

Routledge Research in Historical Geography

URBAN PLANNING DURING SOCIALISM

VIEWS FROM THE PERIPHERY

Edited by
Jasna Mariotti and Kadri Leetmaa



Urban Planning During Socialism

Urban Planning During Socialism delves into the evolution of cities during the period of state socialism of the 20th century, summarising the urban and architectural studies that trace their transformations.

The book focuses primarily on the periphery of the socialist world, both spatially and in terms of scholarly thinking. The case study cities presented in this book draw on cultural and material studies to demonstrate diverse and novel concepts of “periphery” through transformations of socialist cityscapes rather than homogenous views on cities during the period of state socialism of the 20th century. In doing so the book explores the transversalities of political, economic and social phenomena; the places for everyday life in socialist cities; and the role of professional communities on production and reproduction of space and ecological thinking.

This book is aimed at scholarly readership, in particular scholars in architecture, urban planning and human geography, as well as undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate students in these disciplines studying the urban transformation of cities after WWII in socialist countries. It will also be of interest for planning officials, architects, policymakers and activists in former socialist countries.

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Urban Planning During Socialism

Views from the Periphery

**Edited by Jasna Mariotti and
Kadri Leetmaa**



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6 Passive agents or genuine facilitators of citizen participation?

The role of urban planners under the Yugoslav self-management socialism

Ana Perić and Mina Blagojević

Introduction

Socialist Yugoslavia refrained from the polarisation provoked by the Cold War. Besides turning back to the war ally of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1948 to take the leading position in the non-aligned movement in 1961, Yugoslavia followed a distinct path of socialism known as self-management, an emancipatory project in pursuit of a democratic socialist society. As such, Yugoslavia was assigned different roles and attributes: for sure, it was a melting pot of criticism (from both East and West); more positive prospects saw it as a hybrid between East and West; inevitably, Yugoslavia was condemned to be somewhat distanced from both power centres, thus being a periphery to both East and West. Though the periphery is challenging to define due to the heterogeneity of the countries forming it (Becker et al. 2010), during the Cold War, southeast Europe (SEE) has mainly been considered a periphery to the western world (Göler 2005). Despite the existence of the so-called Western European peripheral countries, the absence of capitalism was considered the most influential parameter for diversifying SEE from the West (Bohle and Greskovits 2012; Bohle 2018). However, due to unstable political relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the latter was considered detached from the communist ideology, too. This was particularly seen in the architectural and planning discourse, which after 1948 was informed almost exclusively by Western sources, while references to the communist bloc became exceedingly rare (Kulić 2009). Although nowadays the so-called Western Balkans region (that largely coincides with the former Yugoslavia) is considered to be a “super-periphery” (Bartlett and Prica 2013), in the Cold War period, Yugoslavia “was softening the contrast between socialism and capitalism, between the planned economy and the free market, and between liberal democracy and the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’” (Kulić 2009:129).

Against such a background, Yugoslavia emerged as a testbed where the “third way” was searched for. Development of the Yugoslav “third way” officially started after the political expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform in 1948, which inevitably led to a distinctive economic restructuring, too.

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For example, while the centrally planned economy (with the five-year plans) was a specificity of the communist Eastern Bloc for decades after WWII, e.g., the Soviet Union experienced the changes of the socio-political-economic system just after the “*glasnost*” and “*perestroika*” initiatives in 1985 (Grava 1993; Golubchikov 2004), the centrally planned economy in Yugoslavia lasted only until 1950 (Nedović-Budić and Cavrić 2006). Shortly after, in 1953, Yugoslavia introduced the self-management socialism as the main tool of economic liberalisation (Dawson 1987; Liotta 2001). As a distinctive Yugoslav feature in comparison to other countries behind the Iron Curtain, self-management meant societal ownership over the means of production aimed to prevent the concentration of power in the hands of state bureaucracy and distribute it to the “working people” (Lydall 1989). From a practical point of view, such an “industrial democracy” (Ramet 1995) introduced a number of instruments (e.g., self-management arrangements) aimed at coordinating the interaction among numerous administrative bodies and individual enterprises. From a more abstract perspective, the goal of the socialist evolution was to eliminate the very existence of the state as a condition of ultimate democracy, making the self-management a tool against bureaucratic dogmatic communism and uncontrolled speculative capitalism (Ignjatović 2012). As a result, the “market socialism”, i.e., the free-market principles introduced into a state-controlled economy, facilitated massive housing construction and the proliferation of educational, scientific and cultural activities (Zukin 1975).

To support the self-management model and triggered by the internal tensions among the Yugoslav republics over the federal administrative level as the key decision-making body, the political and administrative decentralisation started in 1965 and continued over the next two decades (Vujošević and Nedović-Budić 2006). Hence, the Yugoslav socio-economic planning included not only the previously mentioned self-management approach but also the so-called societal planning (Dabović et al. 2019; Blagojević and Perić 2023). The main units in charge of the self-management planning were basic organisations of associated labour (BOALs) (*osnovne organizacije udruženog rada*) and self-managed interest-driven communities (SICs) (*samoupravne interesne zajednice*), while various socio-political communities (*društveno-političke zajednice*) – from the federation to municipalities/communes (*opštine*) and local communes (*mesne zajednice*) as constitutive elements of a commune – were crucial for societal development.

Although self-management certainly failed in eliminating social inequalities, many members of the middle strata could prosper by virtue of their competence (Zukin 1975). Intellectuals particularly enjoyed a relatively high level of cultural autonomy and international mobility (Jovanović and Kulić 2018; Mrduljaš 2018). In the Yugoslav socialist experiment, urban and spatial planning played a key role, contributing significantly to societal emancipation, modernisation and welfare. Rather than a mere tool of economic growth and industrialisation (as under the centrally planned economy), urbanisation was instrumentalised in pursuit of a higher interest:

establishing a self-management socialism. However, as self-management was relatively short-lived for a genuinely democratic political culture to be developed, there is a significant gap between the profound self-management narrative, revolving around the ideas of political decentralisation and citizen participation, and their practical implementation. Accordingly, when translating the self-management narrative into the urban and spatial planning discourse, a body of literature focuses on the prominent urban planners and their core ideas and principles aligned to the self-management model (Blagojević 2007; Mrduljaš and Kulić 2012; Le Normand 2014; Kulić 2014). However, evidence on their implementation into planning processes is rare.

To address such a gap, this research critically examines the planners' pursuit for citizen engagement under the self-management socialism. This is considered valid as, on the one hand, planners enjoyed freedom in self-management conditions in terms of organisational aspects and the content of their work (Mrduljaš 2018). On the other hand, since self-management was imposed from the highest political tiers, some authors question the role of planners as independent mediators in a seemingly conflict-free, socialist society revolving around the common interest as the fundamental societal value (Blagojević and Perić 2023). To tackle such a dichotomy through the lens of citizen participation in urban planning, this chapter elucidates planners' role under the self-management socialism. In other words, did planners act only as technical executors (of the high-level political goals and visions) or as active agents in pursuing citizen participation (and fostering local community needs)?

The chapter is structured as follows: after a brief introductory section, the critical features of Yugoslav socio-economic, physical and urban planning are briefly discussed to elucidate the norms within which urban planners operated. To situate the narrative beyond the national borders and official instruments, the next section briefly reflects upon the core international influences and domestic planning discourse. Both sections serve to set the scene, i.e., to depict the socio-spatial circumstances and main planning topics, approaches and mechanisms the Yugoslav planners dealt with. After a brief methodological part, the central section presents the results of the analysis of planners' role in affecting citizen participation as the core mechanism of socialist planning. The conclusion puts the planners' pursuit for citizen participation into the context of socialist self-management, also blurring the definitions of East and West.

Setting the scene: Yugoslav socio-economic planning, physical planning and urban planning

To understand the nature of urban and spatial planning in socialist Yugoslavia, it is helpful first to observe the broader social development of the state led by a specific political ideology different from both the mainstreams of West and East. The primary legislative documents that resulted from the political paradigm during the Cold War and their core substantive and procedural features are given in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Timeline of key federal (Yugoslav) and national (Serbian) legislative documents and their main substantive and procedural features

<i>Year</i>	<i>Legislative documents</i>	<i>Main substantive (S) and procedural (P) features</i>
1953	Constitution of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia	S: self-management socialism P: societal agreements, self-management arrangements
1961	Act on Urban and Regional Spatial Planning of the People's Republic of Serbia	S: citizen participation as societal support and plan verification P: public discussion
1963	Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	S: commune as a territorial and political unit P: bottom-up participatory approach to policy- and decision-making
1974	Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	S: societal ownership; more democratic re-distribution of power (decentralisation) in the process of policy-making; strengthening of the role of the local commune P: advanced mechanisms of obligatory public participation
1974	Act on Planning and Spatial Arrangement of the Socialist Republic of Serbia	S: early involvement of public (comment possible throughout the entire phase and not only in the final phase of policy-making) P: public viewing, public consultation
1976	Act on the Foundations of the System of Societal Planning and the Societal Plan of Yugoslavia	S: integration of physical planning into socio-economic planning P: agreement on the plan's foundations
1985	Act on Planning and Spatial Arrangement of the Socialist Republic of Serbia	S: coordination and integration of plans and policies P: expert debate on a draft plan P: expert debate on a draft plan

Source: Authors.

Postulated as the pillar of social governance by the Yugoslav Constitution of 1953 (OG FPRY 3/1953), the original intention of self-management was to replace the state bureaucracy with empowered workers at the helm of Yugoslav enterprises, thus establishing workplace democracy focusing on leadership development and continuous learning among all employees (Lynn et al. 2012). Gradually, self-management was meant to spread over all segments of society, transitioning from workers' self-management to societal self-management or self-government (Zukin 1975). Problems related to diversity and social and economic heterogeneity among the federal republics were tackled through administrative decentralisation of the federal state, in which the commune (municipality), as the essential socio-political unit,

played a critical role (Fisher 1964). Like an enterprise, communes were supposed to raise their funds, set their budget and provide their residents with various social services (Zukin 1975).

Yugoslav socio-economic planning included societal planning and self-management planning to forecast social and economic developments and their interdependence. More precisely, socio-economic planning was a social relationship between, on the one hand, socio-political communities at various administrative levels (from municipality to federation) in charge of societal development and, on the other hand, BOALs in different sectors and governmental levels, responsible for overall production and consumption. The main instruments of each institution were societal agreements and self-management arrangements, respectively, and they were mutually coordinated by the principle of “cross-acceptance” (Dabović et al. 2019; Blagojević and Perić 2023). Under such circumstances, urban planning was perceived only as physical planning, i.e., a tool to support socio-economic development and ensure the rational use of resources through “top-down” allocation (Perić 2020).

Towards the end of the 1950s, the role of physical planning in societal development was challenged. At a conference in Arandjelovac in 1957, professionals (architects, geographers, engineers and sociologists) gathered from all Yugoslav republics agreed upon a need for a new discipline that should become an integral part of the socio-economic planning system (Nedović-Budić and Cavrić 2006). The idea was to enable cross-sectoral coordination in the spatial development and establish the profession of an urban and regional planner. Accordingly, the nature of planning shifted from the physical planning towards the so-called integrated and comprehensive planning, attending not only to the multidisciplinary nature as the fundamental norm but also to the collaboration of planners with citizens (Dabović et al. 2019). To implement such visions, the Serbian Act on Urban and Regional Spatial Planning (OG PRS 47/1961) introduced the instrument of public participation as societal support in the process of verifying the planning documents. Furthermore, the Yugoslav Constitution of 1963 (OG SFRY 14/1963) identified the commune not only as the basic territorial but also socio-political unit in which self-interests and common interests were to be aligned with the public interest.

During the 1970s, several regulatory instruments addressed the way of spatial development decision-making. The 1974 Constitution (OG SFRY 9/1974) facilitated administrative and political decentralisation to enable workers, in narrow terms, and citizens, more generally, to achieve some common interests and needs. Through local communes, the role of technocratic and administrative structures was diminished in favour of growing citizens’ impact on their immediate environment. Furthermore, local communes were encouraged to collaborate with BOALs and SICs, as the main self-management units, as well as with the socio-political communities at higher administrative tiers to, hence, become the conveyors of the

broader developmental goals both horizontally and vertically (Blagojević and Perić 2023).

Adoption of the 1974 Constitution was followed by another set of legal acts concerning spatial and urban planning in all republics, where all the relevant components of socio-economic, environmental and physical development were considered. Local communes became the leading planning and implementation authorities that enabled the inclusion of the civil sector in the decision-making process using negotiation and consensus-building (Maričić et al. 2018; Perić 2020). To strengthen the exchange between a local community and planners, the Serbian Act on Planning and Spatial Arrangement (OG SRS 19/1974) introduced regular public inspection and public consultation on draft plans. In doing so, planning was considered a right and obligation of the working class, and local communes were envisioned as communities of people (Kardelj 1979). Furthermore, the Act on the Foundations of the System of Societal Planning and the Societal Plan of Yugoslavia (OG SFRY 46/1976) suggested the integration of physical planning into socio-economic planning by establishing the instrument of “agreement on the plan’s foundation” as a tool to improve collaboration among professionals, local political representatives and the public, and cooperation among bodies at various administrative levels. Finally, according to the Serbian Act on Planning and Spatial Arrangement (OG SRS 27/1985), the operationalisation of the idea of horizontal, vertical and multi-sectorial cooperation should be achieved through the integration of plans and policies, as well as by introducing the instrument of expert debate on a draft plan (Vujošević and Nedović-Budić 2006).

Setting the scene: international planning ideas and domestic planning discourse

The previous overview gives valuable insight into implementing the main ideological narrative into the Yugoslav constitutions and urban and spatial planning legal frameworks. Nevertheless, as Yugoslavia differed from the countries behind the Iron Curtain in terms that it was more exposed to international influences, to properly grasp the nature of Yugoslav socialist urban and spatial planning, it is important to note how and to what extent the dominant foreign ideas and principles were accepted in the domestic planning discourse. The most significant international and national planning events and policies, and their central ideas classified into substantive and procedural categories, are briefly indicated in Table 6.2.

Early after WWII, Yugoslavia (re)started its engagement in some of the most influential international networks: in 1950, Yugoslavia joined the International Union of Architects (UIA), in 1953, it re-joined the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM) and in 1960, it joined International Federation of Housing and Town Planning (IFHTP). Due to all this networking, the planning system in Yugoslavia during the socialist era evolved

Table 6.2 The overview of main substantive and procedural aspects of the planning process in leading international and national events and policies

<i>Year</i>	<i>International and national events and policies</i>	<i>Main substantive (S) and procedural (P) features</i>
1961	IFHTP Congress, Paris	S: neighbourhood unit P: scientific-based conceptual foundations
1962	10th Conference of the Association of Urban Planners of Yugoslavia	S: urbanism as a societal agency P: citizens as informed agents in public debates
1971	IFHTP Congress, Belgrade	P: multistakeholder cooperation; decentralised government
1972	Belgrade Master Plan	S: public consultation P: interdisciplinarity, formal and informal collaboration, transparency; sociological survey; public discussion of a draft plan; extensive public informing (exhibition, visual presentations, specialised publications, information in daily newspapers)
1973	IFHTP Congress, Copenhagen	P: involvement of multiple actors; symbiosis between planners and local administration
1974	International Planning Seminar ("U 73"), Ljubljana	P: citizen participation as an alternative to urban design; integration of rational and irrational input
1976	Vancouver Declaration (UN)	S: dynamic incorporation of people in the social life P: a cooperative effort of people and their governments; providing information in clear and meaningful language; two-way flow of information
1980	Third Meeting of Planners and Urbanists of Yugoslavia	S: protection of municipalities; community cohesion P: genuine citizens' inputs; rising political awareness
1981	UIA Congress, Warsaw Warsaw Declaration of Architects	S: overcoming professional blind-mindedness P: planners as equal participants in collective endeavours; genuine democratisation of urban development
1982	Conference of the University of Belgrade and the Centre for Marxism of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia	S: planning as a process P: inclusive decision-making (self-interests of heterogenous public beyond technical rationality); absence of technical jargon; design competitions (alternative proposals)

Source: Authors based on Blagojević and Perić 2023.

through synthetic innovation and selective borrowing, primarily from the West (Nedović-Budić and Cavrić 2006). Western planning principles, listed in the Athens Charter, were dominantly influential in the 1950s due to the professional relations that some leading Yugoslav architects established with CIAM (Jovanović and Kulić 2018). Notably, CIAM X was held in Dubrovnik in 1956. For example, Athens Charter's "functional city model" was widely adopted among planning authorities as a suitable tool for catching up with the rapid urbanisation process and ever-increasing demands for housing. However, throughout the 1960s, criticism against rationalist "big schemes" started to evolve from social science and architecture perspectives, leading to the emergence of alternative urbanistic concepts (Kulić 2014; Le Normand 2014) and, hence, placing more emphasis on planning as a social practice.

Similarly to the international experiences, pluralism and diversity of critical and theoretical thought were institutionally promoted, aiming at a continuous advancement of Yugoslav planning practice (Kulić 2014). Interdisciplinary collaboration, as well as connecting research and practice, was standard in many planning and design institutions (Mrduljaš 2018), while professional organisations and associations at various scales (from federal to local) flourished (Nedović-Budić and Cavrić 2006). Since the 1960s, the Association of Urban Planners of Yugoslavia (AUPY) served as an instrument to develop international connections, as Yugoslav delegates regularly participated in international architectural and planning congresses (Perišić 1965; Stupar 2015). Internally, AUPY was oriented towards revising certain theoretical foundations and planning practices, considering the general social development of Yugoslavia (Bjelikov 1962b). In general, professional conferences and symposia served as channels for rethinking the role of socialism within various scientific and professional fields (Martinović 2020).

However, the main difference between international ideas and domestic discourse was in different viewpoints and, hence, priorities given to the importance of the planning procedures on the one hand and the methods for improving the planning practice on the other (Blagojević and Perić 2023). For example, the focus of the discourse in the national reports was on public discussions and consultations as a tool to increase citizen participation and diminish the dominant role of planners as professionals. International declarations, on the contrary, focused more on scientifically proven methods (e.g., surveys) that foster true feedback from the locals in creating planning solutions. The flaws in the loosely defined planning procedures were inevitably seen in the practice of creating planning instruments (as shown in the central part of this chapter).

Methodological approach

To contribute to the discussion on how self-management socialism influenced professional thinking and the practice of citizen participation, the research

attends to the roles, viewpoints and actions of participants in planning processes. As professional journals are considered a tool to disseminate key information among the authorities, professionals and a wider public (Blagojević and Perić 2023), the data were collected through the archival research of the two most influential Yugoslav professional journals – *Urbanizam Beograda*, published by the Belgrade Urban Planning Institute, and *Arhitektura-Urbanizam*, a publication of the Serbian Urban Planners Association. In selecting the articles, the focus was on those prepared as critical reflections on the socialist self-management urban planning theory and practice, and, hence, addressing the broadly used concepts such as local commune – considered both the object and subject of planning, participation – considered the key mechanism of socialist planning, and interests – public, common and self-interest as the triggers of any planning activity, thus elucidating the roles of different actors in planning processes. The articles cover the period between 1961 and 1982 to secure the representativeness of planners’ perspectives as the professional feedback in this period was often inspired by significant international networking events as well as formal decisions regarding the planning system and urban development, e.g., adoption of legal reforms or major plans. The professional backgrounds of the authors were notably diverse: architects, engineers, geographers, sociologists, economists, lawyers, archaeologists, etc.

Planners in the pursuit of citizen participation: critical reflections

At the 11th AUPY Conference (1963), a broad consensus was reached that the commune, being a unit of socio-economic planning closest to urban settings, should be accepted as an object of spatial planning (Bjelikov 1963). Zooming into the urban level, instead of large-scale urban schemes dogmatically dedicated to functionalist principles, a more sensitive, human-centred and small-scale approach was sought, the one that nurtures local specificities, memory and atmospheres (Janković 1969; Mutnjaković 1964; Radović 1964). Seen as a fundamental organisational and spatial module for a meaningful co-existence of citizens, where the sense of emotional security and belonging should be developed, the local commune was an essential topic of urban planning (Figure 6.1).

Furthermore, the calls for a more interdisciplinary effort to conceive a unified, systematic approach and establish scientific methodology in tackling the challenges of the local commune were typical for the period of the early 1960s. Namely, the deficiency of adequate studies led to arbitrary and inconsistent approaches and uncritical replications of international concepts and practices (Bjeličić 1962; Maksimović 1963). The gaps between the “static” visions of spatial planners (which were, at the time, mainly architects) and the objective possibilities of the society were to be bridged by the elaboration of dynamic studies regarding socio-economic trends (Bjelikov 1962a).



Figure 6.1 Centre of the first local commune in New Belgrade.

Source: Arhitektura-Urbanizam 72–73 (1975).

The constitutional reform of 1963 saw the commune not only as a basic territorial unit but also as a socio-political community where common and self-interests should be aligned with the public interest. Accordingly, the planning community reached a consensus on understanding urbanism as a social activity that involves the broad public in decision-making processes (Bjelikov 1962a). Nevertheless, it was challenging to implement the principles of “planning as a societal practice” due to the relatively low public awareness about the possibility of actively changing the environment they were directly living in (Bjelikov 1963). Furthermore, urban development issues were not sufficiently and adequately communicated to the masses, giving way to the misuse of power by individuals. Hence, it was stressed that the popularisation of urbanism ought to take place using all forms of public informing (Bjelikov 1962a) and by introducing public debate (Perišić 1965).

Since the enactment of the 1974 Constitution, as the primary cells of the self-management society, local communes were increasingly regarded as crucial to enabling decentralised, organically developing urban structure instead of the alienation and dehumanisation of the rapidly growing urban environment (Jakšić 1978; Krstanovski 1977; Tomić 1980). Accordingly,

discussions regarding the social role and tasks of urban planning intensified. The fundamental goal of the reforms was seen as ensuring the redistribution of power in decision-making on human environment in a more democratic way, i.e., avoiding power concentration in technobureaucratic structures. As constitutional reforms elaborated the rights and responsibilities of different actors in the self-management planning system, planners felt responsible to rethink their roles and revising their methodologies (Bojović 1976; Đorđević 1974; Vasić 1976). As often stated, the very activity of planning was not clearly defined, and different sectors and levels of planning were not appropriately mutually coordinated (Đorđević 1974; Milenković 1981; Vasić 1976).

A robust planning methodology was needed to eliminate arbitrary decision-making (Bojović 1976), against a common bias that urban planners held power over people's lives (Đorđević 1974), as well as to provide a clear division of responsibilities and coordination between expert research and self-management decision-making processes. In other words, the role of planners was to collect and organise relevant data and propose multiple development alternatives regarding the commonly agreed development goals and criteria. In sum, planning agencies should act as neutral professional services to inform the self-management decision-makers (Vasić 1976). Planners should focus on research regarding integrated planning models and their evaluation as the basis for coordinating individual and collective interests to promote proper information transfer and closer collaboration with the primary planning actors (Vasić 1976). As for the local communes, the essential precondition to pursuing their upgraded role as the decision-makers was to develop their organisational and individual staff capacities. The role of local (communal) authorities was marked as crucial to ensuring citizens' participation in planning processes (Veljković 1975).

Criticism regarding the misbalance between clear social orientation towards self-management socialism and the inability to translate it into spatial policies and coordinated planning activities prevailed in the years that followed (Vasić 1976). Liberalism and bureaucratic dogmatism were seen as major systemic threats to the self-management society. The former referred to autonomous economic structures that used the semi-market system to maximise their interests, while the latter was embodied in the authorities' oligarchy that tended to misuse spatial rights in the name of "higher interests" (Milenković 1981). Concerning detailed urban plans for Belgrade's reconstruction from the late 1970s, it was underlined that citizen participation had been reduced to the final stages of a planning process when the plan could not be practically changed anymore (Jakšić 1978). Moreover, surveys demonstrated that the deficiency of time and resources, coupled with insufficient levels of neighbourhood cohesion, hindered the local communities from sustaining the torrential decision-making functions on their shoulders (Milenković 1981).

In such a context, self-critical stances were common and directed towards the planners' technocracy, i.e., ignorance of political awareness (Milenković 1981) and their elitism and distorted perceptions about their professional role, power and personal responsibility (Srdanović 1981). In other words, planners were criticised for not being interested in anything beyond their conceptions of demands, needs and standards. Instead of being obsessed with procedures and efficiency, planners should have been more responsive to the needs of the social community (Srdanović 1981). To utilise the "advantageous position" of Yugoslav self-management and enable a genuine democratisation of urban development, a whole new system of urbanism was to be contemplated (Radović 1982). Citizens needed to be provided with comprehensive information and included in all planning stages (Jakšić 1978). Hence, information on public display should be suited to the competencies and interests of the non-experts. This meant that each development alternative's environmental and practical consequences should be presented broadly and comprehensively. Furthermore, decision-making should not be done only on formal, special occasions but often in a continuous planning process (Krešić 1982; Radović 1982). The local community was stressed as the point where individual and common interests should consolidate in a united, general interest (Jakšić 1978). Finally, there were calls for a profound and comprehensive urbanist critique that could catalyse progressive change in planning practice by facilitating debate, alternative approaches, continuous planning process and impetus for research rather than blueprint solutions (Krešić 1982).

Participatory planning in practice: the Master Plan of Belgrade 1972

To test the previously mentioned participatory planning narrative in practice, this section briefly elucidates the process of making the Master Plan of Belgrade of 1972, which lasted between 1967 and 1972 and featured an extensive range of collaborative and participatory activities across number of phases (Figure 6.2). More precisely, first we give an overview of different procedures for public engagement, political instruments and expert knowledge and skills, to then critically reflect on effectiveness of implementing such measures.

As previously given, national planning instruments often emerged from consultation with international bodies. Interestingly enough, the Belgrade Master Plan 1972 was born out of the collaboration between the Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade and Wayne State University (from the United States), bringing the cooperation beyond European borders. As a result, one of the pillars ingrained in the plan-making process was the tendency towards public consultation (Le Normand 2014), supported by interdisciplinarity and transparency (Đorđević 1973). Regarding the first, around 150 studies, including a sociological survey, were conducted to strengthen exchange (both formal and informal) among scientific and public institutions, including

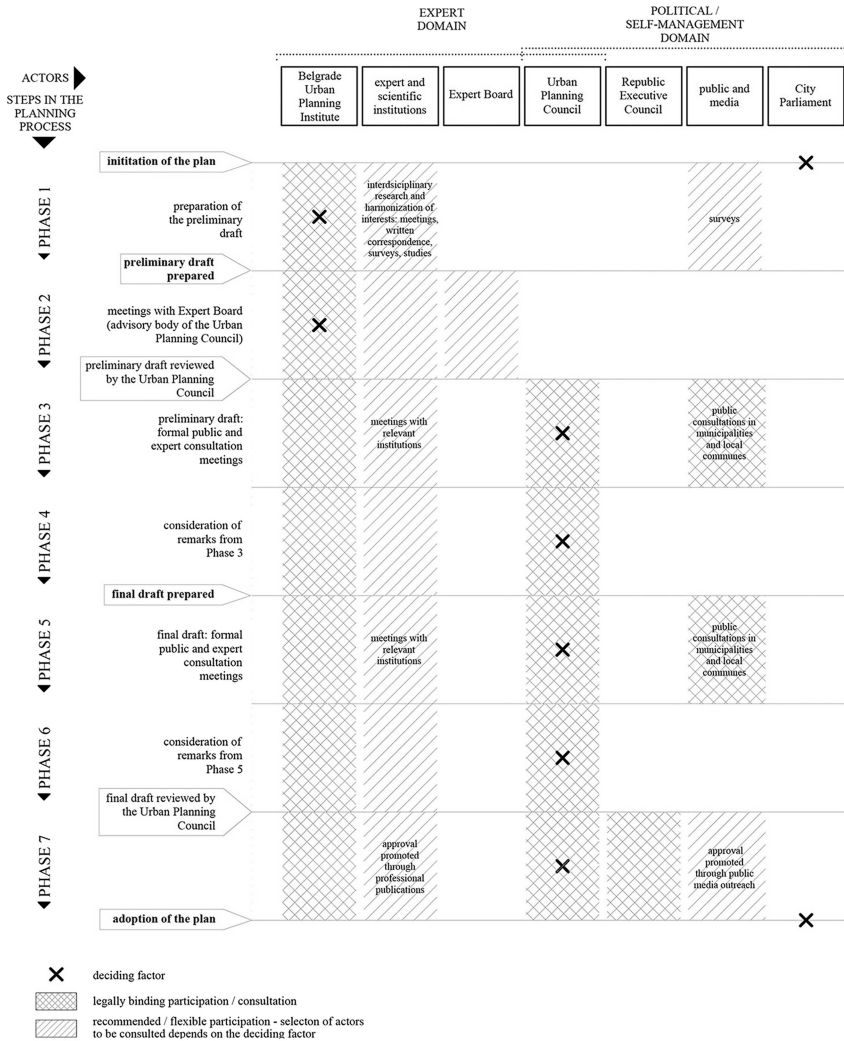


Figure 6.2 Main phases and participants in making the Belgrade Master Plan of 1972. Source: Authors.

international participants (Đurović and Marinko 1969). As for the latter, in addition to the public consultation on the final plan proposal, which was binding by law, additional triggers for public engagement in communes and local communes – seen in exhibitions, public presentations, specialised publications, supplements in daily newspapers and written information to all households – served to boost public feedback on the planning proposals (Stojkov 1972; Đorđević 1973).

Despite all the efforts to make the general public familiar with the new city vision, the extent of genuine citizen engagement could have been greater. For example, during the consultative process, citizens had more questions than objections to the proposed plan versions (Stojkov 1972); residents were more interested in the day-to-day problems and proposed solutions than in the overall vision presented by the plan; both the composition of citizens' groups that participated in meetings and discussions and the content of the responses collected were inadequate to represent a genuine and long-term public interest (Đorđević 1974; Stojkov 1972).

The previous obstacles to genuine participation stemmed from the citizens' attitudes and viewpoints (e.g., motivation to participate) and were not influenced by planners' approach. However, planners' decisive role towards citizen engagement was noticed in the early phase of the planning process (Bojović 1976). For example, the preliminary draft plan (i.e., the initial planners' proposal) was rarely critically discussed later in the process. Planners mostly stuck to their proposals without fully attending to ideas brought forward during the consultation process – citizens were more involved when procedurally demanded and less when it was intrinsically needed. This was contrary to the plan-making process as exercised through the genuine public involvement as a self-management convention, ultimately possibly diminishing the public trust in planning bodies (Bojović 1976; Đorđević 1974). Briefly put, the criticism about the discrepancy between the general narrative on self-management socialism and its weak transition into spatial policies and coordinated planning activities was confirmed.

Conclusions

The chapter elucidated vital topics, approaches and mechanisms particularly related to the process of citizen engagement as immanent to the paradigm of self-management socialist urban planning. In general, ideological specificities of Yugoslav socialism found their expression in urban and architectural theoretical discourse as an appreciation of a human-centred approach, often with no explicit references to the state ideology. As suggested by the literature review, the analysis confirmed the local commune as the central notion for the Yugoslav spatial and urban planning, understood as both the basic urban unit and the cell of the self-management society. In other words, the conceptualisation of the local commune as an object of urban planning was seen as key to creating conditions that would enable and facilitate self-managed social relations. However, the efforts to develop a unified methodological approach in planning local communes persisted throughout the entire analysed period, with no broad and clear consensus reached. Until the mid-1970s, there was almost no word on the citizens' role in planning processes. As the 1974 Constitution designated the local commune as the principal agent (decision-maker) in the planning processes, discussions concerning participatory aspects of planning intensified. Also, the role of planners concerning other actors in the planning processes was increasingly debated.

Yugoslav planners saw their role as a neutral professional service of the society by providing comprehensive information basis to facilitate a deliberate exchange between planning actors. Planners performed interdisciplinary, methodologically sound research, proposing as many alternatives as possible, including clear, practical implications for future urban development scenarios. Accordingly, planners developed a comprehensive platform and a toolkit for the self-management authorities, enabling them to balance different interests and shape their living and working environment. In short, both initially proposed viewpoints on planners' position – technocrats vs. enablers of societal change – are partially supported. Nevertheless, planners' position towards citizens is not to be observed in an isolated manner, i.e., without attending to the specificities of the socio-political context. Though self-management included various forms of vertical and horizontal cooperation and involved various actors (political councils, professional bodies, local communities), due to the strong political ideology pursued through different socio-political units, both the planners' decisions and citizen needs could have been eroded. In other words, hardly any decision could have been made without the previous consent of the local and central governments (Perić 2020). Consequently, the constant tension between the unitary, i.e., politically imposed public interest, and self- and collective interests blocked the planners from fully utilising the instrument of citizen participation. In a nutshell, the personal and collective identities of Yugoslav citizens coloured with the right and duty to shape their immediate environment, and the planners' image of emancipated intellectuals marked by the constant exchange with the internationals were curbed by the uncontested communist political regime. Hence, the Yugoslav self-management seemed to emerge from two opposed but rather complementary interpretations of East and West.

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