.

44 Purcell, Mark, “Excavating Lefebvre: the Right to the City and its Urban Politics of the Inhabitant”, *Geojournal* 58, no. 2-3 (2002). 101.

45 Harvey David, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, London-Brooklyn: Verso, 2012. 117.

46 Marcuse, Reading the Right to the City, 3.

“a cry and a demand”⁴⁷ to radically change the balance of power between the relationships that constituted the determinant element of the making of urban environment.

As Lefebvre firstly conceptualized,⁴⁸ Harvey widens the analysis around the intimate relation between capitalism and urbanization also, considering the latter as the product of class struggle. This relation unfolds in the perpetual search for profitable terrains by capitalists to create surplus value as this is like their lifeblood which assures them to produce surplus value and then have it absorbed through urbanization.⁴⁹ Consequently, the whole city becomes a point of contention for those investors (public or private) that see it as an attractive commodity for economic speculation, transforming urban dwellers into mere consumers. For this reason, Lefebvre considers the right to the city superior to other rights, because it contains in itself in various and changing claims to make the city an *oeuvre*, rejecting the dominant version of the city as an exchange value.⁵⁰ This is why Mayer contends that the right to the city is an “oppositional demand, which challenges the claims of the rich and the powerful”.⁵¹

Occupy movements and current local protests embody this spirit of radical change, resisting the coercive power of neoliberalism. From his Marxist philosophic affiliation, Lefebvre detected the working class of the economic boom of the 60’s as those urban citizens entitled to the right to the city but Harvey, in his up to date interpretation of the right, enlarges the scope from the industrial-based workers to all those workers working for the production and reproduction of the urban life.⁵² Relatedly, concerning the question of whose is the right to the city, it is important to highlight the challenging nature toward the traditional liberal democratic citizenship. Lefebvre affirms that the right to the city is the right of “the citizen as an urban dweller (*citadin*) and user of multiple services”⁵³, basically, the people who live and experience the everyday life of the city. Purcell draws his discussion on the right to the global city on Lefebvre’s statement. Assuming the loss of nation-state centrality that has caused a rescaling, reterritorialization, re-orientation⁵⁴ of the world economy (as outlined above), the author considers the right as a real alternative to the conventional citizenship, proposing the term of “*citadinship*”⁵⁵. This term expresses the power that any urban dwellers holds in himself or herself and gives them a legitimised base to their actions against the assumptions of capitalist social relations and for the creation of an urban political community different from the State. A right to the city that proves to be an inspiring concept also from this analytical point of view, proposing a revision and extension of the traditional citizenship that fits perfectly

47 Lefebvre, *Writings on cities*. 158.

48 Lefebvre, *Writings on cities*, 65-85.

49 Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, 5.

50 Lefebvre, *Writings on cities*, 66.

51 Mayer Margit, The “right to the city” in urban social movements, in Brenner Neil, Marcuse Peter, Mayer Margit, *Cities for people not for profit: critical urban theory and the right to the city*, New York/London: Routledge, 2012.

52 Ibid. 139.

53 Lefebvre, *Writings on cities*, 34.

54 See Purcell Mark, “Citizenship and the Right to Global City: Reimagining the Capitalist World”, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol.27.3 (2003): 564-90; Purcell Mark, “Excavating Lefebvre: the Right to the City and its Urban Politics of the Inhabitant”, *Geojournal*, vol. 58, no. 2-3 (2002): 99-108.

55 Purcell, *Citizenship and the Right to the Global City: Reimagining the Capitalist World*, 578.

in the current times in which more and more new practices of citizenship are performed against the lack of recognition from the institutions.

Finally, the rehabilitation of a concept as the right to the city did not happen by chance but arrived in a fertile moment of worldwide radical oppositions to the political and economic *status quo* dominated by the latest and more articulated version of neoliberalism. Its appropriation from political movements acquired and still acquires a different meaning and different set of actions and practices according to the city and the related urban environment in which they are active. Overall, in cities where the rein of decision-making power are held in the hands of an inaccessible self-regenerating multi-layered system, the right to the city seems not to ask for a recognition from the authority. On the contrary, to convey a message of people empowerment through self-legitimation before the institutional and legal power, by simply taking back and re-signifying spaces.

2. Urban development trends in Central and South Eastern Europe

The year 1989 is a crucial date for Central and South Eastern Europe as it symbolically marks the fall of the communist and socialist regimes. This particular year paved the way for what was to come: the phase of transition at the end of which these countries should have achieved stabilisation and fully functioning liberal democracies. For this to happen, a package of reforms had to be implemented by the national authorities concerning all aspects of the political life of the country. Despite the formal institutional engagement in the support of the necessary political and economic reforms, the first results observed were not considered satisfying in terms of full commitment to the achievement of the established objectives. Focusing the interest on a smaller scale, the very same dynamics that affected the national politics can be found at the local level, especially for what concerns the management of urban territories. Cities have become sites of private investments and urban projects, at times questionable for their usefulness for the urban community. Thus, urban development is definitely one of the transitional issues that deserves to be investigated to aid understanding regarding what the on-going political transformation allows to happen in practice. Recently, the research on this crucial period has begun to focus on a specific aspect concerning the overarching transitional process, namely the urban development occurring in cities, especially capitals.

In order to investigate the lower administrative level of cities, the chapter will be organized in two sub-chapters. The first one presents the concept of the post-socialist city and its characteristics, being a conceptual category representing the cities that underwent or still are in a process of transition towards a definitive democratic government and its fully operating bureaucracy. The post-socialist city is discussed by referring to the contributions of some authors who focused their research on this topic, such as Kiril Stanilov and Sonia Hirt. The second sub-chapter focuses on the Balkan region drawing on two cases of capital cities: Belgrade and Zagreb. These two cities have been specifically chosen because they are presenting two contested urban projects, opposed by the urban citizens and the civil society who directly clashed with the public institutions. The case of the city of Zagreb will be discussed by relying on the analysis offered by Anka Mišetić, Sara Ursić, Ognjen Čaldarović and Jana Šarinić. For the city of Belgrade, the analysis will be developed considering the studies offered by Uroš Radosavljević, Ksenja Lalović, Zoran Đukanović and Snežana Đorđević. Furthermore, newspaper articles and activists' statements will be used in the discussion.

2.1 The Post-Socialist City and its Peculiarity

Central and South Eastern Europe followed a different historical path compared to the Western part of Europe when it comes both to economic and political development over the last century, due to being under the influence of the two major super powers in the world who were in contention for global dominance through all possible means, including the atomic bomb. Although divided between the Soviet satellites and the Socialist Federation of the Republics of Yugoslavia (SFRY), which meant a different application of the communist ideology, that side of Europe shares common political characteristics. Among them, the overall management of political and economic affairs by the State, a capillary party system from which it derived a top-down decision-making process, the abolition of private property in favour of a nationalised economy based on either a centrally-planned economy or the principle of self-management. The crude confrontation between the two blocks separated by the infamous ‘iron curtain’ was suddenly interrupted by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, a turning point which witnessed the whole communist area of influence hit by a domino effect that would define the end of the Cold War.

The following transitional period had serious implications for the regional countries, far from the prosperous democratic future that was promised to them. The interested countries undertook a difficult course towards democracy and a market-oriented economy. Some of them are still stuck in this phase, precisely those areas in the Balkans. Consequently, the shift from a socialist regime to a liberal democratic regime required the implementation and the enforcement of several reforms through the newly formed institutional framework. The coinciding fall of socialist regimes and the contemporary consolidation of the neoliberal paradigm in the capitalist countries entailed the application of its main funding principles in the transitional phase of those countries. For this reason, Kiril Stanilov pointed out that “the market is often viewed as the major (and quite frequently the only) agent of positive change while the role of post-socialist governments is confined to curtailing their own influence, attracting capital, and making sure that it flows freely within the elements of the economic system”.⁵⁶ To align with the western standards, it was required to elevate privatization to the guiding principle of the process of transformation. For some countries this had and still has crucial consequences on the democratic functioning of politics.

It followed a harsh period characterized by economic difficulties in particular, as most of the countries experienced a decrease of the national GDP, an increase in unemployment rates, inflation and rising inequality.⁵⁷ Yet other problems of a different nature affected the

⁵⁶ Stanilov Kiril et al., *The post-socialist city, Urban Form and space transformation in Eastern Europe after socialism*, edited by Stanilov K., University of Cincinnati, Ohio, US, Springer, 2007. 347.

⁵⁷ Hirt Sonia, *Iron Curtains: gates, suburbs and privatization of space in the post-socialist city*, Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. 40.

regional countries, such as the process of institutional reform and the revival of ethnic conflict resulting from the dissolution of multi-national federations.⁵⁸ It is in this context of general instability and political confusion that urban policies have been developed and operationalized. A context emerged in which the restructuring of the economic system obtained more importance over the definition of a spatial planning system, ultimately resulting in its negligence.⁵⁹ As discussed in the previous chapter, cities have become neuralgic centres of the global economy and therefore, different interests concentrate in the urban territory, most of them following the explicit logic of the market for which the space becomes a valuable commodity that in turn allows the realization of profitable projects.

If this trend of the growing importance of cities can be observed all over the world, certainly the meaning of this phenomenon and the related characteristics differ from city to city. In my analysis, the city I refer to belongs to a broader conceptual category that embraces all urban areas of a specific kind, the so-called *post-socialist city*. This peculiar terminology has entered the analysis of urban developments of cities in Central Eastern Europe and the Balkan with the intention of stressing the different developmental path compared to other cities already part of the same process of neoliberal-oriented capitalist urbanization. The prefix *post*, placed before the adjective socialist, defines a temporal limit corresponding to a definite historical moment that is the discriminating factor marking the difference with the previous concept of the city, assuming an intrinsic change in the urban management that occurred with the regime shift. Sonia Hirt indicated four particular differences between the socialist and the capitalist city. According to Hirt, the socialist city did not experience what is for capitalism a characterizing urban feature, namely the sprawling suburbs because the space was rationalized in accordance to the corresponding communist socio-economic order, the same for which there was less economizing with space, underrepresentation of retailing and less social diversity, marginality and informality people, places, behaviours.⁶⁰

With the integration of neoliberal policies, all the previously listed features of the post-socialist city vanished and the opposite dynamics came into being, following the development of the capitalist urban model. The crucial difference between the two types of cities was determined by the short time span in which radical changes occurred, and in turn, produced socially problematic situations in addition to the already listed negative national trends in the economy especially. Because neoliberalism brought about a constant process of deregulation and de-territorialisation as well as re-territorialisation and cities became key players of the new structure of the capitalist system, post-socialist cities entered the global market precipitously, facing challenges they never experienced before, without any expertise and more importantly, in an institutional context poor in resources and efficiency. As reported by Stanilov and Hirt, “[L]acking the capacity to accomplish such a heroic task within a limited timeframe clearly impacted on the quality of the newly coined legislation. Moreover, the process had to be accomplished within a context of intense political struggle as

58 Stanilov Kiril, Hirt Sonia, ‘Revisiting Urban Planning in the Transitional Countries’, Regional Study prepared for *Planning Sustainable Cities: Global Report on Human Settlements*, 2009. 4.

59 Nedović-Budić, Zoran, Tsenkova, Sasha with Marcuse, Peter, “The urban mosaic of post-socialist-city”, in *The urban mosaic of post-socialist Europe: space, institutions and policy*, edited by Tsenkova, Sasha and Nedović-Budić, Zorica, Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag, 2006. 8.

60 Hirt Sonia, *Iron Curtains: gates, suburbs and privatization of space in the post-socialist city*. 36-37.

new political groups, fermenting from the once fairly homogeneous social fabric, were competing for power and representation".⁶¹

In that chaotic context, some political as well as private forces took advantage of institutional and legal loopholes for realizing their own interests over and in some cases, against the public interest. Concerning urban development, several factors seem to concur with the crystallization of that contingent situation corresponding to the transitional phase: the lack of sufficient legal power, inadequate coordination with other legislative acts, the state of perpetual updates of regulations and a chronic lack of resources.⁶² The most dangerous effect coming out of this unstable situation was and still is the manipulation of the legal framework to the favours of private investors and developers who with the political blessing always find a way to get their projects approved, especially regarding the real estate market.⁶³

Furthermore, within the poor legal framework, a new trend came into being that is the lack of fully developed urban general plans that would master the city's development in a more coherent manner and the simultaneous introduction of strategic plans. However, the latter do not replace the former as they hold a significant difference. The master plan follows the established process of land use and physical planning while the strategic plan conceives the purpose of advancing specific action-oriented programs for the realization of main socio-economic goals.⁶⁴ As Stanilov acknowledges, the overall condition is aggravated by the fact that "chronically deficient levels of funding has prevented municipal governments from upgrading their planning offices with the technical equipment and trained staff needed to carry out data capture and analysis as a basis for urban management".⁶⁵

Another point has to be underscored: the public participation to the process of decision-making. From the blurry picture of the institutional and legal framework in the sphere of urban development, instead it clearly portrays the dominant role of politicians, bureaucrats and specialists in the management of the urban planning and the related sacrificed citizens' participation, as the founding element of democracy. As the functioning of the reformed institutions was and for some others still is compromised by the factors mentioned above, it prevented the redistribution of political power to all active political actors bestowed with rights in a democratic regime. As reported by Stanilov, citizens hardly took part in the process of the development of laws in a transparent and inclusive manner, denied of or limited in participating and expressing their opinion on urban issues due to a top-down, self-serving, bureaucratic approach to this political issue⁶⁶, normally considered as a privileged sphere accessible only to technical experts.

61 Stanilov Kiril, Hirt Sonia, 'Revisiting Urban Planning in the Transitional Countries'. 348.

62 Ibid., 349.

63 Stanilov, Kiril, "Urban development policies in Central and Eastern Europe during the transition period and their impact on urban form", Chapter 17 in *The post-socialist city, Urban Form and space transformation in Eastern Europe after socialism*, edited by Stanilov Kiril, University of Cincinnati, Ohio, US, Springer, 2007. 351.

64 Stanilov, Kiril, "Urban planning and the challenges of post-socialist transformation", Chapter 20 in *The post-socialist city, Urban Form and space transformation in Eastern Europe after socialism*, edited by Stanilov Kiril, University of Cincinnati, Ohio, US, Springer, 2007. 417.

65 Ibid. 421.

66 Stanilov, Kiril, "Urban development policies in Central and Eastern Europe during the transition period and their impact on urban form", Chapter 17 in *The post-socialist city, Urban Form and space transformation in Eastern Europe after socialism*, edited by Stanilov Kiril, University of Cincinnati, Ohio, US, Springer, 2007. 349.

This review of the failure of the implementation of a proper framework where supporting a reasonable and balanced urban planning is to be reached with a sustainable logic of urban development bearing in mind cities needs and consultations with urban dwellers and studies by offices will be discussed in relation to another element.

In her book *Iron Curtains*, Sonia Hirt singles out another characteristic of the post-socialist transition different from the classical political and economic sphere, although inter-related, which is linked to culture. Accordingly, neoliberalism affected the cultural sphere of transitional societies also by producing what the author defines as *privatism*. With that term, the author refers to “a culture that entails diminishing appreciation of broad-based collective narratives and actions, and a growing interest in issues centered on the personal and the domestic, the individual, the family and the narrowly defined interest group”.⁶⁷ Its peculiarity lays in “its dual origin, its rootedness in the dramatic failure of decades-long totalitarian attempts to subdue the private realm and the equally dramatic failure to establish a viable non-corrupt public realm after 1989, accounts for the virility with which it self-propels”.⁶⁸ Overall, the generalized laissez-faire approach characterizing the post-socialist transition generated what Hirt calls *the post-public city*⁶⁹ as a city constantly consumed by a relentless process of privatization.

Central Eastern Europe and South-Eastern Europe faced differently the process of transition due to specific historical events that interested differently them and for that reason, they are characterized by different speeds of progress that influenced the state of advancement of the urban development sphere.⁷⁰ The former underwent a process of transformation at the beginning of the 1990s, stimulated by the prospective of integration in the European Union, which helped in adjusting the flaws of the urban regulation already at the end of the 1990s. Whereas, in the South East of Europe, those weaknesses typical of the transitional phase still constituted a threat for a transparent and democratic management of the urban planning and development, in particular due to the widespread corruption and weak public sector management.⁷¹

For that reason, in the next sub-chapter, I will discuss two cases taken from the Balkan region that present those characteristics of political mismanagement and support, if not offering a *carte blanche*, to private investors. I refer to the already exhausted case of the Flower Square (Cvjetni Trg) in Zagreb and the Belgrade Waterfront, a contested urban project in the process of being constructed.

67 Hirt Sonia, *Iron Curtains: gates, suburbs and privatization of space in the post-socialist city*. 21.

68 Ibid. 27.

69 Ibid. 47.

70 Stanilov, Kiril, “Urban development policies in Central Eastern Europe during the transition period and their impact on urban reform”. 358.

71 Tsenkova, Sasha, “Beyond transitions: Understanding urban change in post-socialist cities”, in *The urban mosaic of post-socialist Europe: space, institutions and policy*, edited by Tsenkova, Sasha and Nedović-Budić, Zorica, Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag, 2006. 30.

2.2 Capital Cities and Private Investments in the Balkans: Belgrade and Zagreb, Iconic Examples of a New Urban Phase

Once the war in the former Yugoslavia was over, the end of the 1990s witnessed the end of the era of Milosevic in Serbia and Montenegro as well as of Tudjman in Croatia. These two countries entered a phase of transition, willing to build a dialogue with the West. This meant that with the new century, not only did a dialogue for European integration start but the influence of global markets also began to mark the economic orientation of the countries.⁷² The effect of the new political course revealed itself to be crucial for cities as well, as was discussed previously.

At the local urban level, the currently dominant neoliberal model is characterized by the promotion of public-private partnerships and expansion of the tertiary sector, such as banking, retailing and business centres mainly. This worldwide trend has been observed in both capital cities, Belgrade and Zagreb respectively. Here I will outline certain common features of the two cases of urban projects planned for the Flower Square in Zagreb and the Belgrade Waterfront in the Savamala district of Belgrade. Two symbolic urban projects developed in a political environment fully characterized by the flaws typical of a post-socialist city as discussed above, fit completely in the neoliberal paradigm of urban development. The commonalities can be summarized in the following three main characteristics. Firstly, the specific characteristic that additionally makes these two cases relevant for the analysis of urban development trends, is the strict affiliation of the projects with gentrification as the backing process of plans of redefinition of certain areas of the city to make them profitable economic areas again. Furthermore, the striking element for both cases is the complicity of the local municipality in supporting the projects against the will of those citizens that they should represent. In both cases, the dissatisfaction of citizens was and still is expressed in form of manifestations, initiatives and campaigns that led to the birth of movements as a political counterpart opposed to arbitrary decisions in favour of specific interests, certainly not those of their urban dwellers.

As for the first point, it has to be noted that the two cases occurred in a different time range. In the case of Zagreb, the issue already found an end, while for Belgrade the project is still a matter of animated debate and opposition between national and local institutions and the Belgrade urban dwellers. In 2006, the city of Zagreb became a political terrain of contestation in which the organized civil society on one side and the local political ruling class on the other, clashed in an overt contrast over a debated urban project. Specifically, the object of contention was the presented urban project of renovation of the Lower Town block

⁷² For a discussion about the urban changes of the two cities with a specific stress on the contemporary post-socialist period, see for Zagreb Cavric, Branko, and Nedovic-Bundic Zorica, "Urban development, legislation, and planning in post-socialist Zagreb," in *The post-socialist city, Urban Form and space transformation in Eastern Europe after socialism*, edited by Stanilov K., University of Cincinnati, Ohio, US, Springer, 2007; for Belgrade, Vujović S., Petrović M., "Belgrade post-socialist urban evolution: Reflections by the actors in the development process", in *The post-socialist city, Urban Form and space transformation in Eastern Europe after socialism*, edited by Stanilov K., University of Cincinnati, Ohio, US, Springer, 2007.

around the central Flower Square (Cvjetni Trg). The western and southern part of the square began to be attractive for a private-corporate developer, the Croatian HOTO Group, which started buying properties in those areas with the purpose of developing a project of the residential-business type.⁷³ As reported by Čaldovarić and Šarinić, “the proposal is actually an urban passage, with small shopping centre, with the “new elevated gardens”, with luxury apartments and – strangely enough – an underground garage for circa 800 cars, busses and even lorries. To realize the project, 2 houses should be torn down, both of them under historical protection act, but soon to be liberated from this protection by the city office for the protection of cultural monuments”.⁷⁴ An ambitious project that had the clear intention of moulding the entire area of interest and the surrounding as a whole for allowing a private actor to make profit out of that investment.

In the same way, in 2014, the Arab Emirate-funded Belgrade Waterfront project in Belgrade was officially launched with its ambitious plan of building a housing-business complex of 1,8 million square meters to develop on the southern bank of the Sava river, in the derelict land of the Savamala neighbourhood for the amount of 3.6 billion dollars.⁷⁵ Both projects offer the construction of multi-functional areas centrally located on a model that combines investments to the real estate sector and the retail sector with the purpose of creating a profitable consumption-oriented area, accessible to those people who can economically afford a medium-high standard of living in particular. Nonetheless, the way they are presented to the citizenry is different: the projects are legitimized as being of public interest, precisely for the renewal of the concerned neglected area, hence an action that would be beneficial to all urban dwellers.

Relatedly, another controversial point of both projects is related to the *ad hoc* process to create a legal framework for supporting their development. In 2007, The City Council of Zagreb adopted some changes to the General Urban Plan (thereinafter GUP) in order to meet the requests and needs of the investor, the HOTO Group. As lamented by Green Action and Right to the City, the strategy adopted was the one of organizing public hearing in which the urban citizenry was invited to discuss together the project and after that, it would have introduced some amendments to the GUP to be definitely approved by City Assembly bypassing the public discussion. The result was that all restrictions to buildings construction in the blocks of the Lower Town were removed, as well as the limit to the height of buildings. In addition, it was revealed that the permit for the construction of the underground garage would mean the restriction of the pedestrian zone.⁷⁶

In the case of Belgrade, the role of the Government had a crucial importance as it “took over the role of local government in entrepreneurial urban governance in finding new ways and instruments for the creation of favourable environment for the local economic develop-

73 Mišetić, Anka and Ursić, Sara, “The Right to the City: An Example of Struggle to Preserve Urban Identity in Zagreb”, *Sociologija i Prostor*, 180(1) (2010). 7-8.

74 Čaldarović, Ognjen, and Šarinić, Jana, “First signs of gentrification? Urban regeneration in the transitional society: the case of Croatia”, *Sociologija i prostor*, 46 (3/4) (2008). 377.

75 Robinson, Matt, “Facelift or folly, Belgrade braces for Dubai-style makeover”, *Reuters*, 31 March 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-serbia-belgrade-development-idUSKBN0MR1WI20150331> (accessed 29 September 2016).

76 Public statement published online by Right to the City (Pravo na Grad) and Green Action (Zelena Akcija) on the City Council public hearings and adopted amendments to the Urban General Plan. 26 June 2007. Available online at https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/zelena-akcija.production/zelena_akcija/document_translations/359/doc_files/original/IzmjenaGUPa26062007_PriopcenjeZaMedije.pdf?1270309893 (Accessed 30 September 2016).

ment and for the increasing employment".⁷⁷ Several amendments to the Master Plan of Belgrade 2021 have been made in order to overcome the obstacles to its implementation and, in particular, the one that clearly shows the lack of transparency of the project is the cancellation of "the former obligation of an international competition for the Sava amphitheatre".⁷⁸ Moreover, a Spatial plan for special purpose area was adopted in order to start land clearance and relocation of the existing bus and railway stations⁷⁹, along with a *lex specialis* that legitimizes the houses expropriation on that site.⁸⁰

Furthermore, the process of decision-making process has been problematic on the side of inclusiveness of citizens and institutions' responsiveness toward citizens. Concerning Zagreb, the response from the civil society proved to be determined in opposing the realization of the project. Since the beginning, the local NGO 'Green Action' (Zelena Ackcija) started an action against it and from this first gathering of citizens, it came out the idea of creating a network of youth and cultural NGOs under the name of 'Right to the City' (Pravo na Grad), paying tribute to the Lefebvrian book and concept.⁸¹ Together they organized a petition that successfully collected 54000 signatures to present to the city's municipality as an official statement of rejection of the urban project.

Despite the citizens' pressure to the local government, the construction of the project started in 2010, provoking an angrier reaction by the activists who organized the occupation of the street Varšavska to which it followed the arrest of several protesters.⁸² Although the movement failed in its objective of defeating and winning over the arrogant power of private interests and the colluded institutional politics, in 2013 the City Council of Zagreb approved the changes to the General Urban Plan proposed by the activists who fought all over the years for the preservation of the urban area against those provisions previously integrated. The latter refer to "[T]hose provisions were included in the Urban Plan in 2007 to allow the HOTO Group (owned by developer and real-estate tycoon Tomislav Horvatinčić) to develop its "Cvjetni" business centre and underground garage. At the same time, the ban on the construction of new public parking lots and garages in down-town Zagreb was lifted, which allowed construction of access ramps to underground garages on public spaces and increased the levels of permitted development of Lower City area".⁸³ Clearly, the participation of citizens in the political arena where important interests are discussed was neglected, breaking the relation between the local government and its citizens for allowing a type of shady politics indifferent to the common good to rule over the city.

77 Lalović Ksenja, Radosavljević Uroš, Đukanović Zoran, "Reframing public interest in the implementation of large urban projects in Serbia: the case of Belgrade Waterfront project", *Architectural and Civil Engineering*, Vol.15, N.1 (2015). 42.

78 Ibid. 40.

79 Ibid. 40.

80 Tanjug, "Belgrade Waterfront *lex specialis* passes in parliament", *B92*, 10 April 2015. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2015&mm=04&dd=10&nav_id=93770 (accessed 29 September 2016).

81 Čaldarović, Ognjen, and Šarinić, Jana, "First signs of gentrification? Urban regeneration in the transitional society: the case of Croatia". 378.

82 Matteo Tacconi, "Croazia: Diritto alla Città", *Osservatorio Balcani Caucaso*, 12 February 2013. <http://www.balcani-caucaso.org/aree/Croazia/Croazia-diritto-alla-citta-129301> (accessed 29 September 2016).

83 Dejan, Georgievski, "Zagreb City Council adopted Changes to the General Urban Plan Supported by Citizens and Civil Society", *One World See*, 23 March 2013. <http://oneworldsee.org/content/zagreb-city-council-adopted-changes-general-urban-plan-supported-citizens-and-civil-society> (accessed 29 September 2016).

In the case of Belgrade, in relation to the ad hoc legal framework created by the national government and adopted by the local government, the civil society organized itself against the project under the name of “Ne da(vi)mo Beograd”. The social movement gathered independent citizens, the Association of Architects of Serbia, SANU (Serbian Academy of Science and Art), the Academy of Architects of Serbia, Transparency Serbia and other NGO’s.⁸⁴ The protest actions against the concerned project have been impeded by authorities on different occasions. Here I report the most clamorous one in occasion of the demonstration held in Belgrade against the contract signature between the two parties in April 2015. As reported by the newspaper *Balkan Insight*, “At one point, two trams were halted on the street in order to block the view of the protesters, and conceal the demonstrators from the sight of Government officials and their Abu Dhabi partners”.⁸⁵ The civil society actors involved in the campaign for the retreat of the project also committed themselves to proposing alternative project and modifications. In addition to practices of obstruction by the authorities, it has been reported that the discussions on the “proposed and then approved amendments to the Master Plan of Belgrade 2021 were carried out without substantial participation of professional and general public, except for the formal conducted insight”.⁸⁶ According to Đorđević, at the time of the discussion on Draft of Spatial Plan for special purposes area, the Commission discussed at one open and seven closed sessions.⁸⁷ All this information is indicative of the same low level of transparency, citizens’ involvement and consideration of their demands, as it was in the case of Zagreb.

These are two symbolic cases of urban dilapidation of public spaces and manipulation of the space that directly affect the lifestyle, habits and possibilities of the urban dwellers who seem powerless when faced with the decisions made by public authorities and private investors and taken in non-political places where legitimation disappears. All basic problematics of the post-socialist city in special regard to the approach to the urban development and planning issues are clearly visible. All the advantages of an insecure and indefinite institutional framework have been cunningly taken from both public and private institutions because what neoliberalism allows is the creation of a supra level of decision-making process, inaccessible to citizens who are oblivious of hidden self-interested dynamics. Finally, when this mechanism is inserted in the fragile post-socialist context, it proved to become a danger for the basic idea of democracy.

84 Đorđević, Snežana, “Urban Regeneration Policy in Serbia-three case studies from Belgrade”, Panel T18P34, International Conference on Public Policy-Urban regeneration policies: theory and practice, 1-4 July, Milan, Italy, 2015.15. Available online <http://www.icpublicpolicy.org/conference/file/reponse/1432824403.pdf> (accessed 29 September 2016).

85 Domanovic, Milka, “Belgraders protest against Waterfront Deal”, *Balkan Insight*, 27 April 2015. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/belgraders-protest-against-belgrade-waterfront-deal> (accessed 29 September 2016).

86 Lalović Ksenja, Radosavljević Uroš, Đukanović Zoran, Reframing public interest in the implementation of large urban projects in Serbia: the case of Belgrade Waterfront project, 40.

87 Đorđević, Snežana, “Urban Regeneration Policy in Serbia-three case studies from Belgrade”. 17.

3. A Case of Post-Socialist and Post-Conflict City: Sarajevo and its Contested Urban Development

Sarajevo as the capital city of Bosnia and Herzegovina (thereinafter B&H), as well as of one of the two entities constituting the country, the Federation of B&H (thereinafter FB&H), concentrates all main political national and international institutions on its territory. Thus, it represents a relevant centre for decision-making process, although the competing political centre is located in Banja Luka as the capital of the Republika Srpska. The relatively recent war in the 1990s had harsh implications for Sarajevo, which had to survive a four-year long siege that caused big damage to the city, physically speaking as well as to its trapped urban dwellers in terms of their broken lives. The context of the post-war reconstruction and the additional parallel transitional phase complicated the whole process of recovering, affecting politics as a whole even until today. The neoliberal paradigm adopted for the economic and financial reforms turned out to be inadequate for the Bosnian context. However, to date, it remains the dominant one, guiding the broader global market.

The city of Sarajevo mirrors the problems generated during the post-war period and then consolidated over the years. Among the issues concerning politics in Sarajevo, there is one that is often neglected in the analysis of the city's political scenario and this is the management of the urban development. Thus, the interest focuses on the characteristic aspects of urban planning in Sarajevo and the current urban phase in which it is developing. This chapter has the function of opening the analysis of the concerned issue by investigating it in its contemporary phase of development. Firstly, I will discuss the flaws of the urban planning legal framework at all the Bosnian administrative levels. I will then move to the neoliberal urban phase and its main aspects, specifically focusing on the malls' construction boom and the many scattered ruins in the city as the other side of the same coin. Finally, I will analyse the urban context considering all the elements singled out. To do that, I will rely on academic sources as well as on the findings gathered as a result of my research, mainly in forms of interviews and a photographic survey of some of the ruins in the city.

3.1 A General View on the Spatial Planning Legal Framework

Before narrowing down the discussion to the specific case of Sarajevo, it is worth elaborating on the broader context of Bosnia and Herzegovina concerning its actual condition and more specifically on the national regulation of spatial planning as a controversial issue not clearly present on the political agenda of the country. Bosnia and Herzegovina as a post-socialist country had to go through common transition processes shared with all the other post-socialist countries, such as the definition of a solid democracy and of a liberal market economy. However, as asserted by Timothy Donais, not only did the country have to deal with those challenges but it also had to face the devastation of the territory as a consequence of the war as well as the psychological burden resulting from the crimes and atrocities committed during the wartime and a divided population.⁸⁸ The additional transition processes from war to peace and from contested to consolidated statehood further complicated the creation of a united country.

After over twenty years since the end of the last war, this double characteristic endures as a permanent element that has not been overtaken so far and therefore, its burden is still looming over Bosnian politics as a whole. The Dayton Peace Accords complicated the political functioning of the country, dividing it along ethnic lines with the creation of two entities that meant the definitive separation of the administrative levels, both deaf to each other. From this condition, it follows the general lack of national coordination of certain political issues that would make the country united in pursuing a collective policy applicable to the entire territory. This is the case of the urban spatial planning policy in B&H. As observed by Aida Korjenić, this political question is not regulated by a national strategy supported by a legal framework to refer to. Furthermore, she argues that the lack of mutual coordination reduces the legislative process in the field of urban planning to the entity and its internal administrative levels.⁸⁹

In the case of the Federation of B&H, there is no record of a Federal Plan so far.⁹⁰ A situation that seems to be already compromising the urban development and planning regulation as the void created complicates its chances to progress and finally achieve a complete legal roof. As far as the legislation in this field is concerned, it is governed by the Law on Urban Planning and Land Use (Official Gazette of the FB&H, no.2/06, changed and amended

88 Donais, Timothy, "The Politics of Privatization in Post-Dayton Bosnia", *South-East European Politics*, Vol. III, No. 1 (June 2002). 3.

89 Korjenić, Aida, "Spatial Planning in Bosnia and Herzegovina- Legislative Framework", *Acta Geographicae Bosniae Herzegovinae*, Vol.3 (2015). 53.

90 Milojević, Brankica, "Factors of Urban Transformation in B&H", Presentation Paper, 48th ISOCARP Congress, Perm, Russia, 10-13 September 2012. 4.

in 2007, 2008 and for three times in 2010).⁹¹ This law was modified in 2010 with the purpose of “achieving efficiency in the field of urban planning through the reduction of procedures in administrative tasks and more flexible planning”.⁹² Despite this intention, its implementation has encountered two main obstacles; namely the issuing of local permits and building permits as a result of multiple changes in legislation by the Department of Spatial Planning of municipalities.⁹³ Furthermore, Brankica Milojević points out that the inefficiency of the implementation of the law is also related to “political interests, investor demands (particularly when the level of investment is considered significant) and the capacities of municipal departments responsible for the preparation and adoption of planning and technical documentation”.⁹⁴ A general condition that has been commented by Professor Vesna Hercegovac-Pašić from the Sarajevo University of Architecture as “lacking of a proper long-term strategy, replaced by daily decisions that compromise the implementation of a homogeneous urban development across the administrative territories which constitute the Federation”.⁹⁵ In contrast to that, Professor Hercegovac-Pašić pointed out “the absurdity of the signing mechanism of European Union documents in order to align with the European standards, while in the country there does not exist a national coordination and a federal plan either”.⁹⁶

The poor legal framework together with an unstable political context influenced by private external actors, compromise the definition of a homogeneous urban regulation able to prevent any kind of manipulation. Thus, in this situation, what seems the most plausible prospective is that most of the regulation of the urban issues happens at the cantonal level, then implemented at the municipal levels. In particular, the administrative territory of the Canton of Sarajevo does not have a definitive plan yet. The Spatial Plan for Canton Sarajevo 2003-2023 is in the process of being amended and this requires time to discuss them among all parties who are involved in the legislative mechanism, included in the civil society. Meanwhile, the city of Sarajevo is still regulated by the recently expired Sarajevo Urban Plan 1986-2015 that without the approval of the cantonal plan cannot be revised and updated to the actual situation and condition of the city, which means that urban projects and plans are still based on the old plan.

In the following sub-chapter, I will open the discussion on the current neoliberal phase and its characteristics in Sarajevo. For practical reasons, the discussion focuses on the city of Sarajevo and its four constituting municipalities, namely Centar, Stari Grad, Novi Grad and Novo Sarajevo. I will analyse the phase as such through the contribution of academics such as Zagora Nermina and Dina Samić, Rahman Nurković, Jordi Martin-Diaz mainly. The discussion will then focus on the four malls located in the very centre of the city whose planning and implementation have some debated aspects.

91 Korjениć, Aida, “Spatial Planning in Bosnia and Herzegovina- Legislative Framework”. 54.

92 Milojević, Brankica, “Factors of Urban Transformation in B&H”. 8.

93 Ibid. 8.

94 Ibid. 8-9.

95 Hercegovac-Pašić, Vesna, Professor at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Sarajevo, interview by Cecilia Borriani, 28 July 2016, Sarajevo.

96 Ibid.

3.2 The Urban Neoliberal Phase and its Trend in Malls Construction

The city of Sarajevo is marked by a rich history of intercultural exchanges due to the changing political regimes that occurred over the centuries and that have profoundly affected its urban size and style. Relatedly, Nermina Zagora and Dina Samić conducted a study with the purpose of pointing out the architectural transformation of Sarajevo according to the contingent political regime and related socio-economic order by using the Lefebvrian category of representational spaces.⁹⁷ Precisely, they detected three main periods that correspond to the Ottoman Empire rule, the Yugoslav Socialism and finally, the contemporary capitalism. To them, they correlated what they observed as representational spaces, symbolic of those times and these are respectively, the religious buildings, the socio/cultural/sports homes and the shopping centre. Significantly, the latter represents this last phase of neoliberal-oriented economy introduced after the war with the strong support of the international community. As already stressed, the neoliberal paradigm is a carrier of a changing economic focus with the concentration of economic activities in the tertiary sector and this economic tendency is clearly present also in the city of Sarajevo as I will discuss below.

In this phase, Sarajevo as the largest city in B&H has come to consolidate its role as most attracting Bosnian city in terms of job opportunities.⁹⁸ It was after the war in particular that the city experienced a consistent migration flow of people leaving the rural areas for the urban centre in the search for a job. This had put a strong pressure the city and caused the expansion of the urban and suburban sprawl.⁹⁹ In terms of economy, the expanding sector is definitely the tertiary one as showed by some academic researchers. Rahman Nurković observes that the tertiary activities in the city developed with different intensity and concentration in single municipalities. The author reports an intensification in commercial and business centres on sites marked by pre-war industrialization, which are generally located in central areas of the city, in the intersections of main city roads and near the conjunction of roads at the edges of the city.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, a further expansion in new areas has been observed, especially in the southern and the western part of the city in the Stup zone, in which new shopping centres especially have been located in recent years.¹⁰¹ In addition, Jordi Martìn-Díaz offers some percentage

97 Zagora, Nermina and Samić, Dina, "Sarajevo lost in transition?", *International Journal of Architecture Research*, Volume 8, Issue 1 (March 2014): 159-170.

98 Nurković, Rahman, "Urbanisation and Economic Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina", *Chinese Business Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (February 2012). 201.

99 Martìn-Díaz, Jose, "Geomorphological risks, suburbanisation and neoliberalisation of the urban space in post-war Sarajevo", Conference Paper, International Scientific Conference GEOBALCANICA, 5.7 June 2015, Skopje, Macedonia. 371.

100 Nurković, Rahman, "The City of Sarajevo as the focal point of development of spatial planning", Conference Paper, International Scientific Conference, Academy of sciences and arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, September 19th 2015. 37.

101 Nurković, Rahman, "Contemporary aspects on spatial and urban planning in the canton of Sarajevo", *European Journal of Geography*, Vol.6, N.1 (March 2015). 29.

of the tertiary sector that underscores its dominance in the economic development of the city. Accordingly, office building represents 39% of new developments, which is followed by commercial projects (21%), either supermarkets or shopping centres.¹⁰²

By focusing the attention on the centre of the city, the main area of greater concentration of administrative and business centres is the Marijin Dvor neighbourhood¹⁰³ and it is where three out of the four central multi-storey malls are located, such as Importanne, Alta Shopping Center and Sarajevo City Center. The other shopping centre that firstly was built up in the city centre is the BBI Centar in 2009 that along with a Konzum supermarket and various clothing shops and not only, it also offers food services also such as restaurants and cafés. The place on which it was constructed is the one that was occupied by the first shopping centre in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the popular *Sarajka* which was bombed during the siege. Because of the past memories and the related attachment to that place, when the project of construction was launched, some citizens decided to collect signatures for a petition to present to the municipality as a form of protest to ask for the construction of a square instead.¹⁰⁴ A striking detail of the mall is that the square in front of it has been taken over by the owner.¹⁰⁵ On the BBI Centar website, it can be read in the description of the mall that “The square is a meeting place of the citizens of Sarajevo where, in organization of the BBI Centar, artistic performances, kids playgroups and workshops, concerts, promotions, sports competitions and like, take place”.¹⁰⁶ The private appropriation of a former public space and its presentation as if it were still public, it is the sign of an attempted exploitation for its fundamental functions to the interests of the private owner who takes advantage of its attractiveness. A fake publicity that risks replacing the real one and hiding its opposite nature and the related profit-oriented interests embedded in that place.

The other three shopping centres offer similar various retail services all oriented to the mere principle of consumption, except for Importanne that is also a residential centre and hosts offices and other kind of activities. Alta Shopping Center and Sarajevo City Center, the first one inaugurated in 2010 and the second one in 2014, occupy the two sides of the main alley Zmaja od Bosne in a crucial axis where also the Bosnian parliament and government are located. Their history is signed by some controversial facts that fit in the typical dynamics of this phase. The American company Triland Development¹⁰⁷ based in Sarajevo that invested and constructed the mall was part of a scandal one year after the opening. The American business man Tie Sochowski did not pay the public electricity company for an amount of 126000 KM and for this reason he escaped from the country causing the failure of the in-

102 Martìn-Díaz, Jordi, “Urban restructuring in post-war contexts: the case of Sarajevo”, *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin*, Vol.63, No.3 (2014). 311-312.

103 Stachura, Ewa, Tufek- Memišević, Tijana, Sokolowska-Moskwiak, Joanna. “Urban and architectural design problems in the contemporary city: the case of Sarajevo”, *Architecture, Civil Engineering, Environment*, No.1 (2015). 39.

104 Ibid. 37.

105 The Company “BBI Real Estate” d.o.o. Sarajevo, as the investor, is responsible for development and concept of the BBI Center, which Company was founded by Islamic Development Bank, Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank, Dubai Islamic Bank and Bosna Bank International d.d. Sarajevo.

106 Official website BBI Centar, section About us, http://www.bbicentar.ba/eng/about_us.html (accessed 01 October 2016).

107 For more information on the details of the construction, Office of Architecture-Studio Non Stop, <http://www.studiononstop.com.ba/projects/bosnian-knot.html> (accessed 02 October 2016).

vestment that in turn was taken over by the Austrian Hypo Adria Alpe from which the company took a loan for the construction.¹⁰⁸

While in the case of the Sarajevo City Center (SCC) constructed by the Saudi-Arabia Al-Shiddy Group and opened in 2014, the two towers built up besides the main multi-storey building are not in use which means a case of undue occupation of a former public soil. They were supposed to be an Office Tower and a Hotel, as it is written in the SCC website.¹⁰⁹ Two years have passed since the opening of the mall and their destiny still remains unclear. A related problem that was stressed by the PhD candidate Tijana Tufek-Memišević when giving lectures in Architecture at the International University of Sarajevo and what she refers to as “visual continuity, a principle that is broken by the construction of this kind of high buildings that do not fit in the environment of Sarajevo considering its strong topography”.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, it is believed that the original plan of the construction was modified at the very end at the very end of the approval process to meet the investor’s interest of expansion of the building.¹¹¹

Another common point that characterizes malls in Sarajevo that have been surveyed by Rahman Nurković, although not specifically referring to the same shopping centres I have selected, is that private parking lots are an insured service for accommodating the practical needs of their clients to access them and carry their shopping or groceries easily.¹¹² This aspect would not raise any critical point if Sarajevo did not have problems with ordinary traffic jams but critically, on the contrary, the city suffers from that symptom to which a high level of pollution is attributed. This in turn is making the city one of the most polluted in Europe.¹¹³ Although the Spatial Planning Institute already prepared underground parking lot plans to be constructed in the most crucial spots of the city, thus benefitting the city as a whole, building permits are not being issued for political or interest-related reasons mainly.¹¹⁴ Again, it is clear how private projects are favoured without encountering major obstacle in their plans, as it is the case of malls parking lots, while when it comes to the public interest of the city, this is compromised by the intrusion of concurring stronger wills.

Together these cases seem to be characterized by some shade of real estate speculation and by that characteristic underlined in the previous chapter with regard to the urban planning management in post-socialist cities, meaning the adjustment of urban projects to the will of investors. In contrast to this picture is the surrounding panorama of damaged façades

108 A. K./Sarajevo-x.com, “Ponovo radi, subdina potpuna nepoznanica”, *Klix*, 27 October 2011 <http://www.klix.ba/biznis/alta-ponovo-radi-sudbina-potpuna-nepoznanica/111027066> (accessed 02 October 2016); A. K./Sarajevo-x.com, “Alta Shopping Center još uvijek u mraku, vrata zaključana”, *Klix*, 27 October 2011. <http://www.klix.ba/biznis/privreda/alta-shopping-centar-jos-uvijek-u-mraku-vrata-zakljucana/111027015> (accessed 02 October 2016).

109 Official website of the Sarajevo City Center, section About us, http://www.scc.ba/en/about_us.html (accessed 02 October 2016).

110 Tufek-Memišević, Tijana, PhD Candidate at the Cracow University of Technology, Poland and lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture at the International University of Sarajevo (IUS), interview by Cecilia Borrini, 29 June 2016, Sarajevo.

111 Technician of the Spatial Planning Institute, anonymous, interview by Cecilia Borrini, Sarajevo, 15 July 2016.

112 Nurković, Rahman, “Shopping and Business Centres in Sarajevo”, *Reza za geografiju- Journal of Geography*, Vol.7, No. 1 (2012). 39-40.

113 Toé, Rodolfo “Air Pollution is choking Bosnia, Experts Warn”, *Balkan Insight*, 30 November 2015 <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/air-pollution-reaching-alarming-levels-in-bosnia-experts-warn-11-30-2015> (accessed 03 October 2016).

114 Technician from the Spatial Planning Institute, anonymous, interview by Cecilia Borrini, 15 July 2016, Sarajevo.

of buildings by bullet holes that activates an everyday memory of the siege that strangled the city for four years. Moreover, the most contrasting aspect is the poor existence of open public spaces in the city centre especially parks, green spaces, alleys, squares as well as landscaped urban public spaces that risk to be even more reduced in this process of ‘betonization’ and occupation of huge urban areas of the centre.¹¹⁵ The geographical characteristics of the city, a valley surrounded by hills and further by mountains makes its urban environment a fragile one. For this reason, the city’s urban development would need to be better pondered in respect of the city as such and its citizens who, almost powerlessly, see a continuous devouring process of the urban space by private actors that are supported by the local municipalities and who dominate over the city.

3.2.1 Ruins in the City: the Other Side of the Same Coin

The siege of Sarajevo left a deep, open scar in the city which is still visible on the facades of the buildings around the city and on a number of buildings dispersed in the four municipalities of the city. Although right after the end of the war a huge plan of reconstruction to recover from the so-called *wararchitecture*¹¹⁶ was met in its major objectives, today a last stage of urban intervention is necessary for those buildings that are in a precarious state. Indeed, many buildings lie in a state of abandonment waiting for something to happen in the future. In addition, in recent times other buildings have been erected in the city and were later abandoned probably due to failed investments.

None of the institutions in the territory of the city of Sarajevo has estimated the exact number of vacant places. So far, the only attempt comes from the civil society, by the local NGO ‘Crvena- Association for culture and art’. In 2014, within its on-going project ‘Gradologija’, a preliminary mapping of the redundant buildings in the city was conducted.¹¹⁷ This work had resulted in an online interactive map of the urban territory in which is possible to reveal the location of those buildings to the public.

By using the national online cadastre, I was able to discover their actual private or public nature. The purpose of this work is to make visible these buildings again, not literally speaking, as most of them are located in inhabited or living areas but in the sense of giving them a chance to be considered from another point of view: the one of being potentially for the local community, bearing in mind what was discussed above regarding the lack of public spaces. In particular, here I decided to report just four vacant buildings, some of them a complex of buildings and other single unit buildings. I specifically chose those four for their

115 Nurković, Rahman, “The City of Sarajevo as the focal point of development of spatial planning”. 244.

116 Herscher, Andrew. “Wararchitecture theory”, *Journal of Architectural Education, Collateral Damage: War & Architecture*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (February 2008): 35-43.

117 Official website of Gradologija-NGO Crvena. From the following link it is possible to access directly the map of ruins in Sarajevo. <http://www.gradologija.ba/> (accessed 02 October 2016).

size and their good state, which make them appealing for public use. In order to profile them, I will provide a short description here and respective pictures below.

The first complex of buildings is the one located on the University of Sarajevo Campus in Zmaja od Bosne 8.¹¹⁸ During the socialist times, the entire area of the campus was occupied by military barracks and only after the end of the war, it was converted into a site for the facilities of the University. For that reason, the extended area of 136.856 m² hosts several buildings, today mostly occupied by faculties and other facilities such as a café, copy shop and a library. Among them, there are two barracks not in use at the very end of the western area of the campus, surrounded by other damaged buildings that could not serve anymore and would need to be removed. The two barracks instead are still in a good condition because the structure has not been heavily damaged during the siege, preserving the roof and the bearing walls intact. Over the last two decades, they have remained vacant, which entailed their use mainly for dumping waste. Their use could improve the University services, such as the construction of libraries and related reading rooms, of which there are just a few in the city. Instead, there is already a proposed project for the construction of a new library on the campus that would be financed by the Saudi Arabian government.¹¹⁹ Although the project dates back to 2009 and so far, it has not seen the light, it does not tell much about the attitude of the public institutions lenient to the logic of profits and distant to any idea of public investment in projects that would improve the living standards of the city.



One of the two barracks in the University Campus of Sarajevo, Zmaja od Bosne

118 Federation of BiH. Uprava za geodetske i imovinsko pravne poslove, *Online cadastre*, <http://www.katastar.ba/pre-gled> (Accessed 02 October 2016).

119 About the construction of the new library at the campus of the University of Sarajevo, see akta.ba, "Who is donating \$22 million for the University Library of Sarajevo?", *Sarajevo Times*, <http://www.sarajevotimes.com/?p=92348> (Accessed 03 October 2016).



One of the two barracks in the University Campus of Sarajevo, Zmaja od Bosne

The second selected building is located in the hilly area of Bijelave.¹²⁰ It used to be a dormitory before the war and today is completely forgotten in a quiet neighbourhood surrounded by residential houses. According to the cadastre, it is registered with the former name of the dormitory, “Slaviša Vajner Čića Dom Ucenika”. It is not immediately clear whether the building is the property of the public or not, as it could be one of those structures part of the re-appropriation process enacted after the end of socialism, during which times several buildings were expropriated and taken over by the state.

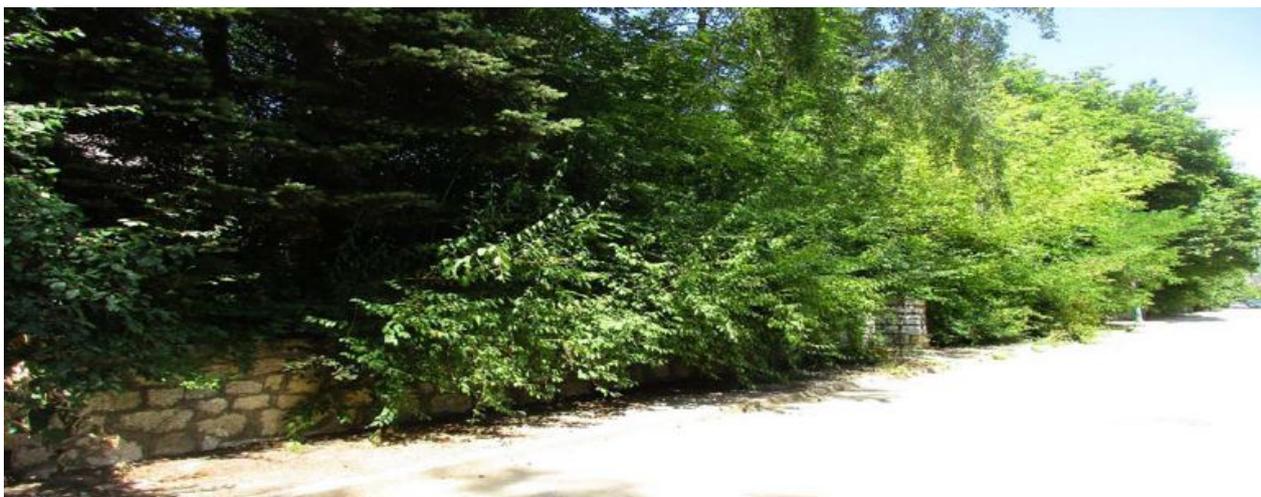


Slaviša Vajner Čića, Dom Ucenika, Ulica Envera Čolakovica

The next set of buildings is located in a less visible part of the city, on the hills in between Gorica and Ciglane, specifically in Crni Vrh. From the outside, the area looks like an enormous park but once entered, three recently constructed buildings reign over the shabby park. Considering the lack of green public areas in the city, this place would suit perfectly the needs of urban dwellers for places where to spend their free time. The owner of the three

¹²⁰ Federation of BiH. Uprava za geodetske i imovinsko pravne poslove, *Online cadastre*, <http://www.katastar.ba/pre-gled> (accessed 02 October 2016).

buildings is the D. P. Unis. Inzenjering Sarajevo,¹²¹ the former public company then privatized in the post-war period, a process of privatization that guided the post-war period in pursuing the accomplishment of a market-oriented economy.



Crni Vrh. The outside of the vacant site



The inside of one of the three buildings in Crni Vrh



One of the three buildings in Crni Vrh

121 Federation of BiH. Uprava za geodetske i imovinsko pravne poslove, *Online cadastre*, <http://www.katastar.ba/pre-gled> (accessed 02 October 2016).

The last one is in a more distant neighbourhood of Sarajevo, Alipašino Polje. As Professor Hercegovac-Pašić commented during the interview, this neighbourhood feels isolated from the centre of the city, itself abandoned in the Sarajevo outskirts. The former kindergarten Vjeverica is owned by the kindergarten “Djeca Sarajevo”, which is a public institution.¹²² The re-use of the building would require the will of the public institution to intervene for its restoration to give it back to its urban dwellers.



Former kindergarten Vjeverica, Alipašino polje, Trg Medunarodnog Prijateljstva

These ruins together with the others disseminated around the city are lying in a condition of negligence due to the disregarding attitude of the institutions, waiting in vain for something to happen. The latter seem not to be willing to invest public money for their rescue because of their non-profitability and at the same time, private investors are not interested to take over the places, as it is more convenient to plan and construct a new building than to restore an old one. The consequent result is a lost opportunity to bring them to life again and become useful for the urban community.

An encouraging and inspiring experience comes directly from the country, specifically from Mostar where in 2003 a group of young city dwellers decided to start an adventure that would have brought about the creation of a totally new space in the city from the ruins of a former Cultural Center of the socialist period.¹²³ This is the story of the Omladinski Kult-

122 Federation of BiH. Uprava za geodetske i imovinsko pravne poslove, *Online cadastre*, <http://www.katastar.ba/pre-gled> (accessed 02 October 2016).

123 The building in which the centre is located, was symbolically chosen for its former function of cultural centre for workers during the socialist time. Because of its previous legal nature of socially owned property, now the property belongs to the OKC, being the NGO that inherited the management from the previous one of the socialist era that was still the owner after 50 years at the time the young activists wanted to take over the space. The formerly run-down building where nowadays all initiatives take place was reconstructed by the NGO itself, creating two main halls, the bar and a well-equipped concert hall that is adaptable to all kind of other events. Outside, around the yard, there is another building in very precarious condition that the NGO's activists want to bring to life again, adding a useful part to the social space, thus expanding their activities.

The brief description here reported is the summary of the Abrasević story I got from Kristina Ćorić as one of the founder of the NGO. Kristina Ćorić, project manager, NGO OKC-Abrašević, interview by Cecilia Borrini, OKC Abrašević, Mostar, 19th April 2016.

uralni Centar (OKC) Abrašević¹²⁴ that tells to the local urban communities that the rescue of ruin is possible as well as a potential successful project.

3.3 An Analysis of the Chaotic Urban Scenario of Sarajevo

The neoliberalization process in B&H turned out to be inappropriate to the post-war condition of the country since the first decade of introduction and implementation of the related policies.¹²⁵ The international community belief in restoring the peace by simply supporting the recovery of the economy through a plan of privatization proved to be too naïve for B&H. The country came out of a draining war ended by the Dayton Peace Accords from which it derived a complex political system characterized by a deep fragmentation of the society along the very same ethnic lines for which the war was fought. Although neoliberalism brings with itself this idea of necessary ‘neutral’ and technical measures for the economic and political re-stabilization, it failed in its promises. This is not only the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina but also of the first Latin American countries in which this new formula was tested in the 1980s and more recently in the very core of Europe after the economic 2007/08 crisis. The lack of a political analysis of the Bosnian context let the country to slowly undertake a troubled transitional process, getting to the point in which it got stuck to a self-reproducing political system distant to the idea of the democratic common good.

According to Asim Mujkić, at the end of the war, the different ethno-political parties born after the war, failed in their goal of constituting a pure national state. Therefore, in order to keep their grip on their political communities, a vivid ethnic division discourse was enabled and cunningly stoked over the years. Furthermore, the author singles out another important aspect. Accordingly, ethno-nationalism goes hand in hand with ethno-capitalism. For that reason, “there are no real differences between the dominant political parties because all of them are ethno-political and each of them act on behalf of the initial accumulation of capital not only through various privatization processes but also through the distribution of positions of power and decision-making posts in the public and political institutions, public enterprises and alliances with private enterprises”.¹²⁶ A political élite that seems too comfortable to support and promote some reforms that would result in a functioning democratic system and instead prefer to work for itself, careless of citizens’ needs.

The urban issue is not detached from this political context. On the contrary, it presents most of the related side effects that in turn resulted in the mismanagement of the urban de-

124 Official website of Omladinski Kulturni Centar (OKC)-Abrašević, <http://okcabrasevic.org/> (Accessed 05 October 2016).

125 Donais, Timothy, “The Politics of Privatization in Post-Dayton Bosnia”, *South-East European Politics*, Vol. III, No. 1 (June 2002): 3-19.

126 Mujkić, Asim, “In search for a democratic counter power in Bosnia-Herzegovina”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol.15, Issue 4 (2015). 627.

velopment, causing a deep legal and legislative void from which only certain groups profit to the detriment of the collective interests. The undergoing neoliberal-oriented privatization process is functioning inside that circuit of self-interest political decisions and corruption that has a deep impact on the everyday life of urban citizens of Sarajevo, the latter left without effective institutional instruments for opposing this trend, as it will be discussed in the next chapter. On the contrary, they are directed towards a consumerist lifestyle that is imbedded in the main neoliberal symbolic architecture, like one of the shopping malls.

Although I reported on the main malls located in the city centre of Sarajevo, the outskirts of the city are also touched by the very same malls' proliferating process.¹²⁷ As discussed in the previous chapter, the post-socialist cities experienced the most aggressive attack on the public urban spaces and what has resulted from it is their replacement with the kind of 'commercial temples' that have the pretention of presenting themselves as public spaces. The same is true for Sarajevo, characterized by this specific form of "spatial enclosure"¹²⁸, where shopping is combined with places that offer also the opportunity of socializing, such as cafés, restaurants and fast food. However, this kind of socialization is allowed only through the mediation of money. Moreover, the surrounding environment is conceived in ways that indirectly address people to firstly step inside shops. Tufek-Memišević commented the malls' set up pointing out an important detail. She argued that "is not by chance that supermarkets are placed at the underground floor because the real function of malls is not directed towards shopping for needs but it is strictly related to a hedonistic kind of consumerism".¹²⁹ Indeed, from the survey she conducted on the users' motivation of visiting BBI, Alta and SCC, the majority of people go to malls for the specific purpose of shopping for wants that means for clothes, accessories and gadgets.¹³⁰ The induced consumption is veiled in that kind of accommodating artificial environment, which for its characteristics and for the opportunities it gives to people it is not even put in discussion from a critical point of view.

Relatedly, the quasi-public status they acquire with the sold illusion of offering those spaces to the citizens' pure need of enjoyment, is also reinforced by some dynamics that spontaneously trigger from the opportunity that people see in some areas of those malls. This is the case of the Alta shopping centre. As I had the chance of witnessing during my studies in Sarajevo, the Alta's last floor has become a reading room for students as the number of libraries is irrelevant in the city considering the number of students, and most of them do not assure the service until late in the afternoon and during the evening. For this reason, students have found a comfortable place to go studying on that floor where no activity is in service, except for a café. That example gives also an idea of the absence of public institutions where citizens would need to be supported with adequate services.

Furthermore, the occupation of the centre by business and commercial centres, not by chance close to the centre of political power in the case of the central malls and their

127 Nurković, Rahman, "Shopping and Business Centres in Sarajevo", *Reza za geografiju- Journal of Geography*, Vol.7, No. 1 (2012): 35-48.

128 Hirt, Sonia, *Iron Curtains: gates, suburbs and privatization of space in the post-socialist city*. 50.

129 Tufek-Memišević, Tijana, PhD Candidate at the Cracow University of Technology, Poland and lecturer at the International University of Sarajevo (IUS), interview by Cecilia Borrini, 29 June 2016, Sarajevo.

130 Tufek-Memišević, Tijana, "Architecture of Consumption. Case Study Sarajevo", *Konsumpcija I Rozwoj*, 3(8) (2014). 80.

expansion to the periphery of the city, would imply that a process of gentrification is possibly being undertaken. Yet, compared to the cases of Belgrade and Zagreb briefly reported in the previous chapter, what is missing in Sarajevo is that ‘hidden’ strategy oriented to middle class appropriation of the urban space. The high unemployment rate, that reaches a considerable percentage of 25.8%¹³¹, is critically affecting the citizens’ economic status and consequently, the economy of the country. Therefore, it seems difficult to think of a gentrifying process when the average monthly salary in B&H is 832BAM (€424),¹³² money with which it would not be possible to afford the prices of shops and boutiques in the malls. Gentrification would entail better economic chances of specific rich strata of the society and a domino effect on the concerned urban area characterized by a progressive general increase of prices but these characteristics seem not to suit the context of Sarajevo.

However, a class interpretation of the post-war socio-economic composition is possible. According to Asim Mujkić, as a consequence of the war and its termination with the Dayton Peace Accords, in B&H a deep class division took shape “between the ethno-political entrepreneurs’ class and the class of the dispossessed: the citizenry internally fragmented and conflicted”. Thus, that class of dispossessed trapped in the tormented Bosnian politics of ethnic confrontation, seems more plausibly to be oriented toward a model of consumeristic lifestyle, while the gentrifying urban process is happening somewhere else under a different form.

A peculiar case of gentrification is taking place in Sarajevo, that has still something to do with the process of spatial seclusion that Sonia Hirt analyses as a common characteristic of the post-socialist city and this is the gated community. A phenomenon that does not interest wealthy Bosnians but rather tourists coming from Arab countries, who see in Bosnia and Herzegovina and especially its capital city, a cheap holiday destination where they can enjoy the rich surrounding natural environment. The creation of gated communities is happening in the surrounding hills of Sarajevo and in Ilidža, a popular green area where the spring of the river Bosna and several Spas are located and continue the past Roman heritage of offering thermal baths.¹³³ The search for healthy and pleasant territories to escape from the sweltering areas they come from and combining the chance for making business deals have created a huge real estate selling machine producing villas, stores and multi-storey malls. This trend has been consolidating in the recent period and adding up to the rest of the problematic and controversial facts that characterize Bosnian politics in the management of the urban development issues in the city of Sarajevo.

In the depicted picture here reported, the city of Sarajevo in the on-going post-war neo-liberal phase has become a centre of profitable interests of public and private actors. On one side, the selfish and corrupted political class, divided into ethnic parties, that do not fulfil their roles of leading actors in the promotion, implementation and enactment of laws and regulation that instead are desperately wanting. On the other hand, the foreigner investors who take advantage of the lack of developed legal frameworks and of the lenient political

131 World Bank, Indicators, Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimated), Accessible online <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS> (accessed 02 October 2016).

132 Statistical Agency of B&H, Indicators, <http://www.bhas.ba/> (accessed 14 October 2016).

133 Stockmans, Peter, “Wealthy Arabs buy up Sarajevo”, *Mondial Nieuws*, 19 September 2016, <http://www.mo.be/en/report/wealthy-arabs-buy-sarajevo> (accessed 05 October 2016).

class to the chance of making profits out of their investments and for that reason accommodate their needs and desires without caring to the impact on the city. The ones who pay the price of this capitalist race to the conquest of the urban spaces are the city's citizens.

In the following chapter, I will discuss the public participation to the decision-making process and the existing capacity of self-organization of some urban groups who are committing themselves in the struggle for the re-appropriation of corners, areas, squares in contraposition to those economic forces that are biting ever-bigger pieces of the city. Against the general passivity of the Bosnian society to politics, some forms of opposition are trying to make a difference.

4. Public Participation and Urban Local Activism in Sarajevo

One of the fundamental pillars of democracy is the citizens' participation to the political life of their community. This principle is valid to any stage of the political decision-making process for any of the political issues concerning the person as well as the community. Thus, the urban management and its related policies do not make an exception. Yet, the respect of this democratic value is not always fully ensured. Especially when it comes to a discipline that is considered accessible only to whom has the appropriate technical knowledge and when the space becomes a source of profit.

This is the case of Sarajevo and its urban development legal framework, within which the regulation of public participation seems to be trivial, thus allowing a questionable enhancement of the mechanism of public discussion in the decision-making process. At the same time, the weak institutional setup does not stop the self-organizing capacity of citizens and their initiatives in the city. Recently, different groups are actively engaged with courageous projects and initiatives in the urban territory of Sarajevo. In order to investigate this component of the democratic decision-making process, firstly, I will discuss it from a legal point of view, highlighting the main problematic aspects and secondly, I will present the urban activist scene and to do that, I will rely on the interviews I took as part of my research. Finally, I will analyse the capacity and the strength of the forming grassroots groups in Sarajevo, considering the Bosnian context and the differences compared to the other cases in the region.

4.1 Citizens' Participation in the Urban Planning Decision-Making Process

As already discussed in the previous chapter, the legal frame that should define homogeneously and coherently the underpinning parameters to the urban planning discipline in the FB&H is not complete. A coordinated system that functions at all levels does not exist; from the national one passing through the entity until the lowest cantonal and municipal political administrations. Hence, in reality, the only two political centres that are mostly involved in the regulation of the urban territory are the Canton and the constituting municipalities.

However, in the case of Sarajevo, these two administrative levels also show little capacity of producing the necessary regulatory documents in a reasonable time in order to cre-

ate a solid and reliable ground to refer to and according to which the related laws can be fully enacted. The reigning confusion is the result of a state of a fragmented and profit-oriented politics that prefers to keep the *status quo* instead of fulfilling their tasks for assuring a proper legal ground and political commitment to it. Yet the institutions represent only one side in that political arena of enabled actors involved in the decision-making process. The other legitimate side is the one of citizens.

Nonetheless, citizens' participation is another problematic aspect of the political process regarding the decisions to take upon urban development issues. The definition of public participation in the process is contained in the Regulation on a unique methodology for preparation of planning documents, a federal legal document.¹³⁴ Thus, according to article 7 of the Regulation, "at all stages of preparation and development of planning documents at all levels of spatial planning in the FB&H is necessary to ensure public participation".¹³⁵ The Regulation goes further in stressing the necessary definition of tools with which public participation should be supported, such as forums, panel discussions, public hearings and other forms of events to be organized for assuring the proper information and involvement to citizens during the drafting phase.¹³⁶ Relatedly, in the case of a discussion of an urban project, institutions have the duty of affixing the contract and the plan in a public institutional space for the citizens to be informed about it. Moreover, during public hearings, citizens have the right of presenting their comments and suggestions that have to be taken into consideration in the further discussion of the concerned plan or project, plus their rejection or approval have to be supported by a formal explanation from the institutions in charge.¹³⁷

Although the citizens' participation is legally guaranteed, it does not mean that is fully contemplated. Several critics to the lack of a detailed accuracy of the text have been underscored. According to Boriša Mraović, despite the ensured participation at all levels and phases, "there are no sources to show what these legal instructions could mean in practice, what are the effects and the scope of participation", and the concerned norms "(...) do not define under what conditions and to what extent should participation enable the citizens to impact the outcomes".¹³⁸ For those reasons, when norms would need to be transposed into practice, public participation does not obtain the relevance that should have according to the regulation. Considering the semi-political context previously discussed in which decisions are taken, politicians are not eager to open a political channel of communication with citizens, as the citizens' concerns may be a potential obstacle to their political interests. In order to avoid that happening, as Tufek-Memišević also reported, "public hearings are organized in a way that people do not have a real possibility to attend them, usually fixing

134 Regulation on Unique Methodology for Preparing Spatial Planning Documentation, "Official Gazette of FBiH" No. 63/04 i 50/07.

135 Ibid. Art.7 (translated in English from the original text).

136 Ibid.

137 Ibid., Art. 8.

138 Mraović, Boriša, "O gradu i participaciji - Izazovi demokratskog upravljanja i neki aspekti urbanog pitanja u Bosni i Hercegovini" (in Bosnian) (On city and Participation – Challenges of democratic governance and some aspects of urban question in Bosnia and Herzegovina), unpublished translation, CRVENA – Association for Culture and Art, Sarajevo, 2015. 8.

the date during working days and holding the meeting in places not easy to be found”.¹³⁹ It may be assumed that the respect of the democratic principle of participation is left on a paper in favour of the existing mismanaged mechanism of decisions that in turn are taken in other places than those legally defined.

A concrete example can be reported here as it refers to the amendment phase of the Cantonal Urban Plan mentioned in the previous chapter. As reported by Alma Midžić who personally attended the public hearing as a member of the local NGO Crvena, last year in December, a public hearing was held in Sarajevo at the City Municipality Hall for discussing the integration of some amendments to the Urban Plan. Surprisingly, the meeting called for the participation of some citizens, some groups from the civil society, such as Borba za život, a local group of activists engaged in the protection of the natural environment, and the association of architects, NGO Crvena and technicians from the Spatial Planning Institute.¹⁴⁰ In that occasion, several critiques were addressed to politicians for having organized the event as this took place on a working day without publishing the proper information needed to make it transparent and accessible. A critical point that was singled out already in the second chapter as one of the main characteristics of the post-socialist city decision-making process regarding urban planning issues.

A further critical aspect concerns the modifications to plans of urban constructions and the shady procedure that makes them possible without public consultation with citizens, as it is allegedly for the case of the Sarajevo City Center shopping mall mentioned before. That seems to be allowed by the abuse of a provision of the Cantonal Law on Spatial Planning. According to the article 46 of the law,¹⁴¹ municipal executive branch have discretion in amending planning documentation and as commented on by Mraović, “Legally, this right is restricted only to those corrections that do not change the basic parameters of the plan. However, it seems that the mechanism is often employed so as to bypass public inclusion while making significant changes to the plans”.¹⁴²

Finally, the legal terrain is a deeply compromised political space, in the context of a general lack of rule of law in the country, which entails the atomization of the territory in the production of a legislative system, in turn not fully operationalized in each political level and between them. Although a generalized mechanism of political clientism and corruption colluded with private interests is capillaried and allowed by the loopholes in the legal framework, the Canton and the municipality are the closest political spaces accessible to citizens. Local political spaces that become potential terrains of action for reclaiming a different sensitivity toward the urban space and the citizens’ life in the city. Relatedly, in the next sub-chapter I will present the current activist reality in the city of Sarajevo. Their initiatives for re-claiming the city refer, directly or indirectly to the political concept of the right to the city, as it has been rehabilitated in the recent times.

139 Tufek-Memišević, Tijana, PhD Candidate at the Cracow University of Technology, Poland and lecturer at the International University of Sarajevo (IUS), interview by Cecilia Borrini, 29 June 2016, Sarajevo.

140 Midžić, Alma, “Public consultation on the Draft “B”, Amendment phase of Urban plan of the Canton of Sarajevo 2003-2023”, Report of the public hearing that took place at the City Municipality Hall, Sarajevo, 22 December 2015.

141 Law on Spatial Planning in Sarajevo Canton, article 46, “Official Gazette of FBiH” 7/05.

142 Mraović, Boriša, “O gradu i participaciji -Izazovi demokratskog upravljanja i neki aspekti urbanog pitanja u Bosni i Hercegovini”. 8.

4.2 Urban Grassroots Initiatives in the City of Sarajevo

During my internship period, I dedicated a consistent part of my work to the gathering of interviews from urban activists in the city of Sarajevo in order to understand the response from below against and in opposition to the standard disregarding political approach to crucial urban issues, an attitude analysed over the present discussion. As far as I could observe, the urban grassroots political scene is in the process of emerging, progressively creating and building up the capacities to engender alternative dynamics in the city, different from the imposed imperative of passive consumption. Different are the urban issues covered by the groups of activists and different are the levels of political engagement beyond the urban practices put in action and the critique to the current status quo. Importantly, most of the groups do not have an official institutional status of registered associations or Non-Governmental Organizations and their members are all local young people. I will present their initiatives and discuss their intentions, objectives through the interviews I recorded to some of the members of each group.

The most recent group formed in February 2016 in Sarajevo is H:ART,¹⁴³ made possible by Belma Rizvanović, Bojan Kanlić and Lejla Kusturica, who are specifically committed to make art accessible to the ordinary urban citizenry, as according to Bojan Kanlić, “the city does not have many galleries and those that exist have a limited access for a small élite”.¹⁴⁴ Their on-going project wants to connect art and city together, the former as one of the means to create alternative ways of socialization and to make this to happen they are using peculiar urban spaces in the city, the buildings’ foyers. By organizing free exhibitions on the ground floor of buildings, not only do they give the chance to students of the Fine Arts Academy of Sarajevo and other artists to present their works without any money mediation but they also create a common space for the citizenry as a whole and specifically for the buildings’ residents.

As explicitly expressed by Bojan and Belma, the idea came from the need of “connecting neighbours again”¹⁴⁵ in whom reciprocal trust had been lost after the draining war that afflicted the city. With the temporary creation of a genuine common space where one could gather and enjoy the moment together with other people, known or unknown, and without any compromising means of exchange, H:ART as an informal and self-financed initiative is trying to revive the city by opening up spaces for living spontaneous social relations. Since the project has started, they have had a positive response from the buildings’ residents and other citizens who attended their exhibitions. Importantly, the group also developed collaborations with other activist groups in Sarajevo that resulted in new joint initiatives.

143 H:ART Official Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/HART-566562406840579/?fref=ts> (Accessed 06 October 2016).

144 Kanlić, Bojan and Rizmanović, Belma, H:ART’s Activists, interview by Cecilia Borrini, 24 June 2016, Sarajevo.

145 Ibid.

Dobre Kote (Good Places) who also is collaborating with H:ART, is another group consisting of young teenagers mostly.¹⁴⁶ Supported by the NGO Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR BiH) and the Youth Council of the Stari Grad Municipality, Dobre Kote preferred to keep an informal status, which gives to them more freedom in developing their work, as commented by one of the activists Aldijana Okerić.¹⁴⁷ The group's initiatives began a year ago and concentrate around forgotten and neglected spots surrounding the city of Sarajevo, either public or private ones. The group organizes cleaning and tidying up days with the ultimate goal of restoring a permanent liveable space for the community. By liberating those spaces from a state of abandonment and giving them back to the people, their actions are explicitly motivated by a self-engagement in spaces of public interest against the indifference of public authorities. So far, their actions are confined to the four city municipalities and are currently including the amphitheatre in Dobrinja, the park in Grbavica and an enclosed yard, 'Baštica', shared by several buildings in the Marijin Dvor neighbourhood. The latter has been chosen for its history, again related to the traumatic past connected to the war. The yard was used as a garden to grow the essential food and since the end of the war because of bad memories connected to it, people stopped using it. However, Dobre Kote's intervention had the beneficial effect of again making a functional space for the neighbourhood, inspiring a collaboration with H:ART for the installation of an exhibition.¹⁴⁸

Furthermore, Borba za život (Struggle for life) represents another active self-organized group in Sarajevo with an environmentally friendly background.¹⁴⁹ The group was born last winter and to date, it gathers activists, some of them active in the institutional politics, students from different fields and ordinary citizens. Specifically dealing with air quality and the water supply service, the group is struggling for the preservation of the environment against urban projects seen as potentially dangerous for nature and human health. Among them, the city for tourists 'Buroj Ozone',¹⁵⁰ a huge project planned to be constructed in the Trnovo municipality of the Canton of Sarajevo. As commented by Alma Midžić, "the land site where it is planned to be built up is close to important water springs that supply the entire city of Sarajevo".¹⁵¹ For that reason, for the time being, this project represents a threat for the entire urban area that in case of realization, could suffer from further water cut-offs and risks being polluted by the wastes from the concerned enormous complex. The level of action develops on a legal ground mainly, pointing at the responsibility of public authorities as representatives of the community to whom is asked to intervene by erasing legal flaws or weaknesses that allow irregularities and in turn to enforce the legal text for assuring the respect of collective needs.

146 Dobre Kote, Official Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/dobre.koote/?fref=ts> (Accessed 06 October 2016).

147 Okerić, Aldijana, Dobre Kote's activist, Interview by Cecilia Borrini, 27 June 2016, Sarajevo.

148 Klix.ba, "Umjetnost pripada svima: Još jedan haustor u Sarajevu pretvoren u galeriju", *Klix*, 05 July 2016, <http://www.klix.ba/magazin/kultura/umjetnost-pripada-svima-jos-jedan-haustor-u-sarajevu-pretvoren-u-galeriju/160705070#13> (Accessed 07 October 2016).

149 Borba za život, Group on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1078494348827336/?fref=ts> (Accessed 07 October 2016).

150 Buroj Ozone Official Website, <http://www.burojo3.ba/> (Accessed 07 October 2016).

151 Midžić, Alma, Borba za život's activist as well as member of Gradologija-NGO Crvena, interview by Cecilia Borrini, 20 July 2016, Sarajevo.

Finally, the most organized and politically engaged group was born in 2013 and it takes its name after an envisioned city science, Gradologija (Citology).¹⁵² The project is part of the initiatives of the local NGO Crvena with the objective of studying and researching the developing dynamics of the city, trying to cover all issues concerning the urban. As presented by Boriša Mraović, “Gradologija’s work is project-based, funded by different donors but at the same time, open to informal actions, more activist in their nature than the standard policy approach”.¹⁵³ The very first initiative supported by the group resulted in the work of mapping the ruins and public spaces in the city, the one mentioned in the previous chapter. The underpinning idea was to raise awareness of their existence and start a process of reflection on the possible uses they could have if converted into functional spaces. Moreover, a broader goal is pursued by Gradologija, the one of generating a future coalition of political actors (grassroots groups, trade unions, political parties) sensitive to the institutional politics that is steering the development of the city and interested in building an alternative analysis and action. Thus, that long-term project would give birth to what is imagined as a City Syndicate, embracing all various social and political categories of the society, strong enough to create an oppositional front able to fight for a political change.

Today, a current fight for keeping an urban space is going on in Sarajevo and it involves some of the presented realities in the effort of supporting the cause actively or in solidarity with it. The following sub-sub chapter will introduce the growing struggle for preserving the internal yard adjusted to a park in the very centre of the city.

4.2.1 Slobodna Zona, Reclaiming Back Public Space

In June 2015, a group of youngsters spotted a public yard located beside Markale, the city’s market place, in between Đenetica Čikma and Ulica Mula Mustafe Bašeskije. From that moment on, a collective effort for removal of the waste that covered the area was put in place, consequently entering into direct confrontation with public institutions for the use of that space. With the active support of the Stari Grad Youth Council, the YIHR BiH and the political party Naša Stranka, the group of activists managed to clear the yard up and bring it back to life by organizing public events that aimed to involve citizens and inform them on the issue. For the action of liberation, the place has been renamed Slobodna Zona, free zone.¹⁵⁴ In September 2015, the activists deposited a request of temporary use of the place to the Stari Grad municipality and on that occasion, they got to know the urban project that is interesting a larger area within which the yard

152 Gradologija Official Website, <http://www.gradologija.ba/> (Accessed 07 October 2016).

153 Mraović, Boriša, Member of Gradologija, interview by Cecilia Borrini, 25 July 2016, Sarajevo.

154 The information here reported was obtained by Aldijana Okerić as one of the activists involved in the campaign for preserving Slobodna Zona.

is placed. The area interested is the “Quadrant 12” according to the urban planning map, on which a building for commercial purposes would be constructed by the Bosnian investor Amko Komerc.¹⁵⁵ But a dispute over the ownership of the space between the Stari Grad municipality, the Jewish community and the Islamic community is delaying the start of the construction. In the meantime, the activists collected signatures for a petition and gained the support of the residents for the preservation of the yard, as one of the few public spaces that offers a green area in the city centre, even if a small one. The place has been cleaned up, decorated and arranged to a park for the community thanks to the constant work of the activists, with the collaboration of other groups previously reported, such as Dobre Kote, H:ART and Gradologija. On the other side, the Stari Grad public authorities showed a disregarding attitude toward the activists who attended the public hearing concerning the discussion on the urban project, sign of indifference to the citizens’ opinion, not being used to opposition.

This case does not differ from other examples of implemented urban projects. Another supermarket will be built up, surrounded by a residential centre in the centre of the city with the blessing of the public institution, with an unclear legal ground and a dismissive response from the politicians towards the young activists, kept aside the decision-making process.

4.3 An Analysis on the Activist Scenario

The activist panorama in Sarajevo seems to be at the beginning of its development and possibly, of its future blossoming. After the protests that exploded in the country in 2014,¹⁵⁶ nothing has been achieved in terms of radical political changes but as a spontaneous wave of contestations that gave birth to the political experiment of plenums, certainly it can be retained a fruitful general feeling and memory of a concrete possible response to the self-referent politics. Although it is not possible to draw a direct correlation between the 2014 uprising and the popping up of some groups of active young people in the contemporary Sarajevo, those protests might have activated or inspired critical minds to make a difference. The grassroots groups discussed here, bring with them two central characteristics: they have recently formed and their strength and innovation is to be acknowledged in their young composition, which would allow thinking that a new phase of fresh ideas could really take off. Yet, below the hopeful future perspectives, lies the reality.

155 For more details on the urban project, Odluka o pristupanju izradi imjena I dopuna urbanističkog projekta “Kvadrant 12”, (Decision on the drafted changes and amendments of the urban project “Quadrant 12”) Bosna i Hercegovina, Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine, Kanton Sarajevo, Općina Stari Grad Sarajevo, Načelnik Opcine, Sarajevo, mart/ožujak 2016 godine.

156 Vilenica, Ana and Crnomat, Dražen, “We are hungry in three languages1: the February urban social movements in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, in *Urban and Regional Social Movements*, Petropoulou C. & Vitopoulou, A. eds, Thessaloniki. Mytilene, AUTH and University of the Aegean, 2016: 358-381.

The grassroots groups of our interest were born recently, over the last three years, boasting a strong youth component. The relation between the Bosnian young people and politics is troubled and therefore, difficult to be redefined in a short-term period. According to the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung's youth study in BiH, "[The] youth do not express great interest in political events, regardless of whether we talk about global politics, the politics in the Balkans, Bosnian-Herzegovinian or EU politics. Between 47,8% and 54,4% of respondents are not interested or not interested at all in political events, depending on the scale of political events".¹⁵⁷ As reported by another study, youth would be willing to commit themselves to parties or civic engagement only if they knew that this opportunity has a real chance of success to make a change in the society.¹⁵⁸ But the main impediments are to be found in the contemporary political situation that causes a general feeling of disenchantment as what is generally believed is that local authorities are affected by a widespread corruption that steal funds for others' interests, impeding to arrive to whom should be the first beneficiaries.¹⁵⁹

Aware of a politics stuck in between private and personal interests, the activists have found their own way of intervening and interfering against that model of political management of the local territory. Most of them preferred to keep a non-institutional character to be freer in their decisions and actions but another point came up from the interview I took: a sizeable, general distrust against NGOs has appeared in high numbers since the last war.

A strong feeling of rejection that comes from the inaction of NGOs that reveal themselves for what they are: namely an integral part of the same system, having the pretention of supporting and enriching the civil society while in reality, they have become mere bureaucratic machines, at times politicized and used for other interests. David Harvey on the contemporary NGOisation process offers a lucid comment, by arguing how "NGOs have grown and proliferated under neo-liberalism, giving rise to the illusion that opposition mobilized outside of the state apparatus and within some separate entity called "civil society" is the powerhouse of oppositional politics and social transformation".¹⁶⁰ Sharing the same analysis on NGOs dominating the civil sector of their country, the local groups of activists want to keep themselves distant from that model of passive assistance and competition for obtaining funds from donors. Thus, they have opted for direct actions that want to stimulate the involvement of urban dwellers especially the youth, in a prospective of re-shaping the city by themselves without the intermediation of an unreliable political ruling class.

The element of the trust reconstruction process emerged in the interviews, not only as a social process in the urban society like H:ART is trying to do, but with the help of art in the neighbourhoods of Sarajevo, and equally important is the general effort of creating an urban activist network and the attempt of aggregating people around activist initiatives. A slow process that needs to be pursued gradually because people are diffident, they fear to be

157 Žiga, Jusuf, et al. *Youth Study Bosnia Herzegovina*, Sarajevo: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2015, 122.

158 Nansen Dialogue Center and Saferworld. *Leaving the past behind: perceptions of youth in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, Sarajevo: London, Nansen Dialogue Center; Saferworld, 2012. 22.

159 Ibid., 30.

160 Harvey, David, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Development*, London: Brooklyn, Verso, 2006. 28.

used; a feeling that is direct consequence of the above-mentioned NGOisation of the society as argued by Alma Midžić.¹⁶¹

The local urban society is self-organizing with an aim to defeat the public and private powers that impede the full and just enjoyment of the urban public spaces, where the everyday life could unfold beyond the imperative of consumption and the logic of profit, values that are characterizing this dominant global neoliberal phase as stressed out all over the dissertation. Against the absent support of the public institutions, although just at the beginning of their actions, the grassroots groups in Sarajevo are trying to take back a protagonist role in the politics of the city. Thus, the urban space in Sarajevo has become a point of contention. On one side, the public authorities that go hand in hand with the private investors from whom they get money for accommodating their interests that in turn allows the reproduction of a corrupted political system. On the other side, the citizenry passively discouraged by the political trends in the country witnesses a constant pillage of the urban sources and among them, an active part of the city's youth that has not surrendered to the traditional disempowering politics.

Nonetheless, when compared to the examples of urban struggles in the region as the ones discussed in the second chapter, Sarajevo seems to have a weaker capacity of social mobilization. Zagreb and Belgrade experienced the astonishing citizens' response to the dirty affairs of the local governments and the appealing private investors' urban projects, which gave birth to determined social movements. The latter proved to be able to put forward political claims and to denounce loudly the corrupted politics. In Sarajevo, the context is more complex for reasons that I relate to the post-war re-arrangement of politics in the country as a whole. The transition guided by the international powers that imposed top-down reforms and exported the model of civil society dominated by NGOs and the re-constituted political elite fragmented in political parties that built their campaigns on the ethnic conflict rhetoric, together they annihilated the society, flattening the level of debate and critical thought. The activist voices still need to rise above the overwhelming powers that take the politics hostage to the favours of some, but their initial contribution to an alternative political way of conceiving the urban life might make the difference and pierce the general indifference of people toward politics.

161 Midžić Alma, Borba za život's activist as well as member of Gradologija-NGO Crvena, interview by Cecilia Borrini, 20 July 2016, Sarajevo.

Conclusions

The analysis I developed throughout the dissertation investigates two specific areas of the post-war urban development in Sarajevo: the implementation of urban planning in the city pointing out its principal characteristics in the current neoliberal phase and the citizens' participation in the decision-making process. These two aspects are complementary in a democratic political decision-making process that would imply the commitment of political representatives to the organization of the city's political life in accordance with the citizens' consensus resulting from an informed and transparent policy. However, this is not what Sarajevo is experiencing.

The lack of a complete and fully functional legal framework as a general feature of the post-socialist city is a consolidated characteristic in the city of Sarajevo also. That legal void has become the fertile terrain for corrupted and self-interested decisions by politicians leading to plans approval. In the heart of the city, private investors have played their cards pertaining to their economic power being able to impose their interests, with the construction of malls that dominate over an area which are also the locations of the main political national institutions. The occupation of potential urban public areas by these constructions is the first sign of the arrogant indifference of institutions that release building permits without considering the impact of those buildings on the city. The mechanism of implementation of urban development is driven by the will and needs of private investors that as economic actors are not supposed to take into considerations citizens' needs and opinions.

These facts are part of a broader context that has consolidated over the post-war period during which neoliberal policies were integrated in the reconstruction plan of the country where also the city was indirectly included. The international actors imported and enacted those policies with the biased conviction of their technical neutrality that would have implied the capacity of being adaptable for any context regardless of its peculiar history. However, the neoliberal-oriented reforms turned out to be inappropriate for the Bosnian context because of the primary need of supporting social policies in a country destroyed and traumatized by the war. Precisely, in the urban field, this has meant giving free rein to private investments to be the only source of development as the political parties in power are too concentrated in their power game for keeping a solid grip on their electorate, feeding the ethnic division that issued from the war. As outlined in the analysis, this general political attitude is supported by the will of exercising that authority that the political ethnic engineers of the war did not manage to achieve in their plans of state conquest. The political channel through which these kind of politics is pursued has not a clear and transparent character for a regular democratic functioning but is oriented and directed by a solid and widespread political nepotism that has become the rule in the management of any political issue.

From the top of the Canton of Sarajevo down to the city of Sarajevo and its local municipalities, the decisions in the field of urban development are guided by the most appealing offer coming from private investors and developers as long as it is not the public sector to invest in urban projects. Thus, instead of committing to the urban management of crucial issues for Sarajevo individuating the problems and the needs of citizens, the political elite continues to contemplate a system of favours and profits that are only beneficial to those who are part of the close circle of privileged friends and valuable contacts. The urban political mismanagement has been discussed with the contemporary trend of malls' construction and their dubious legal and transparent character of some of these investments. Malls that are erected with the clear intention of replacing public spaces, create an illusion of living freely with a common space for the urban community. This kind of politics complicated by the overlapping political levels from which the multiplication of political figures and of interests is the cause of delays of relevant interventions in the city, whereas private interests are immediately accommodated.

A contrasting element has been observed in the dissemination of ruins around the city. The bombardment of buildings during the siege and the post-industrial phase in which the economic restructuring happened left behind them a great number of buildings in the city. Some of them would need to be removed but others could be transformed in functioning buildings for the community. Public spaces are left wanting in the city and ruins, as those I have profiled, still hold a great potential to be lived again. The logic of profits leaves them in that neglected state as it seems more convenient to build a new construction instead of restoring them and the public institutions are not willing to invest in what is seen only as old non-profitable ruins.

The other component analysed is the citizens' participation in the decision-making process. Yet, another aspect was also explored that shed a light on the urban activist scenario in the city of Sarajevo. The participation as a legal principle to be respected in any decisional system is present in the poor urban legal framework but as analysed, it seems to be more a formality than a real elaborated stage in the process of discussion of plans and urban projects. When the participative element is related to the implementation process of urban planning and the controversial political system, it can be made to be a definitive consideration. In Sarajevo, it lacks the institutional will of bringing urban issues on a transparently organized political agenda, according to which city dwellers can participate actively in the necessary interventions in the urban space to meet the contingent needs. This political supra level of self-referential interests prevents directly or indirectly the citizens' right of participation in and of expression on political issues that involve them and their lives profoundly. This aspect has been reported with cases and statements made by interviewees that denounce irregularities in the organization and conduct of the public hearings.

Against this status quo, recently, a few self-organized groups have emerged in Sarajevo. They raise critical urban issues which interest the city and work on possible alternatives without waiting for institutional initiatives. Although a collaboration is trying to be built up, the groups of activists I interviewed have decided to keep an informal status that not only gives them both more freedom of action and of decision, but also it is a direct consequence of the distrust of the institutional system on the political side and of the civil society dominated by the huge number of NGOs registered in the city. Activists have connected their ac-

tions and initiatives, although a network is not firmly established yet, but as reported, one group, Gradologija, is working on the long-term project of gathering all urban activist realities in one political front able to stand together against the current politics and uniting support for all urban fights. Furthermore, not all concerned groups have a strong political analysis supporting their actions except for the lucid critique to the corrupted political system they are subjected to and of which they suffer the ravages in their lives. Nonetheless, their engagement in urban actions mainly intended to intervene directly in the space to revive it and re-make a liveable place can be interpreted as a political action. I believe it can be considered a clear stance against the trend of consumption that compromises the living of public spaces due to the exchange imperative that affects the relations unfolding in those kinds of 'commercial temples', that is malls as a symbolic example.

Considering the Balkan region and the trends of urban development in other cities, Sarajevo presents a different situation that is mostly influenced by the course of its post-war politics that is stuck in between the ethnic politics and the widespread corruption, and the consequent annihilation of citizens. Though the other cities in the region, like Zagreb and Belgrade, share the same manipulation of plans and legal loopholes, what makes the difference here, is the on-going process of gentrification compared to Sarajevo. In Sarajevo, what has been observed is more a dynamic of real estate speculation and related nepotism but so far, a clear gentrifying process has not occurred in the city targeting a specific wealthy class except for the recent phenomenon of emerging gated communities for tourists coming from Arab countries.

In conclusion, the urban development in Sarajevo is a fragile political terrain from which citizens are kept distant so as not to be obstacles to the decisions taken by politicians together with private actors that profit from the political situation and a system that itself does not give the right political space to urban dwellers to be active political counterparts. The few activists in the city are making efforts in order to defeat this system. By legitimising themselves in taking initiatives and conveying a message of community, solidarity and care of the city as the urban space where people live their everyday life, they are helping to develop a sentimental attachment to it and build up their relations. Although activism is at its beginning and it is difficult to envision its possible development, it is a sign, even if still weak, of a will to self-organize with a critical mind in order to propose something different to the corrupted chaos of the city.

Bibliography

Books

- Brenner Neil, Marcuse Peter, Mayer Margit, *Cities for people not for profit: critical urban theory and the right to the city*, New York/London: Routledge, 2012.
- Goowerdana, Kanishka et al., *Space, Difference, Everyday Life*, New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Harvey, David, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, London-Brooklyn: Verso, 2012.
- Harvey, David, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: Towards a Theory of Uneven Development*, London: Brooklyn, Verso, 2006.
- Hirt Sonia, *Iron Curtains: gates, suburbs and privatization of space in the post-socialist city*, Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.
- Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Wiley-Blackwell, 1991.
- Lefebvre, Henri, *Writings on cities*, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, edited by Eleonor Kofman, Elizabeth Lebas, 1996.
- Lefebvre, Henri, *State, Space and World: Selected Essays*, edited by Brenner Neil, Elden Stuart, Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press, 2009.
- Slater, Tom, The Gentrification of the City, in *The City*, edited by Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson, Blackwell Publishing, 2011.
- Sassen, Saskia, “*Cities in the World Economy*”, Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, , updated 2nd edition (1st ed. 1991), 2000.
- Stanilov Kiril et al., *The post-socialist city, Urban Form and space transformation in Eastern Europe after socialism*, edited by Stanilov Kiril, University of Cincinnati, Ohio, US, Springer, 2007.
- Tsenkova, Sasha, Nedović-Budić Zorica (eds.). *The urban mosaic of post-socialist Europe: space, institutions and policy*. Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag, 2006.

Vilenica, Ana and Crnomat, Dražen, “We are hungry in three languages1: the February urban social movements in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, in *Urban and Regional Social Movements*, Petropoulou C. & Vitopoulou, A. eds, Thessaloniki. Mytilene, AUTH and University of the Aegean, 2016: 358-381.

Journal Articles

Brenner Neil, “Globalisation as reterritorialization: The re-scaling of Urban Governance in the European Union”, *Urban Studies*, Vol.36, No.3 (1999): 431-451.

Neil, Brenner and Theodore, Nik, “Neoliberalism and the urban condition”, *City*, Vol.9, No.1 (April 2005): 101-107.

Brenner, Neil, “The Urban Question as a Scale Question: Reflections of Henri Lefebvre, Urban Theory and Politics of Scale”, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol.24, No.2, 2000: 361-378.

Brenner Neil, Theodor Nik, “Cities and the Geographies of “Actually Existing Neoliberalism”, *Antipode*, Vol. 34, Issue 3, (July 2002): 349-379.

Čaldarović, Ognjen, and Šarinić, Jana, “First signs of gentrification? Urban regeneration in the transitional society: the case of Croatia”, *Sociologija i prostor*, 46 (3/4) (2008): 369-381.

Donais, Timothy, “The Politics of Privatization in Post-Dayton Bosnia”, *South-East European Politics*, Vol. III, No. 1 (June 2002): 3-19.

Herscher, Andrew. “Wararchitecture theory”, *Journal of Architectural Education, Collateral Damage: War & Architecture*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (February 2008): 35-43.

Korjenić, Aida, “Spatial Planning in Bosnia and Herzegovina- Legislative Framework”, *Acta Geographicae Bosniae Herzegovinae*, Vol.3 (2015): 53-62.

Lalović Ksenja, Radosavljević Uroš, Đukanović Zoran, “Reframing public interest in the implementation of large urban projects in Serbia: the case of Belgrade Waterfront project”, *Architectural and Civil Engineering*, Vol.15, N.1 (2015): 35-46.

Marcuse Peter, “Reading the Right to the City”, *City*, vol.18, No. 1 (2014): 4-9.

Martín-Díaz, Jordi, “Urban restructuring in post-war contexts: the case of Sarajevo”, *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin*, Vol.63, No.3 (2014): 303-317.

- Mišetić, Anka and Ursić, Sara, "The Right to the City: An Example of Struggle to Preserve Urban Identity in Zagreb", *Sociologija i Prostor*, 180(1) (2010): 3-18.
- Mujkić, Asim, "In search for a democratic counter power in Bosnia-Herzegovina", *South-east European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol .15, Issue 4 (2015): 623-638.
- Nurković, Rahman, "Urbanisation and Economic Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina", *Chinese Business Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (February 2012): 199-205.
- Nurković, Rahman, "Shopping and Business Centres in Sarajevo", *Reza za geografiju- Journal of Geography*, Vol.7, No. 1 (2012): 35-48.
- Nurković, Rahman, "Contemporary aspects on spatial and urban planning in the canton of Sarajevo", *European Journal of Geography*, Vol.6, N.1 (March 2015): 23-36.
- Purcell Mark, "Excavating Lefebvre: the Right to the City and its Urban Politics of the Inhabitant", *Geojournal* 58, no. 2-3 (2002): 99-108.
- Purcell Mark, "Citizenship and the Right to Global City: Reimagining the Capitalist World", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol.27.3 (2003): 564-590.
- Purcell Mark, "The Right to the City: the Struggle for Democracy in the Urban Public Realm", *Policy & Politics*, vol.43, no.3 (2013): 311-327.
- Sassen Saskia, "The Global City: Strategic Frontier/ New Frontier", *American Studies*, 41, n.2-3, (Summer/Fall 2000): 79-95.
- Sassen Saskia, "The Global City: Introducing a concept", *Brown Journal Affairs*, vol. 11(2), (2005): 27-43.
- Stachura, Ewa, Tufek- Memišević, Tijana, Sokolowska-Moskwiak, Joanna. "Urban and architectural design problems in the contemporary city: the case of Sarajevo", *Architecture, Civil Engineering, Environment*, No.1 (2015): 35-46.
- Smith Neil, "New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy", *Antipode*, vol. 34, issue 3, (2002): 427-450.
- Tufek-Memišević, Tijana, "Architecture of Consumption. Case Study Sarajevo", *Konsumpcija I Rozwoj*, 3(8) (2014): 73-86.
- Zagora, Nermina and Samić, Dina, "Sarajevo lost in transition?", *International Journal of Architecture Research*, Volume 8, Issue 1 (March 2014): 159-170.

Conference Presentations/Papers

- Dorđević, Snežana, “Urban Regeneration Policy in Serbia-three case studies from Belgrade”, Panel T18P34, International Conference on Public Policy-Urban regeneration policies: theory and practice, 1-4 July, Milan, Italy, 2015.15. Available online <http://www.icpublicpolicy.org/conference/file/reponse/1432824403.pdf> (accessed 29 September 2016).
- Martín-Díaz, Jose, “Geomorphological risks, suburbanisation and neoliberalisation of the urban space in post-war Sarajevo”, Conference Paper, International Scientific Conference GEOBALCANICA, 5.7 June 2015, Skopje, Macedonia.
- Milojević, Brankica, “Factors of Urban Transformation in B&H”, Presentation Paper, 48th ISOCARP Congress, Perm, Russia, 10-13 September 2012.
- Nurković, Rahman, “The City of Sarajevo as the focal point of development of spatial planning”, Conference Paper, International Scientific Conference, Academy of sciences and arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, September 19th 2015.

Publications

- Mraović, Boriša, “O gradu i participaciji -Izazovi demokratskog upravljanja i neki aspekti urbanog pitanja u Bosni i Hercegovini” (in Bosnian) (On city and Participation – Challenges of democratic governance and some aspects of urban question in Bosnia and Herzegovina), unpublished translation, CRVENA – Association for Culture and Art, Sarajevo, 2015.

International and National Reports

- Nansen Dialogue Center and Saferworld. *Leaving the past behind: perceptions of youth in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, Sarajevo: London, Nansen Dialogue Center; Saferworld, 2012.
- Stanilov Kiril, Hirt Sonia, ‘Revisiting Urban Planning in the Transitional Countries’, Regional Study prepared for *Planning Sustainable Cities: Global Report on Human Settlements*, 2009.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2014).
World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision, Highlights.

Žiga, Jusuf, et al. *Youth Study Bosnia Herzegovina*, Sarajevo: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2015.

Legal documents

Regulation on Unique Methodology for Preparing Spatial Planning Documentation, “Official Gazette of FBiH” No. 63/04 i 50/07.

Law on Spatial Planning in Sarajevo Canton, “Official Gazette of FBiH” 7/05.

Odluka o pristupanju izradi imjena I dopuna urbanističkog projekta “Kvadrant 12” (The Decision on Changes and Amendments to the Urban project “Kvadrant 12”), Bosna i Hercegovina, Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine, Kanton Sarajevo, Općina Stari Grad Sarajevo, Načelnik Općine, Sarajevo, March 2016.

Newspaper Articles

A. K./Sarajevo-x.com, “Ponovo radi, sudbina potpuna nepoznanica”, *Klix*, 27 October 2011 <http://www.klix.ba/biznis/alta-ponovo-radi-sudbina-potpuna-nepoznanica/111027066> (accessed 02 October 2016).

A. K./Sarajevo-x.com, “Alta Shopping Center još uvijek u mraku, vrata zaključana”, *Klix*, 27 October 2011. <http://www.klix.ba/biznis/privreda/alta-shopping-centar-jos-uvijek-u-mraku-vrata-zakljucana/111027015> (accessed 02 October 2016).

Dejan Georgievski, “Zagreb City Council adopted Changes to the General Urban Plan Supported by Citizens and Civil Society”, *One World See*, 23 March 2013. <http://oneworldsee.org/content/zagreb-city-council-adopted-changes-general-urban-plan-supported-citizens-and-civil-society> (accessed 29 September 2016).

Domanovic, Milka, “Belgraders protest against Waterfront Deal”, *Balkan Insight*, 27 April 2015. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/belgraders-protest-against-belgrade-waterfront-deal> (accessed 29 September 2016).

Robinson, Matt, “Facelift or folly, Belgrade braces for Dubai-style makeover”, *Reuters*, 31 March 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-serbia-belgrade-development-idUSKBN0MR1WI20150331> (accessed 29 September 2016).

- Stockmans, Peter, “Wealthy Arabs buy up Sarajevo”, *Mondial Nieuws*, 19 September 2016, <http://www.mo.be/en/report/wealthy-arabs-buy-sarajevo> (accessed 05 October 2016).
- Tacconi, Matteo “Croazia: Diritto alla Città”, *Osservatorio Balcani Caucaso*, 12 February 2013. <http://www.balcanicaucaso.org/aree/Croazia/Croazia-diritto-alla-citta-129301> (accessed 29 September 2016).
- Tanjug, “Belgrade Waterfront lex specialis passes in parliament”, *B92*, 10 April 2015. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2015&mm=04&dd=10&nav_id=93770 (accessed 29 September 2016).
- Toé, Rodolfo “Air Pollution is choking Bosnia, Experts Warn”, *Balkan Insight*, 30 November 2015 <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/air-pollution-reaching-alarming-levels-in-bosnia-experts-warn-11-30-2015> (accessed 03 October 2016).

Other Internet Sources

- Borbazaživot, Groupon Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1078494348827336/?fref=ts> (Accessed 07 October 2016).
- Buroj Ozone Official Website, <http://www.burojo3.ba/> (Accessed 07 October 2016).
- Official website BBI Centar, section About us, http://www.bbicentar.ba/eng/about_us.html (accessed 01 October 2016).
- Dobre Kote, Official Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/dobre.koote/?fref=ts> (Accessed 06 October 2016).
- Federation of BiH. Uprava za geodetske i imovinsko pravne poslove, *Online cadastre*, <http://www.katastar.ba/pregled>.
- H:ART Official Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/HART-566562406840579/?fref=ts> (Accessed 06 October 2016).
- Official website of the Sarajevo City Center, section About us, http://www.scc.ba/en/about_us.html (accessed 02 October 2016).
- Official website of Gradologija-NGO Crvena, <http://www.gradologija.ba/> (accessed 02 October 2016).

Office of Architecture-Studio Non Stop, <http://www.studiononstop.com.ba/projects/bosnian-knot.html> (accessed 02 October 2016).

Trading economics, Bosnia and Herzegovina- Economic Indicators, July 2016
<http://it.tradingeconomics.com/bosnia-and-herzegovina/indicators> (accessed 02 October 2016).

Statistical Agency of B&H, Indicators, <http://www.bhas.ba/> (accessed 14 October 2016).

Interviews

Ćorić, Kristina project manager, NGO OKC-Abrašević, interview by Cecilia Borrini, OKC Abrasevic, Mostar, 19th April 2016.

Kanlić, Bojan and Rizmanović, Belma, H:ART's Activists, interview by Cecilia Borrini, 24 June 2016, Sarajevo.

Hercegovac-Pašić, Vesna, Professor at the University of Architecture, interview by Cecilia Borrini, 28 July 2016, Sarajevo.

Miraščić, Aida, Technician, Ministry of Spatial Planning of the Canton of Sarajevo, interview by Cecilia Borrini, 20 July 2016.

Midžić, Alma, Borba za život's activist as well as member of Gradologija-NGO Crvena, interview by Cecilia Borrini, 20 July 2016, Sarajevo.

Mraović, Boriša, Member of Gradologija, interview by Cecilia Borrini, 25 July 2016, Sarajevo.

Okerić, Aldijana, Dobre Kote's activist, Interview by Cecilia Borrini, 27 June 2016, Sarajevo.

Tufek-Memišević, Tijana, PhD Candidate at the Cracow University of Technology, Poland and lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture at the International University of Sarajevo (IUS), interview by Cecilia Borrini, 29 June 2016, Sarajevo.

Technician of the Spatial Planning Institute, Anonymous, 15 July 2016, Sarajevo.

Other sources

Midžić, Alma, Public consultation on the Draft “B”, Amendment Phase Urban plan of the Canton of Sarajevo 2003-2023, Report of the public hearing that took place at the Municipality Hall, 22 December 2015, Sarajevo.

Public statement published online by Right to the City (Pravo na Grad) and Green Action (Zelena Akcija) on the City Council public hearings and adopted amendments to the Urban General Plan. 26 June 2007. Available online at https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/zelena-akcija.production/zelena_akcija/document_translations/359/doc_files/original/IzmjenaGUPa26062007_PriopcenjeZaMedije.pdf?1270309893 (Accessed 30 September 2016).

Author

Cecilia Borrini holds a Bachelor degree in International Studies and a Master degree in Co-operation, Development and Human Rights, both of them obtained from the University of Bologna. During her Master's studies, her interests focused on the issue of minorities in the Balkans, especially in Croatia. In 2013, she was awarded with the Erasmus Placement scholarship that gave her the chance to carry out the curricular internship abroad in a Croatian NGO dealing with the reconciliation between Serbs and Croats based in Vrginmost, a small town located in the rural post-war area. In 2015, Cecilia attended a one-year joint Master between the University of Bologna and the University of Sarajevo in Democracy and Human Rights in South East Europe. During the time spent in Sarajevo, the focus of her academic interests shifted to the research on the current urban development of the city and the activist groups committed to a different development of the city. Recently, Cecilia did an internship at the Osservatorio Balcani Caucaso Transeuropa (OBCT) in Rovereto (Italy) where she worked in the news room and got the opportunity to write two pieces on the issues researched in her Master thesis.

E-mail: ce_@hotmail.it

PECOB'S SCIENTIFIC BOARD

Is an interdisciplinary board of directors responsible for reviewing proposals as well as evaluating and accepting high quality scientific research for publication in PECOBS Scientific Library. The Europe and the Balkans International Network (EBIN) and the Association of Italian Slavists (AIS) provide the Scientific Board with assistance in the task of selecting papers for publication. The Board and its collaborators use a blind review process; only after a contribution is accepted through this process will it be published on PECOBS.

The PECOBS Scientific Board of Directors:

- Stefano Bianchini (IECOB)
- Francesco Privitera (IECOB)
- Marcello Garzanti (AIS)
- Stefano Garzonio (AIS)

PECOB'S EDITORIAL STAFF

brings together the thinking of distinguished scholars, experts, researchers, and other individuals interested in Central-Eastern Europe, the Balkan region, and the Post-Soviet space by collecting and publishing a wide variety of papers, research studies, and other scientific and sociological documents.

LUCIANA MORETTI

Luciana Moretti is responsible for the management of PECOBS, the Portal on Central-Eastern and Balkan Europe, and the head of the Scientific Library section. You can contact her for proposals and submission of scientific contributions for the Scientific Library, Newsletter, Published and web resources and all general request for IECOB. All inquiries regarding the submission of papers, articles, and research to PECOBS for publication in the Scientific Library, Newsletter, or the Published and Web Resources section should be directed to Ms Moretti at luciana.moretti@unibo.it. Ms Moretti also addresses general inquiries regarding IECOB, the Institute for Central-Eastern and Balkan Europe.

TANIA MAROCCHI

Tania Marocchi works for PECOBS's research team and is the head of PECOBS's Up-to-Date Alerts section. Inquiries regarding conferences and events, calls for academic papers or applications, and internships with IECOB should be directed to Ms Marocchi at tania.marocchi@pecob.eu.

ANDREA GULLOTTA

Andrea Gullotta is a contributor for PECOBS's scientific library. Mr Gullotta's work can be found primarily in the "Language, Literature and Culture" section of the Scientific Library. Mr Andrea Gullotta can be reached at andrea.gullotta@unive.it.

ANDREW TROSKA

Andrew Troska is an editor and translator for PECOBS. Mr Troska updates English-language content and translates past articles, primarily from Italian into English. Requests for translation (between English and Italian) or editing (for English grammar, syntax, and diction) of works to be published on PECOBS can be directed to him at andy.troska@pecob.eu.



out in march at newsagents and online

This image shows a grid of content blocks from the PECOBS website. The blocks include: 'Political and Economic analyses' with a globe icon; 'Scientific Library' with a book icon; 'Latest publications' with a list of recent works; 'Calls for Papers' with a document icon; 'News Media' with a newspaper icon; 'Journals' with a book icon; 'Books' with a book icon; 'Institutions' with a building icon; and 'Community' with a group of people icon. There are also navigation elements like 'Quick search' and 'Subscribe to PECOBS Newsletter'.



Portal on Central Eastern and Balkan Europe
University of Bologna - Forlì Campus

PECOB

Portal on Central Eastern and Balkan Europe
University of Bologna - Forlì Campus

www.pecob.eu

AIS
Associazione Italiana
degli Slavisti



PECOB distributes up-to-date materials and information on Central-Eastern and Balkan Europe, provides high quality academic content, and promotes the wider visibility of academic research on the region with the aim of fostering institutional collaboration on the national and international level and promoting further research concerning Central- and South-Eastern European countries, the Balkans, and the Post-Soviet space across a wide variety of academic fields and disciplines.

PECOB's Scientific Library contains original, peer-reviewed academic contributions which, once approved by PECOBS Scientific Board, are published online, either in one of Pecob's Volumes (with a unique ISBN code) or as a part of PECOBS Papers Series (with a unique ISSN code). Being published in PECOBS Scientific Library enables scholars, researchers and specialists to contribute a comprehensive collection of scientific materials on various topics (politics, economics, history, society, language, literature, culture, and the media). Texts may be submitted in English or in any language spoken in Central-Eastern and Balkan Europe or the Caucasus.

PECOB's Informative Areas offers up-to-date news regarding academic and cultural events. Information about and limited access to numerous academic publications and online news resources is also available, as is current information about academic centres and institutions related to Central-Eastern and Balkan Europe and the Caucasus.

Supported by the University of Bologna, the portal is developed by the Institute for East-Central Europe and the Balkans (IECOB) with the collaboration of the Italian Association of Slavists (AIS) and the 'Europe and the Balkans' International Network.



You are free:

to **Share** — to copy, distribute and transmit the work

Under the following conditions:

Attribution — You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author or licensor (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).



Noncommercial — You may not use this work for commercial purposes.



No Derivative Works — You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

With the understanding that:

Waiver — Any of the above conditions can be **waived** if you get permission from the copyright holder.

Public Domain — Where the work or any of its elements is in the **public domain** under applicable law, that status is in no way affected by the license.

Other Rights — In no way are any of the following rights affected by the license:

- Your fair dealing or **fair use** rights, or other applicable copyright exceptions and limitations;
- The author's **moral** rights;
- Rights other persons may have either in the work itself or in how the work is used, such as **publicity** or privacy rights.

Notice — For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work. The best way to do this is with a link to this web page.



CALL FOR PAPERS!

PECOB

Portal on Central Eastern and Balkan Europe
University of Bologna - Forlì Campus

THE SCIENTIFIC BOARD OF PECOBS ANNOUNCES AN OPEN CALL FOR PAPERS TO BE PUBLISHED WITH ISSN 2038-632X

Interested contributors may deal with any topic focusing on the political, economic, historical, social or cultural aspects of a specific country or region covered by PECOBS.

Manuscripts can be submitted in English or the original language (preferably local languages of the countries considered in PECOBS); in the case of non-English text, the author must provide title and abstract also in English.

Contributions must be grammatically correct and in good literary style, using inclusive language. Authors must take care of language editing of the submitted manuscript by themselves. This is a step authors can take care of once the manuscript is accepted for publication. Submissions must include an abstract or summary of the paper/thesis of 350 words at least. The abstract should appear after the author's name and affiliation on the first page.

Upcoming deadlines for submitting proposals are:

- January 31**
- June 30**
- November 30**

All texts must comply with PECOBS Submission Guidelines (www.pecob.eu).

All proposals, texts and questions should be submitted to Ms Luciana Moretti (luciana.moretti@unibo.it or info@pecob.eu)

www.pecob.eu