

Revisiting Urban Planning in the Transitional Countries

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List of acronyms

AESOP	Association of European Schools of Planning
EAUE	European Academy of the Urban Environment
FDI	Foreign direct investment
GDP	Gross domestic product
PPP	Purchasing power parities

Introduction

There is hardly a region of the world which underwent a more dramatic transformation over the last twenty years than the region comprising the so-called transitional countries. This vast region covers over a sixth of the world's land mass and includes the twenty-eight countries which once made the powerful Soviet Union and its East European satellites. The abrupt end of communism in 1989 and the subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union marked the beginning of a turbulent transition period. Over the twenty years that followed 1989, all fundamental societal characteristics of the old, communist order, from government-planned economy to equalitarian social relations, were dismantled and restructured all anew, ostensibly along the flagship doctrines of communism's victorious twentieth-century rival: free-market capitalism.

It is often said that the economic decline during the first years of the transition was deeper than the Great Depression of the 1930s. Citizens of the transitional countries, who had reluctantly learned to live under totalitarian regimes but had for decades enjoyed enviable access to decent housing, employment, health care and many public amenities, suddenly found themselves into the midst of civil wars, political instability and hyper-inflation. The most critical period came to a close by the year 2000. By then, most countries in the region had begun to pull out of the severe economic depression and had achieved some level of institutional stability. Still, today there are dramatic differences across the region, both in levels of economic growth and in degrees of political pluralism and democratization. Doubtlessly, the most economically and institutionally advanced group of countries comprises the five Central European and three Baltic states which became members of the European Union in 2004. They were followed in 2007 by two Balkan nations.

This report tackles how the breathtaking post-communist transformation affected urban areas in the region. It also outlines how urban planning—the indispensable public function which aims to guide urban growth—evolved to respond to new urban challenges. Analyzing the state of cities—and the state of their planning—is a dauntingly complex task. The region includes a startling variety of societies and cultures that are difficult to put under a common denominator aside from that of their shared communist past. Without discounting this complexity, the report strives to sort out the common fundamentals of the transition period as they relate to urban areas and their planning.

Beyond doubt, many of the issues faced by cities in the transitional countries have been caused by the familiar forces of globalization. Thus, the assessment that cities in the region have experienced trends such as decline of industrial areas and growing socio-spatial polarization should come as no surprise to students of contemporary urbanization. Similarly, the fact that urban planning in the transitional countries has taken a more subdued and piecemeal approach to addressing urban issues in recent years is hardly novel to planning scholars who interpret the state of contemporary planning within the context of post-welfare-state societal restructuring. What distinguishes the post-communist experience from the experience of other world regions may indeed be the speed of transformation and the extent of the social turbulence that accompanied it, rather than the crude societal forces which drove the transformation to begin with.

The leitmotif of the post-communist transition has been privatization—the process of transferring vast assets such as urban land, real estate and means of production from the communist state to private actors. This process of privatization, which was carried out with

enthusiasm across the region, reformed the basic context within which planning functions. Once fully controlled by the all-powerful communist state, urban development suddenly became much more complicated; it became the prevue of multiple parties: citizens, owners, builders, realtors, developers and various special interests. This brought conflict and confusion for which planners were ill prepared. Furthermore, the ideological climate within which planning operates changed radically as well. Post-communist governments made a sharp turn to the political right. Neo-liberal doctrines espousing the superiority of unbridled free-market systems led to a broad legitimacy crisis of planning. In fact, many citizens and politicians came to view planning as an unwanted vestige of the old communist system.

The new societal context and the drastic economic downturn which accompanied the post-communist transition led to severe urban challenges, including uncontrolled urban sprawl, failing infrastructure, loss of natural resources and cultural heritage, and sharp socio-spatial segregation. These challenges, however, ultimately highlighted the need for a reinvigorated urban planning. After 2000, urban planning re-established itself as an important societal function across the region. Recent positive developments include the articulation of a clearer institutional framework for urban planning, increased public input in the urban planning process, and a new planning focus on sustainable development.

The report is organized as follows. It first summarizes the socio-economic and political processes defining the post-communist transition, especially as they relate to urban areas (Chapters 1 and 2). Then, it reviews the history of urban planning in the region (Chapter 3) and outlines planning's contemporary legislative, institutional and procedural framework (Chapters 4 and 5). Next, it discusses how planning deals with issues of sustainable development (Chapter 6), informal development and sprawl (Chapter 7), and the provision of infrastructure (Chapter 8). It addresses the question of what mechanisms exist for the monitoring and evaluation of urban plans (Chapter 9). The report concludes with a discussion on the state of urban planning education (Chapter 10).

The report focuses on both the challenges and achievements of urban planning during the transition period. In so doing, it hopes to inform and inspire urban planners in the transitional countries to address urban and regional problems in a more socially equitable, environmentally responsible and economically efficient manner.

1. Major Urban Challenges Facing the Transitional Countries

This chapter outlines the major challenges faced by the transitional countries and their urban areas since the fall of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It begins with an explanation of the broader socio-economic context of the transition period and the major challenges of the post-communist crisis. Next, it addresses the impacts of globalization on national, regional, and urban development. Further, the chapter provides an overview of the key processes leading to rising social inequality in the region. The discussion continues with an assessment of the main problems related to infrastructure and services provision, and a summary of the most pressing environmental issues faced by urban areas. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the role of the market in managing urban development in the region.

1.1. The challenges of the transition period

Since the fall of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the overriding challenge faced by the transitional countries has been finding suitable answers to two fundamental questions: 1) Where do we go from here? and 2) How should we get there? During the last couple of decades, the first question generated a variety of responses which could be grouped in three clusters. The first group of countries has embraced, with some variations in the level of enthusiasm, the idea of establishing pluralist democracies and market-based economic systems. The leaders in this pack are the newly accepted members of the European Union. The second group has opted for the introduction of market-based principles while maintaining the strong presence of centralized power over economic and political affairs. Most notable members of this group are Russia and Kazakhstan. The third cluster is composed of states that have not yet reached a clear consensus on this question. Here we find Ukraine, Armenia, Albania and other countries mired by internal and external political and ethnic conflicts. The range of responses to the second question—determining the appropriate path of reform—has produced even greater variations between and within the countries of this economically and culturally diverse region.

The enormous variation of contexts in the region presents a major challenge to those who try to capture the essence of the patterns and processes of post-communist transformation. This task is made even more difficult when the analysis has to be carried out on the level of cities, which exhibit a wide range of variations within specific national contexts. International, national, and local policies, as well as path dependencies grounded in the socialist past, have exerted great influence on post-communist urban development, leading to differential rates of reforms in housing privatization, property restitution, commercialization of city centres, decentralization of housing and retail, public infrastructure investments, etc.¹ These differences notwithstanding, one generalization is quite easy to make: the post-communist transition period has impacted the lives of over 400 million residents in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, close to two thirds of which reside in cities and towns.² The emphasis placed on the development of cities as engines of economic growth during the communist period and their importance as catalysts of political and economic reform during the transition period point to the extraordinary role that cities have played in the development of this region in modern history. Not surprisingly, the challenges faced by the transitional

1. Stanilov, 2007b.

2. United Nations, 2008.

countries have been most clearly articulated in the processes of transformation taking place within their urban areas.

The collapse of the communist regimes triggered a shockwave through the countries in the region as they were contemplating their first steps on the path to reforms.³ This outcome was expected given the profound nature of the changes that needed to be accomplished urgently in all political, economic, and social spheres of life. In this sense, Keynes's warnings made half a century earlier proved stunningly accurate in their prediction that a "*rapid transition will involve so much pure destruction of wealth that the new state of affairs will be, at first, far worse than the old.*"⁴ The crisis of the transition period, however, exceeded even the worst expectations in terms of the depth and the duration of the economic decline.⁵ On several accounts it was deeper and wider than that of the Great Depression. During the early 1990s, many countries of the region saw a 30 to 50 per cent drop in GDP, a rise in unemployment rates reaching and exceeding a quarter of the population, an explosion of inflation rates into double and triple digits, a removal of government-provided safety nets, and a precipitous decline of living standards. Turning the wheels of the economy presented an enormous challenge given the heavy communist legacy of obsolete and inefficient industrial enterprises. Things got increasingly worse when the erosion of personal purchasing power led to a collapse in domestic consumer demand, which in turn led to a sharp fall in investment activity. Under these circumstances, the recovery achieved by a group of Central European and Baltic states within several years was nothing short of an economic miracle.

The implementation of successful reforms during the 1990s exhibited significant variations among the countries of the region. This result could be explained to a great extent by their historical development paths. The breakdown of the Soviet Union hurt the countries, which succeeded it more than it hurt the Central and Eastern European states, which had a relatively higher degree of economic independence during the communist period and governments that exhibited a willingness to experiment with market-oriented reforms. In Hungary and Yugoslavia, for example, free-market attempts began in the 1970s and continued throughout the 1980s. Thus, the traditions of the Central and Eastern European countries in terms of their past economic development policies conditioned their success during the transition period, softening the shock of the reforms.

The progress of other, less fortunate, countries in the region has been slowed down by political conflicts that have been brewing for decades after World War II but were successfully suppressed by the power of the central authorities during communist times. The explosion of violent ethnic wars and border conflicts in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Central Asia following the collapse of the old regimes has prevented internal national consolidation and interstate cooperation in these sub-regions. The geographic isolation of the countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia has further complicated their recovery by limiting their access to global markets.

Another major challenge for the transitional countries, besides finding a way out of the severe economic crisis and sorting out the ethnic conflicts, was the need for and the implementation of a successful institutional reform. The initial period of the transition was characterized by an unnerving state of institutional disorganization. The institutional vacuum was quickly filled in by private economic interests, which began to dominate the political discourse. In the absence of well-established democratic institutions, finding a balance between economic and social goals presented an enormous challenge. As the transition period

3. Schmieding, 1993.

4. Keynes, 1933: 245.

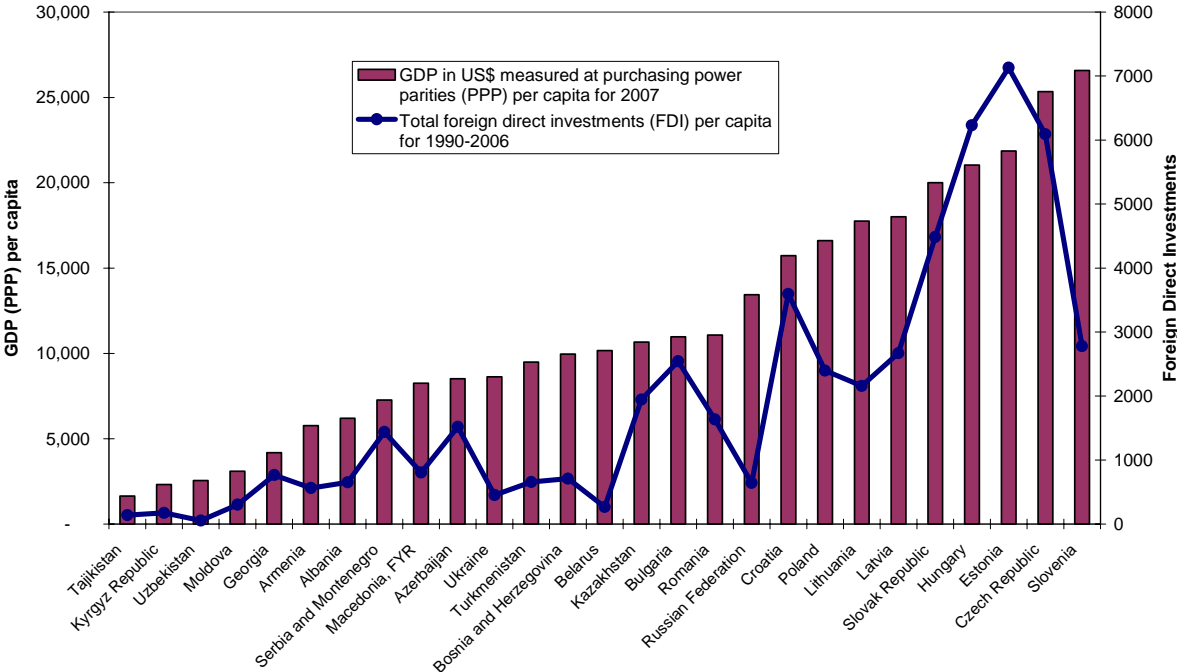
5. UNECE, 2006; Hamilton, 1999.

draws to a close, there is a growing recognition of the importance of addressing this problem among the countries of the region—especially among those which have realized that reforming the political, legal, and cultural frameworks is a much harder issue to resolve than strengthening the economy. Institutional restructuring has become an essential benchmark for guaranteeing the further success of reforms in the transitional states.⁶ The experience of the transition period has highlighted another challenge—it is informal institutions, individual attitudes, and public perceptions that have often resisted change the hardest.⁷ This area is likely to become the next main target in the ongoing transformation of transitional societies, but accomplishing this task will take much longer than the restructuring of the economy and the formal social institutions.

1.2. Globalization and its uneven impacts

A major confirmation of the success achieved by the post-communist countries on the path to economic reforms has been their impressive economic growth since the turn of the millennium. The emerging market economies of the region, as well as those of China, India, and South-East Asia, have become a new engine of growth for the global economy.⁸ In fact, the level of economic recovery of the post-communist countries is inextricably linked with the level of the integration of their markets into the flows of the global economy. Of particular significance are two main factors: foreign investment and economic growth (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Linkages between economic growth and foreign direct investment in the transitional countries



Source: IMF, 2007; UNCTAD, 2007.

6. EBRD, 2006a; 2006b.
 7. Hamilton, 1999.
 8. UNECE, 2006.

Countries in Central Europe such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, which received the lion share of foreign direct investments during the 1990s, enjoyed faster growth by being better connected to the global economic network. Another group of countries that benefited from their quick integration into the global marketplace were countries rich in natural resources, most notably Russia and Kazakhstan. In the context of rapidly increasing energy prices, these countries have attracted significant interest by foreign investors and managed to amass huge revenues through their energy exports. The rest of the transitional countries, which did not succeed in attracting the attention of global investment capital, either through their natural riches or their competitive labour force reserves,⁹ fared significantly worse.

The issue of uneven economic development in regions recovering after economic collapse is a well-known phenomenon, extensively analyzed by economic geographers.¹⁰ As pointed out earlier, the variations in the pace of economic recovery are closely linked with the legacies of uneven past development. Countries closer to the prosperous European Union have been reaping the benefits of the near-neighbour effect not just in the post-communist years, but throughout history. The links forged through trade and cultural exchanges over the centuries have been reinvigorated after 1989. The exposure of the transitional countries to the forces of the global market since the early 1990s has exacerbated the cross-national variations in the region, propelling the leaders in post-communist reforms forward, while providing only a modest push to the ones showing slower progress on the path to reforms.

The differential level of foreign investments, which the post-communist countries have received since the beginning of the transition period, has helped widen the gap between the lowest and the highest economic performers. Thus, the per capita gross domestic product generated in the region in 2007 shows a range starting from less than US\$ 3,000¹¹ (in Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Moldova) to over US\$ 25,000 (in the Czech Republic and Slovenia; see Figure 1). The experience of the transition period has demonstrated that countries which moved ahead in the global competition for attracting investments were the ones where governmental institutions became directly involved in development planning and coordination. Thus, in countries with proactive state, regional, and local governments, such as those in Central Europe and the Baltics, public policies and programs acted as catalysts of reform, allowing the national economies to gain and maintain momentum throughout the period of transition.

The uneven impacts of globalization have been clearly expressed on the sub-national regional and urban levels. In general, capital cities and major metropolitan areas have pulled ahead of secondary and tertiary cities in the urban hierarchy.¹² The restructuring of the economy has proceeded considerably slower in the smaller cities, towns, and villages of the transitional countries. Particularly hard hit are the former communist towns planned as centres of specific industrial branches. In the struggle of these second and third-tier settlements to find a market niche in the global competition for investments, they have come to depend largely on local government initiatives and, more recently, on financial support provided by European Union structural funds and international financial institutions. In spite of these efforts, many post-communist countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia exhibit today regional disparities greater than those found in the ranks of the developed countries. This

9. According to data provided by Eurostat, the average percent of population with upper secondary education for the twenty-five countries of the European Union is about 77 percent in 2004. In Slovakia and the Czech Republic this share was 91, and in Poland and Slovenia around 90 percent.

10. Dingsdale, 1999.

11. GDP values are measured in US\$ at purchasing power parities (PPP) per capita.

12. World Bank, 2006b.

situation has given rise to serious concerns about how far the processes of spatial differentiation will continue and what its ultimate economic and social consequences will be. Reducing the risk for investors, uncovering neglected local opportunities, and marketing them internationally have become key tasks for public officials in the economically depressed regions of the transitional countries and there are some signs that more local and regional governments are stepping up to this challenge.

1.3. Poverty, unemployment, inequality

The period of transition from centrally-planned to market-based economy has been associated with dramatic increases in the levels of poverty, unemployment, and inequality within the former communist countries.¹³ Unemployment rates in the region peaked in the mid and late 1990s, hitting the urban areas and the regions with concentrated industrial employment particularly hard. With the start of the economic recovery, unemployment rates have begun to subside, showing a steady decline since year 2000. Thus, by 2006, all transitional countries (with the exception of a few states in former Yugoslavia) reached unemployment rates below 13 per cent, and a majority of them registered unemployment levels below 8 per cent. The region has also achieved significant success in taming the exorbitant inflation rates of the early transition period down to single digit levels. Real incomes, however, have not increased at the same rate as living costs and housing prices; the latter have been pushed up to astronomic levels by a pent-up demand and intensified speculation in the housing market. The escalation of residential property values has been sustained throughout the transition period by a combination of factors, including the housing shortages inherited from the old regime, the rising affluence of the middle class, and demographic changes in the household structure. Significant impact on housing prices has been exerted also by the rising demand for vacation and secondary homes—a market segment dominated by buyers from the West, particularly from older European Union members. In addition, the mass privatization of dwellings and public services throughout the region has resulted in sharp increases in household expenses for daily housing maintenance.¹⁴

The substantial cross-national differences based on structural socio-economic changes and the impacts of globalization discussed above have been reflected in significant variations in the levels of poverty and income inequality across the region. In the beginning of the millennium, the share of residents living below nationally established poverty lines in Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, and the Kyrgyz Republic included nearly half of their population. Moreover, in some countries of the former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia, there is a trend toward unprecedented levels of inequality, continuously declining living standards, and a sharp increase in the number of households living in slum conditions.¹⁵

In general, cities in the transitional countries have fared better than national averages in terms of poverty rates. A closer investigation, however, reveals considerable variations between first and second-tier cities. A study by the World Bank has found that in most transitional countries the poverty risk of residents in secondary cities is two to four times greater than that of residents in national capitals.¹⁶

National and city level data masks another phenomenon of the post-communist period—the increasing socio-spatial stratification taking place within urban territories. The processes of rising income differentiation within urban areas are articulating a mosaic pattern of spatial

13. EBRD, 2007.

14. UNCHS, 2001.

15. United Nations, 2007; UN-Habitat, 2004; Clapham et al, 1996.

16. World Bank, 2006b.

inequality as some communities have begun to enjoy significant improvements in the quality of their built environment while others are experiencing economic, social, and environmental decline. The relative spatial homogeneity of means and opportunities, imposed by the old communist system, has been shattered by the logic of new market forces. The spatial concentration of different socio-economic groups in certain urban areas has resulted from increased residential mobility of upper- and middle-income residents who have relocated to suburban residential parks, gated urban enclaves, and upscale inner-city neighbourhoods with quality housing stock and superior communal facilities. Residential mobility of lower-income households, on the other hand, has been much more limited. Pushed away by escalating rents in the city centres and fashionable neighbourhoods, these households have sought accommodation in lower-cost urban districts including a limited set of inferior options: 1) declining inner-city neighbourhoods located amidst derelict industrial sites; 2) communist-era built housing estates experiencing rapid physical deterioration due to withdrawal of government support; and 3) low-cost housing found in satellite villages or squatter settlements at the urban edge. The availability of services in these districts is far below the average in the urban areas. Thus, urban inequalities have been exacerbated as low-income households residing in areas of concentrated poverty are much less likely to have access to adequate and reliable public services.¹⁷

1.4. Infrastructure and service provision

Due to the communist policies of providing basic public services for all urban residents, access to utilities from the public grids (such as electricity and water) is uniformly high throughout the region. Greater variations exist in the provision of sewerage within urban areas, particularly in the countries that were parts of the former Soviet Union, excluding those in the Baltic region. Overall, access to infrastructure is markedly higher in urban areas than in the rural districts,¹⁸ a reflection of the fact that rural development constituted a low priority for the communist regimes (see also Chapters 6.2 and 8).

Access to public infrastructure within urban areas in most transitional countries is undermined by the poor quality and low level of service, especially in Central Asia and the Caucasus region. The sharp deterioration in the quality of maintenance and provision of public services during the transition period was a direct result of the drastic withdrawal of state funds supporting local government functions. The fiscal crunch of local public service providers has been exacerbated by the inability of an impoverished population to cover the costs of these services. Outsourcing or privatization policies have achieved some improvements in systems performance, but this process is going on with significant difficulties, particularly in the countries where economic recovery has been slow. The upgrade of the services and the reorganization of their delivery as market-based, self-financed operations have resulted in a sharp increase of service costs. Thus, greater shares of the populations have failed to meet their financial obligations, leaving many users with little choice but to remove themselves from the public service delivery system entirely.

As noted earlier, strategies to cope with rising living costs have included the relocation of impoverished residents from high-cost urban districts to lower-cost districts, and ultimately to informal settlements in the urban periphery. The emergence of squatter communities in some Southeast European and Central Asian cities is fuelled by the inability of governments to address the needs of a growing population of the urban poor. Here the stream of low-income residents leaving the city is merging with another group of squatter settlers—migrants from

17. World Bank, 2006b.

18. World Bank, 2006b.

rural areas seeing employment opportunities in urban centres. Most commonly, these newly formed communities at the urban edge lack basic infrastructure services. The poor levels of connectivity to infrastructure and public services of these marginal neighbourhoods lead to physical isolation and social exclusion of their residents. In addition, these informal communities are often located in polluted areas thus causing adverse environmental impacts on the health of their residents.

Access to quality public health care and education has also eroded during the transition period. This conclusion is confirmed consistently across all transitional countries in a survey of public opinion carried out by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.¹⁹ The trend here, as in the provision of physical infrastructure and other public services, is to embrace privatization as a universally applicable success strategy. This approach, which transfers social responsibilities from the public to the private sector, is a path that is sure to further reduce access to services for increasing shares of the population. The negative social impacts of this strategy, however, have not yet become a serious point of discussion in government circles.

At the national level, an important policy issue is how to make strategic decisions regarding the best way to distribute spatially limited public resources. The clear priority has been economic development and the need to make a choice between supporting the growth of already established centres (thus hoping that they will serve as locomotives pulling the rest of the regions behind), or investing in the regions that have fallen behind. The practice so far has been heavily skewed in support of existing urban growth poles, both at national and local level, thus further increasing spatial disparities between regions and within metropolitan areas.

1.5. Environmental concerns

The majority of the environmental problems of the cities in the region are linked to the heavy legacy of the communist past (see also Chapter 6.1). Communist regimes focused on promoting industrial development made few concessions to the environment. As a result, the transitional countries have inherited some of the worst polluters and the most energy inefficient industrial enterprises in the world. What made this problem even worse is that the majority of these factories were located directly in or nearby major urban centres. The philosophy of communist urbanization postulated that cities were needed to aid the process of industrial production rather than the other way around.

The decline in industrial output during the transition crisis and the subsequent restructuring of outdated facilities has resulted in general decline in air and water pollution and a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions since 1990.²⁰ However, toxic emissions have generally increased.²¹ To a great extent, this is a result of increases in automobile traffic and related levels of traffic congestion, which have in turn led to higher levels of air pollution in urban areas.²² The explosion of automobile ownership rates in the region, which have on the average doubled during the past 15 years,²³ has led to dramatic increases in the share of urban trips taken by car (see also Chapter 6.2). What has made the negative environmental impacts even more severe is the advanced age of the automobile fleet, which comprises mostly second-hand vehicles purchased in Western Europe.

19. EBRD, 2007.

20. United Nations, 2007.

21. UNDP, 2003.

22. Danielyan et al, 2007.

23. In comparison, according to data provided by Eurostat, car ownership during the same period (1990–2005) has increased by an average of about 20 percent in Western Europe and by only 5 per cent in the United States of America.

Another crucial environmental challenge common in cities in the region has been the issue of waste management. Two main factors contribute to this unfortunate situation. The first is related to the erosion in the level of public services, which was discussed above. The second factor is linked to the weakness of metropolitan governments whose ability to find solutions has been undermined by the fragmentation of power due to the process of political decentralization, as well as the growing ability of citizen groups to oppose development initiatives, including those related to waste management. The extension of old or the location of new waste management sites has become a contested issue in local and regional politics. Yet, allocating funds for upgrading existing facilities has been an equally difficult task for the financially strapped local governments.

One of the most visible environmental challenges in the transitional countries is the large amount of brownfield sites interspersed throughout urban areas (see also Chapter 6.2). The disproportionately high percentage of urban land dedicated to industrial uses²⁴ is another hard legacy of the communist city. In the absence of land rent, communist planners, government officials, and enterprise managers designated generous portions of urban land to meet the needs of the industrial sector. After the collapse of the communist economic system, most of these sites became vacant. However, interest in their potential redevelopment is growing, particularly in cities such as Prague, Budapest, Warsaw and Moscow, where urban land rents have recently skyrocketed.

1.6. Fine-tuning the role of the market

Since the beginning of the transition period, the former communist countries in Eastern Europe (and to a lesser extent those in Central Asia) have become the testing ground of neo-liberal ideologies placing faith in the ability of the market to pull them out of the economic crisis. The massive privatization of assets and resources, which took place during the 1990s, has produced mixed results. While the economies of most transitional countries have been revived, the benefits of the economic upturn have been unevenly distributed. Countries and regions which succeeded in linking their economies to the global capital flows have pulled ahead of those that either did not possess the resources or did not manage to capitalize on them. The competition for attracting investments has established the dominance of private economic interests and paved a shift in the style of urban governments—from managerial to entrepreneurial.²⁵

The high priority assigned to economic development has undermined the potential of reforms to increase accountability, transparency, and efficiency in the public sector. Yet a growing discontent with the results of the first, “Wild East” phase of the transition period, which produced declining living standards and sharp erosion in urban quality of life, has highlighted the need to regulate market forces more efficiently. Still, the growing social, political, and spatial fragmentation within the transitional countries continues to hamper the capacity to form broad political coalitions interested in developing governance structures that can effectively impose the necessary market regulation.

24. This share is two to three times larger than the average for Western European cities (Kessides, 2000).

25. UNCHS, 2001.

2. The Urban Context of Planning

This chapter begins with a description of the general urbanization patterns and trends within the region, highlighting national and regional variations. It then proceeds to discuss the main processes of urban space restructuring which have taken place during the post-communist period, summarizing the social and environmental impacts of these spatial transformations. The chapter concludes with an overview of municipal government responses to the challenges presented by the processes of urban change and offers a general evaluation of local government performance.

2.1. Urbanization rates and patterns, regional and national variations

Throughout the region, the period of transition has been characterized by significant demographic shifts and notable changes in the patterns of urbanization reflecting the broad socio-economic transformations taking place in the transitional countries since the early 1990s. The dominant demographic trends for the majority of the nations in the region have been the rapid aging of population coupled with a general population decline. The negative population growth has been accompanied by a comparable decrease in urban population, even though the latter has been partially offset by a rising wave of rural-to-urban migration. These general observations should be interpreted with caution as significant variations exist between the transitional countries in terms of their urbanization trends.

2.1.1. General demographic trends

The two dominant demographic trends in the region are population decline and rapid aging. In the context of a robust global population increase at the end of the twentieth century, it is quite remarkable that all countries that experienced absolute declines in urban population from 1990–2002 were transitional countries.¹ The region continued to carry this extraordinary distinction in the new millennium. Between 2000 and 2005, a cluster of 16 states from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union were the only countries in the world which registered population declines of more than 5,000 people.² Rising mortality rates, decreasing fertility levels, and sizeable migration flows out of the region have led to continued population decrease among these nations.³ The second distinguishing demographic characteristic in the region is rapidly aging population. This trend, which started in the 1980s, shows no signs of reversal. On the contrary, it has been estimated that over the next two decades the fastest aging societies on earth will be, again, those in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.⁴

Both population decline and rapid aging create a critical demographic situation that puts extra pressure on the fragile economic and social frameworks of the transitional countries. Whereas the numbers of working-age people are sharply decreasing, which limits the overall economic output and the size of the national markets, the share of the elderly population is increasing, which places a heavier burden on the social service delivery systems.

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1. World Bank, 2006b.
 2. World Bank, 2007.
 3. UN-Habitat, 2004.
 4. World Bank, 2007.

2.1.2. General urbanization trends

With roughly two thirds of their population residing in urban areas, the transitional countries are highly urbanized. This is a legacy of the intense urbanization which took place in the region during communist times. The period of adaptation from command-driven regimes to democratic societies attuned to the forces of the market has triggered significant adjustments in the settlement networks of the transitional countries.⁵ Large international and domestic migration flows have resulted in unique pressures on urban areas. Naturally, urbanization processes have reflected the larger national demographic trends described above. Thus, post-communist cities have experienced a general population decline coupled with rapidly aging population—a combined effect of low fertility rates (this applies to all states with the exception of those in Central Asia) and emigration of working and reproductive-age residents.

The general decline in the share of urban population due to emigration conceals the extent of another powerful process taking place during the transition period—rural-to-urban migration.⁶ In the last two decades, a great number of migrants have been drawn from rural to urban areas, attracted by the promise of greater employment opportunities. The overwhelming majority of these migrants have settled in the large urban agglomerations around national capitals.

2.1.3. Variations in urbanization rates and patterns

It should be noted that, within the general demographic and urbanization trends outlined above, significant variations exist within the region, as Table 1 illustrates.

Overall, the countries can be classified in five distinct groups based on their urbanization patterns during the transition period:

- **Fast growth.** This group includes four countries in Central Asia: Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, plus Azerbaijan. Due to their high birth rates, these countries registered a national growth of 17 to 32 per cent between 1990 and 2005. Population growth characterized both rural and urban areas, but the high growth in rural population (20 to 40 per cent) surpassed the rates of growth in urban areas (10 to 30 per cent). Notable exceptions here are the capital cities of Turkmenistan (Ashgabat) and Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek) which exceeded the growth of both rural and urban settlements in their countries. Overall, however, although cities in the *fast growth* group experienced substantial population increase, the share of their urban population declined. Tajikistan is the only country in which growth during this period resulted exclusively from rural demographic increase. In the mean time, Tajik cities (including the capital Dushanbe) lost population, mainly because of the civil war which raged in this country during the 1990s.
- **Slow growth.** This group is composed of a cluster of countries in Southeast and Central Europe: Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Poland. It is characterized by modest national growth rates (1 to 3 per cent) and a slightly faster growth in urban areas (2.5 to 6 per cent). Most of this growth occurred in secondary cities while all capitals, with the exception of Warsaw, Poland and Belgrade, Serbia lost 2 to 5 per cent of their population. Rural areas in this group of countries experienced a mixture of slow growth and decline, ranging from negative 4.5 per cent to modest gains of up to 3.5 per cent.

5. Kessides, 2000.

6. World Bank, 2006b.

Table 1. Population growth in the region, per cent change between 1990 and 2005 in order from highest to lowest growth

Country	Total (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Capital (%)	Non-capital (%)
Turkmenistan	31.8	28.9	35.2	66.1	24.4
Uzbekistan	29.6	37.1	18.5	5.3	23.0
Tajikistan	22.7	35.0	-3.9	-6.5	-2.6
Kyrgyzstan	19.8	23.6	13.5	25.7	6.0
Azerbaijan	16.6	22.2	11.8	7.1	15.6
Macedonia	6.5	-21.5	27.0	17.9	32.3
Serbia and Montenegro	3.4	0.5	6.2	-4.8	9.4
Slovakia	2.8	3.4	2.3	-3.0	3.2
Slovenia	2.1	0.7	3.4	-3.3	6.0
Poland	1.1	-0.9	2.4	3.1	2.3
Croatia	0.8	-4.6	5.3	-1.9	8.2
Czech Republic	-0.8	5.9	-3.1	-3.2	-3.0
Hungary	-2.6	-3.9	-1.9	-15.6	3.8
Russian Federation	-3.5	-2.0	-4.0	17.7	-6.0
Moldova	-3.6	-3.4	-3.8	-8.4	-1.7
Albania	-4.8	-18.2	18.4	57.1	8.4
Belarus	-5.0	-21.4	3.3	10.6	1.1
Romania	-6.4	-5.1	-7.5	10.1	-10.4
Lithuania	-7.2	-4.3	-8.6	-4.3	-9.9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-9.3	-19.0	5.7	48.2	-7.8
Kazakhstan	-10.2	-12.3	-8.5	7.0	-10.5
Ukraine	-10.4	-13.2	-9.0	3.8	-10.1
Bulgaria	-11.4	-20.9	-6.5	-8.2	-6.1
Armenia	-14.9	-6.0	-19.2	-6.1	-31.8
Latvia	-15.0	-11.0	-16.7	-19.4	-14.2
Estonia	-16.0	-10.1	-18.5	-17.6	-19.0
Georgia	-18.1	-12.6	-22.5	-14.5	-27.9

Source: United Nations, 2008.

- **Slow decline.** The countries of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, and Russia experienced a modest decline in national population ranging from negative 1 to negative 3.5 per cent with comparable declines in urban and rural population (except for the Czech Republic which showed a 6 per cent increase in rural population). The extreme cases in this group deviating significantly from these averages are the capital cities of Hungary and Russia. While Budapest lost over 15 per cent of its residents, Moscow increased its population size by 18 per cent.
- **Fast decline.** This is the largest and the most geographically diverse group comprising countries from Southeast Europe (Romania and Bulgaria), the Baltic states (Lithuania,

Latvia, and Estonia), the Caucasus region (Armenia and Georgia), plus Ukraine and Kazakhstan. All of these countries registered substantial national population declines of 6.5 to 18 per cent, with comparable decreases in rural and urban population. An interesting distinction within this group is that countries with the highest population losses (15 to 18 per cent in Latvia, Estonia, Armenia, and Georgia) are also the ones with even higher declines in urban population (17 to 22.5 per cent). The rest of the countries in this group, which showed relatively slower declines in population (between 6.5 and 11.5 per cent), experienced more modest decline in urban population (6.5 to 9 per cent) than in rural areas (4.5 to 21 per cent). Capital cities in the *fast decline* group lost less population than secondary cities, with the capitals of Romania (Bucharest), Ukraine (Kiev), and the former capital of Kazakhstan, Almaty, even registering population gains.

- Rapid urbanization. The last group is formed by the countries which experienced significant gains in the share of their urban population. While the proportion of urban residents in most countries in the previous four groups declined or slightly increased (by about one per cent), a group of Southeast European countries (Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Belarus increased the share of their urban populations by 6 to 11 per cent. All countries in this group lost significant shares of rural population (18 to 21.5 per cent). Only Macedonia did it in the context of national, urban, and capital population growth. In Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Belarus most urban growth concentrated in capitals, while the rest of the urban population remained fairly stable. Notable is the extraordinary growth of the capitals of Albania (Tirana) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo) which increased their populations by 57 and 48 per cent respectively.

The results of this classification, based on a closer examination of urbanization patterns within the countries of the region, illuminate several important trends. First, a broad territorial pattern emerges formed by: 1) a cluster of fast-growth Central Asian countries characterized by relatively low levels of urbanization (25 to 50 per cent urban population); 2) a group of countries in Eastern Central Europe plus Russia showing relatively modest population losses or gains; and 3) a geographically and economically mixed group of highly urbanized countries experiencing fast population decline. Second, despite the differences, a common, if not universal, process during the transition period has been the concentration of population in capital cities.

It should be noted that a mountain of anecdotal evidence and widespread public perceptions significantly contradict the official statistics on population growth in the largest metropolitan areas of the region. These unofficial sources offer credible evidence of a chronic population “undercount.” In many cases, it is argued, the officials are either unable or unwilling to record the temporary segment of the urban population. Interestingly, this could be attributed as much to government policies as to residents “hiding” from the authorities in a shadow real estate market.⁷ Examples of government-induced lapses include the failure of the notorious “propiska” system⁸ in Moscow, sudden population shifts in Budapest due to bureaucratic adjustments in the method of counting, disincentives created by specific government policies in Tallinn, and the case of the new Kazakh capital of Astana where authorities apparently decided to “massage” the data for political purposes. The second key

7. This point has been recently raised and discussed on the Cities after Transition listserv whose membership comprises scholars of urbanization in transitional countries.

8. This administrative mechanism, employed extensively by most communist governments in the region, was designed to limit internal migration and residential mobility by placing severe limitations on obtaining a residency status in any place other than the place of birth or place of official employment.

reason for population undercounts is the fact that in many cases the records of population decline in the largest metropolitan areas are heavily impacted by an increasing rate of suburbanization. Thus, the decentralization of population beyond the boundaries of the city or the urban agglomeration is treated as a net population loss in these statistical areas, while in reality the metropolitan region as a whole might have in fact experienced substantial growth as in the cases of Ljubljana (Slovenia), Budapest (Hungary), Riga (Latvia), and Tallinn (Estonia).

2.1.4. Regional variations in urbanization patterns

During the period of transition, locations with advantages for reorganizing production, including concentration of capital, qualified labour force, and access to global communications, have had much better chances for growth than older industrial centres.

The fast growth of capital cities throughout the region confirms this conclusion. The capital metropolises have been the focal points where the processes of post-communist economic restructuring were initiated, tried out and expanded, and ultimately spread towards other urban areas.⁹ The concentration of economic activity in the capital cities has been reflected also in the rising incomes of their residents. Wealth gaps between capitals and all other areas, urban and rural,¹⁰ have thus increased significantly and provided additional incentive for migration.

The restructuring of the economy, as pointed out earlier, has been much less favourable to smaller cities, towns, and villages throughout the region. There, environmental degradation coupled with the withdrawal of state funding and the shortage of private investment has set in a prolonged period of economic stagnation, declining incomes, and diminished quality of life.

2.2. The restructuring of urban space

2.2.1. The spatial structure of the communist city and its legacy

In order to understand the processes of urban spatial restructuring which have taken place in the region during the transition period, the general characteristics of the communist city need to be laid out first. The salient point distinguishing the communist from the capitalist urban areas is that in the former the allocation of land use and infrastructure investments took place with little regard to market-based principles. This concept combined with the principles of centralized planning applied by an authoritarian regime created an urban spatial structure characterized by the following spatial features (see also Chapter 6.1):¹¹

- A high-density urban fabric dominated by a strong centre in which the majority of the main retail, office, and government functions are concentrated.
- A core of older high-density residential neighbourhoods surrounding the city centre, intersected by commercial uses along main corridors radiating out to the urban periphery.
- The core residential zone is surrounded in turn by large mono-functional districts comprised mainly of housing estates, industrial zones, and large peripheral parks.

9. Sailer-Fliege, 1999; Kovács and Wiessner, 1995.

10. The average official income of Moscow's households, for instance, has been estimated to be four times as much as the national average (Golubchikov, 2004)—a situation characteristic for other Central and East European countries as well.

11. Hamilton, 1979.

- The urban area has a relatively sharp urban edge eroded in some spots by small clusters of *dacha* (secondary home) settlements and old villages, which were absorbed by the metropolitan areas during post-war urban expansion.
- Demographically, the communist city is characterized by a relatively homogeneous urban population with moderate differences in community makeup based on residents' socio-economic status. This in turn reflects variations in proximity to the centre, the quality of neighbourhood housing stock, and general environmental conditions.

While the articulation of this rigid spatial structure spanned nearly a half century, its transformation, particularly in the most dynamically reforming countries in the region, took significantly less time to accomplish.

2.2.2. The post-communist restructuring

The introduction of market-based principles in the allocation of real estate investments during the transition period has triggered a massive realignment of land uses and residents within the metropolitan fabric, resulting in significant restructuring of urban space (see also Chapter 6.2).¹² These processes of spatial transformations include:

- Breaking up the mono-centric model of the communist city following the decentralization of commercial and office activities. This has resulted in land-use diversification of formerly mono-functional areas and the emergence of secondary centres outside of the urban core.
- Intense commercial and, to a lesser extent, residential gentrification of the city centre as a result of sharp increases of land rents in this location, leading to a displacement of lower-income inner-city residents and lower-level retail to more peripheral and lower-cost neighbourhoods.
- Increasing rates of residential decentralization taking the shape of: 1) exclusive high-income suburban communities, primarily in Central Europe, the Baltic states, and in more economically advanced urban areas, and 2) emerging low-income squatter settlements in Central Asia, the Caucasus states, and some countries in Southeast Europe.
- Increased local differentiation among urban neighbourhoods based on concentration of investment activities in communities with certain locational advantages (including some brownfield sites), paralleled by disinvestment in economically depressed areas (including large-scale communist housing estates). As a result, cities have undergone a process of sharpened socio-spatial stratification leading to the formation of exclusive upscale communities, on one hand, and urban slums on the other.

The sweeping changes described above have impacted significantly the lives of urban residents throughout the region. While the quality of life of certain types of residents (typically younger, better educated and male) has improved, the quality of life of other, larger groups of urban dwellers has arguably only deteriorated.

2.3. The impacts of urban restructuring

The processes of urban spatial restructuring reflect the deep structural transformations that have taken place in the transitional countries during the last two decades as a result of the

12. Stanilov, 2007e.

impact of both external and internal economic, political, and cultural processes of change. As noted above, the combined effect of these forces on the reorganization of urban space has exerted mixed impacts on the lives of urban residents.

The transition to market-based democracies and the concomitant restructuring of urban space has resulted in a general increase in individual living standards and residential choices within urban areas. One of the most notable accomplishments of the transition period has been the sharp increase in homeownership rates among urban residents. As a result of massive privatization of public housing, homeownership rates in the region reached record levels, exceeding 90 per cent in some of the Baltic, Balkan, and Caucasian countries. This process was used as a “shock absorber,” lowering the negative social impacts of the transition period.¹³ The flip side of these policies is a drastic reduction of the share of affordable, public housing options. The share of this type of housing stock is under 1 per cent in cities such as Sofia, Bulgaria, Tallinn, Estonia, and Bratislava, Slovakia. On the positive side, after two decades of housing reform, cities in the region offer a great variety of housing options including high-rise condominiums, walk-up garden apartments, row houses, and single-family suburban residences. New residential construction has been clearly oriented towards the affluent segments of the population thus squeezing further the options available to lower-income residents. Similar processes have impacted the non-residential segments of the real estate market, where well-heeled firms can choose from a variety of locations ranging from upscale downtown commercial space to offices and stores in suburban business and retail parks, while lower-end entrepreneurs are relegated to stalls in open-air markets and remodelled basement units.

A general decline in communal living standards is another process that has overshadowed the improvements attained by certain segments of the population and some districts within urban areas. This outcome has been a reflection of several parallel processes that have negatively impacted urban communities. First, the decline in public service provision, discussed in Chapter 1.4, has left many struggling communities dependent on government support with little resources to meet their needs. Upgrades of public infrastructure and communal facilities have been put on seemingly permanent hold. Second, the process of privatization has not just taken hold of the economy and the housing sector, but it has also permeated the public realm at all levels including through aggressive appropriation of public space for an assortment of private needs. The disappearance of open space, small urban parks, and large pieces of green urban infrastructure has become a hallmark of urban change in the post-communist period (see also Chapter 6.2).¹⁴ Privatization has become the leitmotif of the transition period,¹⁵ reaching also the realm of urban transportation. The recent explosion in the number of personal vehicles has eroded the well-developed systems of public transit for which cities in the region were known in the past. The aggressive takeover by private automobiles of streets and squares throughout the region has not only further reduced the public realm, but it has substantially worsened urban congestion and environmental pollution. Seeking refuge from an increasingly hostile urban environment, many affluent residents have sought refuge in suburban compounds and gated urban enclaves, thus fuelling the ongoing process of socio-spatial polarization.

13. Struyk, 1996.

14. Akerlund, 2006.

15. Bodnar, 2001.

2.4. Municipal government performance

The performance of municipal governments during the period of transition has been quite uneven, but, as a rule, significantly below the level of the urban challenges. A number of explanations could be provided for this phenomenon, mostly having to do with shortage of financial, legal, and institutional resources. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the decentralization of power from central to local governments has been carried out as the main tenet of political reform in most countries of the region, with the exception of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (see also Chapter 4). Also with almost no exceptions, the process of transferring responsibilities has not been paralleled by an adequate transfer of means through adjustments in the national and local taxation policies. This has left local governments in charge of public infrastructure and service provision, which had to be accomplished in a context of severe budgets restrictions. In order to curtail expenses, local governments embraced the mantra of privatization not only in the areas of housing, infrastructure and services, but even in such typically public duties as park maintenance.¹⁶ In the sectors where privatization or outsourcing could not be carried out, budgets were slashed through a reduction in the level of services.

The entrepreneurial approach to municipal governance has signalled a retreat from the principles of centralized planning, with the dominance of economic concerns ruthlessly trumping the notion of public interests. This environment, coupled with a general relaxation in government control and regulations and the elevation of the concept of private property rights, created a ground fertile for corruption. Government officials became particularly susceptible to looser interpretations of existing regulations, particularly in the area of government procurement.¹⁷ Not surprisingly, a survey of public opinion in all countries of the region found a general agreement that corruption and the level of distrust in government institutions are progressively getting worse. These and other problems of urban management and planning will be discussed throughout the rest of this report, specifically in Chapters 4 through 9.

16. Akerlund, 2006.

17. Anderson and Gray, 2006.

3. The History of Urban Planning

This chapter surveys the complex history of urban planning in the region. First, it outlines planning traditions during ancient and medieval times. Second, it discusses the advent and spread of modern urban planning from the mid-to-late 19th through the 20th centuries with a special emphasis on the communist period. Lastly, it summarizes broad changes in urban planning since the end of communism in 1989. These broad changes are addressed in greater depth in the chapters to follow (4–10).

3.1. Pre-modern urban planning

The region is home to a countless number of ancient human settlements, some dating back to the Neolithic Age (4th- to-3rd millennium BC). Successive civilizations, such as the Urartian, the Achaemeian and the Kushan, left a complex web of settlements across Central Asia and the Caucuses, some with organic and some with planned patterns. Fortified ancient towns such as Teisbaini nearby today's Yerevan, Armenia, which dates back to the 8th century BC, had complex structures including central palaces, residences, warehouses and irrigation channels.¹ The Greek and Roman civilizations brought strong planning traditions between 500 BC and 500 AD and lay ground to many of today's largest cities in Central and Eastern Europe. Traces of Roman planning, including the remnants of gracious and orderly central plazas and sophisticated systems of aqueducts, can be found throughout the vast lands which were once occupied by the Empire. The centres of Belgrade, Serbia, and Sofia, Bulgaria, for example, have street patterns of verifiably Roman origin.² The Russian civilization, dating back to 9th-century Kiev Rus, played a key role in urbanizing parts of Eastern Europe and Asia from the 16th through the 19th centuries. Several other medieval and modern empires such as the Byzantine, the Mongol, the Ottoman, the German, the Swedish and the Austro-Hungarian left an equally important imprint on urbanism through the centuries and across the region.

Medieval towns had many common elements, regardless of the vast socio-cultural differences throughout the region. Typically, the heart of town comprised a central citadel (e.g., the Russian *kremlin*) and a market square flanked by the main religious buildings. Residential quarters were organized by their inhabitants' caste and occupational specialization and were surrounded by an outer layer of defensive walls. Most medieval towns grew organically from the centre outward. By the end of the medieval period, however, some state rulers had succeeded in re-organizing old towns to enable the easier movement of people, goods and military equipment. Russia's czars, for example, had managed to endow Moscow and a number of other Russian towns with a more or less orderly radio-concentric structure by the end of the 16th century.³ Some sovereigns of smaller medieval kingdoms also exhibited keen and early interest in town planning. Serbia's Emperor Dusan, for example, passed a set of laws dealing with building forms and urban spatial organization in 1349.⁴ In Central Europe (e.g., in today's Poland), the 13th and 14th centuries were marked by the massive settlements of new towns whose basic building block was the pre-planned, rectangular land plot.⁵ Select cities like the independent city-republic of Dubrovnik in today's Croatia took the

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1. Gutkind, 1972b: 164–182.
 2. Knox and McCarthy, 2005: 34–44.
 3. Gutkind, 1972b: 23–368; Shvidkovsky, 1975.
 4. Nedovic-Budic and Cavric, 2006.
 5. Gutkind, 1972a: 26–51.

lead in what may be called indigenous municipal planning regulation. Written first in 1272, Dubrovnik's urban code developed over several centuries to include a comprehensive set of rules pertaining to urban health, sewerage, expansion and spatial organization (street width, city block size and buildings height and bulk).⁶ Prosperous medieval cities in Central Asia also showed complex albeit sporadic town planning. Samarkand, Bukhara and Binkath (now Tashkent) in Uzbekistan, for instance, had marvellous central bazaars with domed trade galleries, lavish sub-urban gardens, and advanced networks of aqueducts.⁷

After the 1400s, lands that were dominated by the Ottoman Empire were influenced by Islamic planning, which enhanced the prominence of an irregular yet vital urban node housing the main public functions.⁸ In contrast, Central European urbanism was heavily influenced by the Italian Renaissance. Gothic castles gave way to stately mansions with arcades, courtyards and lavish gardens. Wider open spaces and elaborate plazas became the order of the day. A new dominant structure, City Hall, was added to the cityscape reflecting the ascent of municipal and citizenry power.⁹ Later, Baroque-era plans endowed many cities in Central Europe towns with an even more glamorous look.¹⁰

In the 1600 and 1700s, planning became an increasingly centralized activity through which rulers aspired to "modernize" their states and gain greater control over their subjects. There is no better example than St. Petersburg. Modelled after Amsterdam but built in a few short decades starting in 1703, Peter the Great's city is as much a testimony to Baroque grandeur as it is a monument to his despotic power and the human sacrifice it took to endow Russia with a capital worthy of its imperial status.¹¹ The example of St. Petersburg instigated feverish town planning activity across the Russian Empire. In fact, no less than 400 Russian towns had formal plans by the beginning of the 1800s.¹²

Yet, some informal planning efforts persisted well into the 19th century. In Russia, for example, there was an indigenous tradition of what may be best described as cooperative village planning. Peasants had devised a simple but clever system under which their households took turns in cultivating communally owned lands in order to ensure the equitable distribution of crop yields over time. Russian state authorities, who aspired to modernize their country in the Western image, viewed such planning and crop-sharing as backward and abolished the system in the 1860s after crushing the local resistance.¹³

3.2. Modern urban planning

3.2.1. Planning during the mid-to-late 19th century and early 20th century

The mid-to-late 19th century was a deeply transformative era across the region. Industrial capitalism set its roots in Austro-Hungarian and German Central Europe and began to penetrate the lands to the south and east. By the late 1800s, Russia's largest cities, Moscow and St. Petersburg, had become massive industrial centres attracting armies of workers,¹⁴ although industrial development in the Empire's vast Asian colonies lagged behind. New

6. Nedovic-Budic and Cavric, 2006.

7. Gutkind, 1972b: 398–412.

8. E.g., Nedovic-Budic and Cavric, 2006.

9. Gutkind, 1972a: 52–70 and 162–170; Hruska, 1975; Seculic-Gvozdanovic, 1975.

10. Gutkind, 1972a: 171–186.

11. Gutkind, 1972b: 368–395; Berman, 1982: 173–286; Ruble, 1990; McReynolds, 2007.

12. Shvidkovsky, 1975.

13. Scott, 1998: 37–44.

14. E.g., Shevyrev, 2003.

transport, building and military technologies obliterated the need for compact, walled cities and further propelled urbanization and inter-urban connectivity.

The era was increasingly dominated by the ideals of Western modernity. The level of scientific and industrial progress and administrative order in Western Europe was widely viewed as the golden standard of civilization. In planning, Western-type rationality and order were increasingly associated with the principles of uniformity and orderliness. Such were Austro-Hungarian planning doctrines, for instance, which mandated rectangular lots of uniform sizes as well as standard building sizes and shapes.¹⁵ The most influential Western models for monumental urban transformation were: 1) the mid-century rebuilding of the medieval structure of Paris with wide straight boulevards, vast parks and a modern sanitation system; and 2) the equally ambitious remodelling of Vienna which included the construction of its landmark Ring Road (the *Ringstrasse*)—a spectacular boulevard flanked by a series of neo-classic and neo-Gothic public buildings. Dozens of cities across Central and Eastern Europe including Budapest, Szeged, Cracow, Prague, Brno, Zagreb, Timisoara and Riga imported the Parisian and Viennese models enthusiastically¹⁶ in an effort to modernize and assert a Western civilizational identity. Native and non-western (e.g., Islamic) planning traditions were spurned.

As elsewhere in the world,¹⁷ 19th and early 20th century planning in the transitional countries focused solely on the physical layout of cities. The common term, which is still used across the region today, is *regulatory planning*. This means that planning came in the form of maps showing existing and future streets and infrastructure, the most important public buildings, and the basic building zones. Development control was exercised by adopting a set of broad regulations (hence the term “regulatory planning”) pertaining to urban spatial organization and the size and use of buildings.

By the 1920 and 1930s, most large cities in the region had adopted not only regulatory schemes but also General Plans (or Master Plans). Although these plans remained focused on physical layout, they were the result of more complex demographic, economic and circulation analysis and were more comprehensive. Often authored by foreign architects, these plans were also more visionary: they prescribed an ideal, “modern” urban end-state which was in conformity with the dominant Western ideas of the time.

Bucharest (Romania) and Sofia (Bulgaria), for instance, adopted their first General Plans in 1934. Both plans were influenced by ideas for monumental city restructuring (e.g., both proposed large civic centres) following the example of Paris. However, they were also influenced by two other influential planning paradigms: the Garden Cities movement, which aspired to resolve urban crowding and pollution by dispersing populations into small towns; and the Modern movement, which sought to radically restructure cities by increasing green space, improving transportation efficiency, imposing strict land-use zoning, and building mass housing. In line with these ideals, the plans of Bucharest and Sofia proposed urban dispersal and the building of Garden Cities. They also envisioned modern transportation networks and the use of functional zoning.¹⁸

15. Gutkind, 1972a: 389–400; Nedovic-Budic and Cavric, 2006.

16. Wiebenson, 2001; Sisa, 2001; Winkler, 2001; Batus, 2001; Vybiral, 2001; Zatloukal, 2001; Bojanic et al, 2001; Teleaga, 2001; Krastins, 2001.

17. Hall, 1988; Taylor, 1998; Watson, 2007.

18. Machedon et al, 1999; Hirt, 2007a.

3.2.2. Urban planning during communism

Communist governments gained control over the region in the period between Russia's October Revolution in 1917 and the victorious sweep of the Soviet armies across Eastern Europe in 1945. The concept of rational, scientific planning was one of the ideological pillars of communism. Such planning ostensibly guaranteed equitable and efficient distribution of resources and promised immunity from the periodic crises which plagued capitalist economies. Communist governments took planning to unprecedented heights. The economy was governed by five-year national economic plans. These plans, prepared by armies of technocrats and stamped by the state top legislative bodies, were the tip of a neatly hierarchical system of hundreds of smaller-scale economic plans, which translated the national planning goals into objectives and strategies for every republic, region, county, city, town, and factory. Of course, such extraordinary level of control was only possible because the communist state had first assumed ownership of most urban land, large real estate and production means.

The communist planning system was heavily centralized.¹⁹ Local, urban planning was subordinate to national economic planning and the local planners' chief role was to act as technical translators of the higher-level economic goals into the physical layout of cities.²⁰ For example, if state economic goals were to increase a certain type of industrial production, these goals would have typically been translated into specific mandates for the building of new factories in various cities and regions, which would in turn require that new workers be brought from the countryside. Local planners would receive specific instructions on expected industrial and population growth. Their job would be to plan and design the new factories, the new roads and bridges, and the new housing and services.²¹ Therein lay two key aspects of the communist system, whose legacy continues to plague contemporary planning across the transitional countries today. First, the system was so expert-driven and rigidly hierarchical that it left little room for any citizen participation. Second and related to the above, economic and physical planning were not fully integrated in the sense that there was little meaningful negotiation between the economic planners (who operated at the state level) and the physical planners (who operated at the local level). In fact, the former group held virtually all the power. Land-use planning projections were typically conducted at the local level for larger cities and at the national or regional level for small towns where local staff was scarce. Either way, however, local forecasts had to strictly comply with the economic objectives and projections adopted at the state level and with state spatial standards (e.g., standards for green space and housing per person). Thus, local planners "translated" the state-level objectives and projections into intricate physical designs. But they had no means of questioning or modifying the broad objectives formulated by state economic planners. This lack of integration was ingrained in and reproduced by the planning education system: economic planners received degrees from economic schools; physical planners from architecture schools. The two sides were not trained to actively interact (see also Chapter 10).

Since the communist state had a monopoly over land and production means, communist planners had immense powers to control urban development. Captive of a big-is-beautiful mentality, they viewed territorial conquest as a sign of communism's triumph. Large numbers of new settlements were erected on virgin territory throughout the vast Soviet steppes and well into the least hospitable lands of the Russian far north.²² A strong majority of Kazakh

19. Andrusz, 1984; Fomin, 1989.

20. Maier, 1998; Thomas, 1998; Hirt, 2005.

21. Iyer, 2003; Hirt, 2005.

22. Hill and Gaddy, 2003.

cities, for example, including the second largest city of Karagandy, were in fact founded during the Soviet period.²³

Planners of the early Soviet period made important contributions to planning theory and practice. The school advocating the so-called linear city model (i.e., a model of urban forms located in thin strips along mass transit corridors), for instance, comprised an important arm of the Garden Cities movement.²⁴ Moscow's ambitious plan from 1935 was a creative interpretation of the dominant international ideals of the time.²⁵ Most planning innovation, however, was stifled during Stalin's reign. Stalin favoured the construction of giant public places which served as demonstrations of unlimited political power.²⁶ Almost every major city in the region from Almaty to Warsaw, from Tbilisi to Tashkent, from Minsk to Moscow underwent massive remodelling to include magnificent parade plazas and boulevards which dwarfed any civic spaces built in the pre-communist era.²⁷ Upon Stalin's wishes, the dominant style of these ceremonial spaces was neo-classicism with occasional neo-Gothic and nationalist revival references. The style was referred to as "*socialist realism*," but in fact it shared many elements with Western neo-classicism and the principles of monumental urban restructuring employed in Paris and Vienna. Arguably, the last gasp of this approach was exhibited in 1980's Bucharest, where Romania's dictator Ceausescu built a series of Baroque-style vistas leading to the world's second largest public building, the People's Palace—Ceausescu's crown jewel.²⁸

After Stalin's death, most communist regimes abandoned "socialist realism" and embraced the Modernist ideals of industrialized and standardized architectural technology as a necessary prerequisite of efficiency and economies of scale. Coupled with the communist ideal of egalitarianism, these ideals underpinned the grandest spatial legacy of communist regimes, the vast housing districts, which were built between the 1960 and the 1980s and today house millions of people in the region.²⁹ These districts comprise large residential towers made of pre-fabricated panels. With their vast open parks, rigidly pre-planned and functionally segregated spaces, and Spartan architecture, these districts may well represent the culmination of the Modern movement.

3.3. Contemporary (post-communist) urban planning

The end of communism had major repercussions for planning. As a rule, post-communist governments made a sharp turn to the political right (see also Chapter 1.6). Neo-liberal ideas for the superiority of an unbridled *laissez-faire* system led not only to the immediate abolition of national economic planning but also to a broad **legitimacy crisis of planning** *per se* as some came to view it as a rusty quasi-communist activity.³⁰

The socio-economic context within which urban planning operates was also radically reformed. As state-owned assets—urban land, real estate (including housing) and means of production—were privatized, urban development became the pre-occupied of multiple parties: not just the once all-powerful public authorities, but also private owners, builders, developers,

23. Pavlov and Yarmouhamedov, 1970.

24. Kamenov, 1983.

25. Hall, 1988: 174–202; Bittner, 1998.

26. Crowley and Reid, 2002.

27. E.g., Kvirkeveli and Mgaloblishvili 1986; Kvirkevelia, 1984; Anikin, 1986.

28. Cavalkanti, 1997.

29. E.g., Di Maio, 1974; Grava, 1993; Lizon, 1996.

30. E.g., Stanilov, 2007c, 2007d; Tsenkova and Nedovic-Budic 2006; Nedovic-Budic, 2001.

citizens, non-profit organizations and other interest groups. Regretfully, institutional reforms to adjust planning to the new context lagged behind throughout the 1990s (see Chapter 4).³¹

The new societal context and the sharp economic downturn during the 1990s led to severe urban challenges, including uncontrolled sprawl, failing infrastructure, loss of natural resources and cultural heritage, and socio-spatial segregation (as described in Chapters 1, 2, 6 and 7). These challenges, however, ultimately highlighted the need for a reinvigorated urban planning. Post-2000, planning partially re-established itself as an important societal function across the region. Recent positive developments include the establishment of a clearer institutional framework for planning, increased public involvement in the planning process and a new planning emphasis on sustainable development, as well as the emergence of several new forms of planning including strategic and environmental planning. All these developments will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

31. E.g., Hirt, 2005; Iyer, 2003.

4. Institutional and Regulatory Framework of Urban Planning

This chapter discusses the legal and institutional framework of planning in the transitional countries. First, it briefly reviews the communist tradition, which was characterized by strong vertical integration and the pre-eminence of state economic plans (i.e., local plans were so strictly subordinate to national plans that local initiative was non-existent). Second, it presents recent institutional developments, especially the process of institutional de-centralization. Next, it highlights institutional challenges, such as the legitimacy crisis in planning and the persistent weakness of planning regulation. The chapter concludes with recent institutional developments and policy suggestions.

4.1. The institutional and regulatory legacy of the communist period

As already noted, economic planning across all industrial sectors, at the national and regional scales (the latter was referred to as “territorial planning”), was a key function of the communist state. The system was top-down with a very high degree of vertical integration. Only Yugoslavia had a partially decentralized system following reforms in the 1960s, under which planning became the prerogative of the individual republics.¹

The basic instrument of local planning was the Master (or General) Plan, which usually covered a 20-year time span. This plan was mandated by law and was subordinate to national goals and objectives. To achieve national goals for fast economic growth and social equity, cities were typically expected to expand manufacturing and ensure decent housing conditions for all their residents. In this sense, local planning was but a mechanism for the physical implementation of state goals. It followed strict, state-mandated formulas for industry, housing, green space and services calculated per the “average human unit.”² The local Master Plans outlined the major local infrastructure projects too but, again, in compliance with the priorities set by the all-powerful central state agencies. In addition to the citywide Master Plan, municipalities had a multitude of small-scale (e.g., neighbourhood or city-block) regulatory plans, which outlined the specific rules of land use and building mass, function and density. These plans were often supplemented by even more detailed design plans and studies for particular city blocks.

In short then, there were two basic instruments of municipal planning—the Master Plan and the set of detailed regulatory plans. Both continue to be used widely across the region today. These instruments are embedded into a civil law system—the system prevalent also in continental Europe.³ Under this system, plans provide great detail as to what types of uses and forms may be built in a particular city zone or block, and guarantee the right to build if compliance with the legal requirements is achieved. The communist local planning system, however, functioned differently than that in Western Europe in at least three important ways:

- As earlier said, the local system was strictly subordinated to the state system.

1. Peterlin and McKenzie, 2007.

2. Rubenstein and Unger, 1992; Shove and Anderson, 1997; Alden et al, 1998; Thomas, 1998; Nedovic-Budic and Cavric, 2006; Pallagst and Mercier, 2007.

3. The civil-law system is used in the United States as well, although it differs from the one prevailing in continental Europe in many important ways (e.g., Hirt, 2007b). The civil-law system is principally different than the English common-law system, under which planners have greater discretion in making decisions and case precedent plays greater role than detailed legal rules.

- Because public authorities owned most urban land and had a virtual monopoly over urban development, the concept that a private owner has a guaranteed right to build if s/he complies with a regulatory plan was hardly applicable—indeed, little private development occurred. Since public bodies owned most urban land and had virtual monopoly over urban growth, the regulatory plans were immune from the “whims” of private parties and served as blueprints for future state construction projects. This allowed the plans to be unusually specific: e.g., a regulatory plan would not just designate a set of future buildings as commercial; it would label them as bakeries or grocery stores and show their footprints in detail.
- In the areas where private building did occur (e.g., rural areas or areas for secondary homes around major cities), the system functioned at least in theory as the civil law system elsewhere; i.e., if an owner complied with the regulations, s/he had a guaranteed right to build. In practice, however, less-than-watchful authorities sometimes let violations go on—whether because of lack of staff and resources to monitor compliance with the regulations or because, as it was common under the communist system, the owner had good connections at the right high places and could secure a tacit approval for his/hers private plans.

4.2. Factors underpinning recent institutional developments

Three main legal and institutional factors transformed planning after the end of communism. First, as Chapters 1.6 and 3.3 noted, the post-communist era was marked by a massive transfer of state resources into private hands. The transfer was prompted by new laws which elevated the sanctity of private property and mandated the privatization of urban land, real estate and production means. Although the privatization process varied in speed from country to country, it was carried out throughout the region with remarkable determination. The new laws sharply reduced the power of public institutions to control urban development, although they opened new doors for private parties—owners, builders, developers and other interested parties—to participate in city-building.

The second factor was the process of institutional de-centralization (see also Chapter 2.4). Post-communist states first terminated the practice of national economic planning altogether and then transferred virtually all planning powers to local institutions. This transfer was mandated via new laws of municipal self-governance. However, local authorities had little expertise (and thus, limited staff) to engage in pro-active planning since it was never within their purview during communism. Furthermore, typically municipalities continued to depend heavily on the state for their budgets and thus ended up in a rather peculiar position: they had to plan but had no funds to carry the plans through.⁴

The third factor was that legal reforms regarding spatial planning were a rather low priority and thus lagged behind. This was partially because the serious economic challenges of the early 1990s took precedence over almost all other issues, and partially because ascending neo-liberal governments had little appreciation of planning *per se*, as Chapter 1.6 mentioned.⁵ Thus, urban planning laws from the early 1990s were often of a rather dubious quality and included old and new provisions which were sometimes in direct contradiction. A new generation of more coherent planning laws, which better reflected new free-market realities, did not come about until the second half of the 1990s. Furthermore, many cities continued to operate under their old master plans well until the new millennium. By that time,

4. Stanilov, 2007c, 2007d.

5. E.g., Iyer, 2003.

these plans were deemed as completely obsolete and were thus ignored. For instance, the last socialist master plan of Sofia, Bulgaria had designated wide land strips around the city's narrow Ring Road for future expansion. But during the 1990s these vacant strips were quickly overtaken by quasi-legal private developments (many of which were legalized later under dubious conditions), thus creating major obstacles for the road-widening project once the city finally decided to implement it.

4.3. Institutional challenges

The above-listed institutional factors explain why post-communist planning has been generally weak, passive and reactive. A few examples from the Balkans prove the point.

In Albania, even basic planning functions were clouded by uncertainty during the 1990s. It was not clear which regulatory plans were valid and who issues development permits. Master-planning was marred by lack of expertise in economic analysis, lack of national environmental and infrastructure standards, and major problems with the legal status of urban land. Coupled with the scarcity of funds and staff, as well as the traditionally complicated (and often corrupt) path to obtaining building permits, these factors resulted into a large amount of “illegal” construction in the Albanian capital of Tirana (about 25 per cent of all new housing).⁶ A similar story developed in the Serbian capital of Belgrade, where in 1997 about 50 per cent of all housing production was “illegal” and “sub-standard.” Since such a massive of quantity of housing could be neither ignored nor demolished without causing major social upheaval, the new master plan of Belgrade has undertaken a *post-factum* legalization of the “illegal” units.⁷ It should be noted that, ironically, the weakness of planning does not yield only negative impacts, particularly from a social equity viewpoint. In cities such as Belgrade (which has absorbed about 150,000 ethnic Serb refugees expelled from Croatia and Kosovo) and Tirana (where rural-to-urban migration and poverty are rampant) had citizens—especially those of modest means—waited for planning to adjust its institutional tools, most of the “sub-standard” units would not have been built and many people would have likely been left in even worse housing conditions. Bulgarian authorities seem to have taken a similar *post-factum* legalization approach, as the above-cited example of the Ring Road attests. One expert from Sofia described the situation succinctly: “*our city grows on auto-pilot.*” While functioning on “auto-pilot,” the capital city lost about 15 per cent of its public green spaces in just 15 years, as they were taken over by private developments legalized later.⁸

An unfortunate situation like that in Sofia often results from under-the-table deals between private builders and local officials. As earlier noted, corruption did exist under communism, although to a lesser extent. Ironically, the shady transactions occur within the framework of the civil-law planning system which is supposed to yield a high degree of certainty and legality via requiring compliance with detailed planning provisions—this in fact is one of system's key benefits. In the chaotic 1990s, however, the system clearly failed—master and regulatory plans were routinely sidestepped and new amendments granted at the whim of local officials. Conflicts of interest were typically resolved in favour of wealthy private parties with little concern of long-term public interest. In theory, such conflicts must be handled through the judicial system (in most countries, citizens have the right to appeal all levels of plans and the way they are implemented). Yet, a corrupt-free, independent judiciary is yet to be established in many nations in the region.

6. Nientied, 1998.

7. Zegarac, 1999; Vujosevic and Nedovic-Budic, 2006; Vujovic and Petrovic, 2007.

8. Hirt and Kovachev, 2006

Although institutional weakness has been typical of current planning, there are exceptions in nations and cities where government authority remains strong and money abundant. In Moscow, for example, one may perhaps assume that weak municipal institutions have allowed the demolition of many historic buildings and the vanishing of the greenbelts around the city (see also Chapter 6.2). However, the story may be quite the opposite. A powerful and awash in cash municipal government led by popular Mayor Lujkov, has in fact wilfully allowed such events to occur in pursuit of an aggressive economic agenda. So powerful has been the role of the municipal government investing in city-building and in selecting sites, projects and developers that some scholars claim that the city still operates under the old, communist-era paradigm of “state-led urbanism.”⁹ An even more striking example comes from Kazakhstan. This oil-rich nation is run by an ambitious and, some say, authoritarian regime. The Kazakh government recently achieved a feat, which no other government in the region dared to dream of in recent history: it built a new state capital, perhaps the 21st-century version of St. Petersburg or Brazil’s celebrated capital Brasilia. The new capital is Astana—a city of glittering towers and wide boulevards located deep into the Kazakh hinterlands. It is currently under construction following a plan by star Japanese architect K. Kurokawa.¹⁰

Notwithstanding the Russian and Kazakh cases, planning across the transitional countries has generally taken the back-seat. It permits *ad hoc* development and legally stamps it later. This problematic situation has been aggravated by poor institutional coordination. Vertical integration between state ministries and local agencies has been poor because of the lack, in many cases, of intermediate, regional planning institutions. Horizontal coordination between adjacent locales and between agencies occupying similar levels in the government hierarchy (i.e., ministries) has been far from perfect.¹¹ Cases of successful integrated—economic, social, ecological and physical—planning are relatively rare. And, the level of plan implementation—like that of law enforcement generally—has been low, as shall also be discussed in Chapter 9.¹² Furthermore, in some countries, basic planning-related as well as environmental legislation is yet to be updated. Reportedly, Azerbaijan’s spatial planning laws have hardly changed since Soviet times and the current master plan of its capital Baku is still from 1984. The same applies to environmental laws in Armenia.¹³

4.4. Institutional progress and recent developments

Since 2000, however, planning institutions have gradually strengthened as mounting urban problems resulting from the *lack* of planning have become more obvious.¹⁴ As Table 2 shows, planning has partially regained its professional legitimacy. A flurry of master-planning activity occurred around the year 2000 (e.g., about 200 new plans were adopted in Russia by that year; for a list of new master plans in capital cities, see Table 3).¹⁵ New planning instruments were also developed, as it will be further discussed.

The next two tables (Tables 4 and 5) summarize the current legal and institutional framework of planning in select countries. Recent national planning acts have established a better defined hierarchy of responsibilities between the various institutional levels. Typically, planning laws mandate a generalized national planning scheme, as well as regional planning

9. Boentje and Blinnikov, 2007; Pagonis and Thornley, 2000.

10. *International Competition for the Master Plan and Design of Astana, Kazakhstan*, undated.

11. E.g., Elliott and Udovč, 2005; also Stanilov, 2007c; Tsenkova, 2007b.

12. EAUE, 2003.

13. Khanlou, 1998; Sayadan and Moreno-Sanchez, 2006.

14. Ruoppila, 2007; Stanilov, 2007d.

15. Maier, 1994, 1998; Hirt, 2005; Golubchikov, 2004; Ruoppila, 2007.

Table 2. Changing role of planning and planning institutions in the transitional period

Time period	Political climate	Implications for the concept of planning & planning legislation	Implications for the planning profession
Short-term (early 1990s)	Re-establish local government.	Misunderstanding of the concept of planning; Rejection of existing planning documents.	Planners seem to be a vanishing profession.
Medium-term (mid & late 1990s)	Local governments find their place within the system of government.	Transitory planning legislation; increased need for planning to coordinate activities.	Renewed need for planners; Role of planner unclear: sometimes expected to solve problems and sometimes expected to plan ahead.
Long-term (post-2000)	Professionalization of administration of local governments; Regained status of public service; More dynamic power balance between the central and the local governments.	New concept of integrated “spatial” planning including environmental, physical and social planning; Decentralized planning as a means of consensus-building in communities.	New concept of planner as mediator, facilitator and communicator; Establish a socially accepted planning profession with its institutional autonomy; Re-establish public esteem for planners as respected professionals.

Source: Maier, 1994, p. 265, modified by the authors.

documents (although in Poland, for example, such explicit mandate is absent), in addition to the municipal plans. At the municipal level, planning continues to rely primarily on the traditional master plan and detailed regulatory plans. In some states, such as Latvia and Estonia, there is clear mandate for horizontal coordination; i.e., all master plans must be in concordance with those of neighbouring locales. However, such achievements are far from universal. Furthermore, in some countries the planning system remains surprisingly centralized. For example, in Belarus—a nation sometimes criticized for not being fully democratic—regional and even municipal plans may be prepared by a central, national body, the Institute for Regional and Urban Planning, rather than by the local authorities (i.e., this practice seems to resemble Soviet-style planning).

Two important post-communist additions to the repertoire of plans have recently developed. The first is strategic spatial planning. Like master plans, strategic plans have a citywide focus. However, unlike master plans, strategic plans are typically based on a shorter time-span (about 15 years; only Budapest’s strategic plan targets a 30–40-year period). They are less focused on ostensibly comprehensive analysis and physical planning solutions. Instead, they aim to resolve the set of most pressing urban problems by outlining specific, tangible strategies which can be implemented via a combination of spatial and financial means. Many major cities in the region, from the Balkans to the Baltics, have by now adopted such plans in addition to their traditional master plans (see Table 3). Often funded by international organizations, these plans have been widely praised for proposing sensible strategies for solving key urban issues (“typical” issues include improving city competitiveness in the context of globalization, fostering economic growth, promoting municipal financial reform, and improving quality of life via modernizing housing and infrastructure). Some cities have achieved an enviable level of citizen participation in strategic planning (see also Chapter 5).

Table 3. Master plans and strategic plans in state capitals for which information was available

Country	State capital	Year of master plan	Year of strategic plan
Albania	Tirana		2002
Armenia	Yerevan	2006	
Azerbaijan	Baku	1984 (expected 2008)	
Belarus	Minsk	1997 (revised 2002)	
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Sarajevo	1990	
Bulgaria	Sofia	2007	2003
Croatia	Zagreb	2003	2000
Czech Republic	Prague	1999	2000
Estonia	Tallinn	2001	
Georgia	Tbilisi	1975	
Hungary	Budapest	1993 (revised 1998)	2003
Kazakhstan	Astana	2001	
Kyrgyzstan	Bishkek	1986	
Latvia	Riga	1995 (revised 2005)	2005
Lithuania	Vilnius	1998	2002
Macedonia	Skopje		
Moldova	Chisinau	1996 (revised 2006)	
Montenegro	Podgorica		
Poland	Warsaw	2000	
Romania	Bucharest	2000	
Russia	Moscow	1999 (revised 2006)	
Serbia	Belgrade	2003	
Slovakia	Bratislava	1993 (revised 2000)	1999
Slovenia	Ljubljana	2002	
Tajikistan	Dushanbe		
Turkmenistan	Ashgabat		
Ukraine	Kiev	2002	
Uzbekistan	Tashkent		

Sources: Stanilov, 2007d; Tsenkova, 2007b; and individual city websites.

The Latvian capital of Riga, for example, initiated an inclusive process, “I do Riga,” during which surveys were mailed to every urban household, generating about 12,000 citizen opinions in just three weeks. Riga’s planners also initiated dozens of open forums for citizens, local businesses and experts, which produced additional 5,000 written submissions.¹⁶ Despite the many promises of strategic planning, however, it should be noted that the basic urban planning laws (see Tables 4 and 5) do not legally mandate that a city produce a strategic plan. Thus, plans are produced on a voluntary basis, often without a clear link between the master and the strategic plans. For example, the strategic and the master plan of Sofia were prepared

16. Maier, 2000; Tsenkova, 2007a, 2007b.

Table 4. Current institutional framework for planning in select countries

Country	National legal and institutional framework for planning	
	Main national institution in charge of planning	Basic urban (spatial) planning law and other planning-related legislation
Belarus	Ministry of Architecture and Construction	Law on the Fundamentals of Architecture and Town Planning Activities; Also, Building Normative Act.
Bulgaria	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works	Spatial Planning Act; Also, Law of Self-government, Administrative and Territorial Organization Act, and Building Regulations and Land-use Codes.
Estonia	Ministry of the Environment	Planning and Building Act; Also, Building Law.
Latvia	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development	Law on Spatial Development Planning; Also, Building Regulations, Building Act, Regulations on Physical Plans, and Act on the Municipal Governments.
Lithuania	Ministry of the Environment	Law on Territorial Planning; Also, Code on Territorial Planning and Building Supervision, and Law on Assessment of Impact of Planned Economic Activity on Nature.
Poland	Housing and Urban Development Office	Physical Development Act; Also, Environmental Protection and Management Act, and Building and Land-use Codes.
Russia	Ministry for Regional Development	Urban Development Act; Also, Law on Architectural Activity, Law on Ecological Assessment, and Building, Housing and Land Codes.

Sources: *Committee on Spatial Development in the Baltic Sea region (undated)* and *National Centre for Regional Development (undated)*.

a few years apart. Although there is certainly some thematic similarity (e.g., both address the issue of modernizing the communist-era housing estates—a problem so obviously critical for the Bulgarian capital that no plan could possibly omit it), the preparation of the two documents was led by two different teams of experts. In fact, the master plan, which was adopted a few years later, does not refer to its predecessor, the strategic plan, directly. In this sense, strategic and master plans end up as parallel, rather than connected, documents. However, only master plans have the force of law (and thus, form the key basis of major land-use and infrastructure decisions, as well as regulatory planning). Thus, strategic plans may end up as wishful urban visions. There are some exceptions. In Riga, the strategic plan functions as the key “umbrella” document which provides conceptual guidance for other planning and regulatory documents.¹⁷ However, the pre-eminent role of the plan is a policy method chosen at the discretion of Riga’s City Council, rather than a policy approach mandated by the national legislative framework of planning.

The second new type of planning is regional development planning. Regional plans are prepared by regional layers of government created in the new member states of the European Union.¹⁸ They are economic development plans necessary to direct the use of European Union structural funds, and do not necessarily have a spatial component. There is no clear assessment of how well regional plans link to local master or strategic plans.¹⁹

17. Tsenkova, 2007b.

18. E.g., Myant and Smith, 2006.

19. Strategic plans may act as link between regional development plans and master plans; Tsenkova, 2007b.

Table 5. Levels of planning mandated by law in select countries

Country	Levels of planning			
	National plan	Regional/county plans	Municipal (urban) plans	Detailed regulatory plans
Belarus	National Comprehensive Spatial Organization Scheme prepared by the Institute for Regional and Urban Planning.	Regional Plans prepared by the Institute for Regional and Urban Planning.	Plans prepared by the Institute for Regional and Urban Planning or the Regional Institutes for Civil Engineering; adopted by Municipal Executive Committees.	Plans including: rules for spatial and functional organization, land-use, infrastructure, building, resource use and green systems.
Bulgaria	National Integrated Development Scheme prepared by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works.	Regional Development Schemes prepared by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works.	Plans prepared by municipal planning departments and adopted by Municipal Councils.	Plans including: rules for land division, land-use and building regimes; grading plans; plans for infrastructure, water supply, resource use and green systems.
Estonia	National Planning Policy Statement prepared by the Ministry of the Environment.	Regional Plans prepared by Office of the County Governor.	Plans prepared by the municipal planning departments and adopted by the Municipal Councils; must be approved by the councils of neighbouring locales.	Plans including: rules of land division, land use, building and infrastructure, green systems, forests, resource use and urban design guidelines.
Latvia	National Plan prepared by Centre of Spatial Development.	Regional Plans prepared by Regional Municipal Governments; Mandatory District Plans.	Plans prepared by the municipal planning departments and adopted by Municipal Councils; must be coordinated with the councils of neighbouring locales.	Plans including: rules of land division, land use and building, infrastructure, green systems, forests, resource use, and urban design guidelines.
Lithuania	National Plan prepared by the Ministry of Environment.	Regional Plans prepared by the Office of the County Governor.	Plans prepared by municipal planning dept. and adopted by the Municipal Councils.	Plans including: rules of building, lot division, allocation of land for public uses, plan for use of resources, land uses, building regime, forests and design guidelines.
Poland	“Assumed” Mandatory National Plan prepared by the Centre for Strategic Studies.	“Assumed” Mandatory Regional Plans prepared by planning departments at Regional Assemblies.	Plans prepared by municipal planning departments and adopted by Municipal Councils.	Plans including: land use allocations, plans for infrastructure, green systems, resource use and building/design rules.
Russia	National Planning Guidelines.	Territorial Comprehensive Schemes and District Schemes.	Plans prepared by Municipal planning dept. and adopted by the Municipal Council.	Map with zoning districts, plans for urban land use, development/building and infrastructure rules.

Note: All plans are mandatory, except national and regional plans in Poland which are considered implicitly mandatory.

Sources: *Committee on Spatial Development in the Baltic Sea region (undated)* and *National Centre for Regional Development (undated)*.

In some countries, regional development agencies are an important recent institutional innovation. In the Czech Republic, the Regional Development Agencies were created in the early 1990s (that is, well before the regional authorities required by the European Union). These agencies include public and private members and serve as a venue for public-private negotiation and partnership in planning and development.²⁰ This is a welcome example in a region where the primary planning arena continues to be the formal hearing and the input of private parties in plan implementation comes too often in the form of either ignoring the plan or bribing the planning officials. There have also been cases of relatively successful trans-national regional planning. Slovenia's regional institutions, for instance, have partnered with dozens of partners in nearby countries via the INTERREG programs of the European Union. Slovenian planning institutions also contributed to the writing of the European Spatial Development Perspective in 1998–1999, although the country did not formally enter the European Union until five years later.²¹

4.5. Conclusions and policy recommendations

It is clear that urban planning in the transitional countries was in a crisis through most of the 1990s due to a mix of economic, institutional and ideological reasons. It is also clear that it has lately regained some of its legitimacy since pressing urban problems resulting from planning's retreat have become increasingly apparent. Based on these experiences, the following recommendations for further legal and institutional reform are appropriate. First, national spatial planning laws must be streamlined to clarify the roles of different institutional levels. At present, national governments develop broad policy documents which may lack clear spatial implications, whereas most planning occurs locally. Regional planning institutions must be supported to become an effective intermediate level. Mechanisms must be set up to ensure the principle of subsidiarity of plans. It is clear that the Soviet top-down system did not work. But it is also clear that better coordination between the different scales of planning—national, regional, and local—must be achieved. Countries like Germany and the Netherlands have fairly well established mechanisms of multi-level coordination and may serve as models. Second, horizontal integration in planning must be strengthened; i.e., by setting up legal mandates that require that local plans be prepared after consultations with neighbouring locales. Currently, few countries (e.g., Latvia and Estonia) have such laws. Yet, neither pollution nor poverty recognizes municipal boundaries. Third, governments should invest into alternatives to master-planning. Traditional, comprehensive master-planning has many useful functions but many weaknesses as well. Other tools such as strategic planning, issue-focused planning (e.g., planning for heritage preservation or environmental protection) and urban redevelopment programmes deserve greater attention. Further, the process of obtaining development permits according to compliance with a regulatory plan must be streamlined. Whereas new master plans have been widely adopted, hundreds of regulatory plans have not been redrawn and continue to be widely ignored. Amendments and changes occur on an *ad hoc* basis. Not only should regulatory plans be updated, but the path to obtain development permits should be clarified. Finally, strengthening cross-national exchange of ideas on best institutional practices may provide many new ideas.

20. McMaster, 2006.

21. Peterlin and McKenzie, 2007.

5. The Planning Process

This chapter reviews the extent to which meaningful public participation in planning occurs across the transitional countries. It first points to the weak participatory traditions during communism. Second, it presents current laws pertinent to participation in planning, discusses how participation occurs in practice, and outlines the factors which impede participatory processes. The chapter concludes with select success stories and brief policy suggestions.

5.1. Planning process under communism

Citizen participation was never part of the planning process during communism. As already noted, state and regional economic plans were made by political elites which, as communist theory claimed, represented the interests of all citizens. The political goals were then translated into urban spatial projects by trained experts—architects, planners and engineers—who claimed privileged understanding of their subject. This approach was perhaps more elitist than conventional practice in Western Europe and North America during the second half of the 20th century. But differences were more a matter of extent rather than principle: under both the capitalist and the communist systems, urban planning was traditionally deemed a sophisticated scientific activity of which common citizens had little understanding.¹

On paper, some participation was a legal requirement in most communist countries (especially in Yugoslavia).² In reality, however, it was a formality in the form of pseudo-open public hearings, which attracted mostly technocratic elites, and ceremonial exhibitions during which the public was *allowed* to see the already-made master plans.

The closed-in process was partially challenged during the 1980s. Burgeoning environmental movements such as Green Future in Hungary and the Socio-Ecological Union in the Soviet Union, for example, were able to stop specific state-planned construction projects through inspiring citizen opposition.³ But such successful cases were isolated and the overall lack of transparency in planning was a key factor in the professional legitimacy crisis which was discussed in Chapter 4.⁴

5.2. Current laws and practices

5.2.1. Legal requirements and their implementation

Since 1989, most transitional states have made notable steps toward democratization. This trend is well reflected into new legislation mandating participation in planning and other law-making activities. In practice, however, many obstacles to participation remain.

It is useful to begin the discussion on public participation in planning in the context of broader democratization trends. As illustrated in Table 6, these trends have been highly uneven across the region. Not surprisingly, countries which have stronger civil societies and have recently made more concerted efforts toward developing open institutions, such as the Baltic states, have also made greater progress in fostering public participation.

1. Scott, 1998.

2. Golobic and Marusic, 2007.

3. Pickvance, 1997.

4. Nedovic-Budic, 2001; Iyer, 2003; Hirt, 2005.

Table 6. Democracy Scores for 2006 according to Freedom House. The scores are based on a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 representing the highest score in democratic progress and 7 the lowest

Country	Civil society score	Local democratic governance score	Overall democracy score
Albania	3.00	2.75	3.82
Armenia	3.50	5.50	5.21
Azerbaijan	5.25	6.00	6.00
Belarus	6.50	6.50	6.68
Bosnia & Herzegovina	3.50	4.75	4.04
Bulgaria	2.50	3.00	2.89
Croatia	2.75	3.75	3.75
Czech Republic	1.50	1.75	2.25
Estonia	2.00	2.50	1.96
Georgia	3.50	5.50	4.68
Hungary	1.50	2.25	2.14
Kazakhstan	5.75	6.25	6.39
Kyrgyzstan	4.50	6.25	5.68
Latvia	1.75	2.50	2.07
Lithuania	1.75	2.50	2.29
Macedonia	3.25	3.75	3.82
Moldova	3.75	5.75	4.96
Montenegro	3.00	4.50	3.93
Poland	1.50	2.25	2.36
Romania	2.25	3.00	3.29
Russia	5.25	5.75	5.86
Serbia	2.75	3.75	3.68
Slovakia	1.50	2.00	2.14
Slovenia	2.00	1.50	1.82
Tajikistan	5.00	5.75	5.96
Turkmenistan	7.00	7.00	6.96
Ukraine	2.75	4.75	4.25
Uzbekistan	7.00	7.00	6.82

Note: The scores are calculated by Freedom House 2007, are not universally acceptable, do not necessarily represent the views of the report's authors and should be used only as a guide.

As part of the overall democratization trend, planning legislation across the region has been upgraded to mandate public participation in ways much more resolute than during the communist period. Participatory mandates stem not only from specific spatial planning laws but also from new constitutional provisions guaranteeing the right to access information and petition the government, and the rights for free expression, association and assembly, as well as from some other broad laws pertaining to participation in law-making. Table 7 illustrates the state of legal mandates and practices in select countries. Although the new laws are

progressive (corresponding laws in select “developed” democracies in Western Europe are not much different),⁵ they only imply the bare minimum of participation. Typical legal provisions require that the public be *acquainted* with draft plans via the time-tested means of public announcements at the onset of the planning process, public exhibitions, and a couple of public hearings.

The classic “ladder” of public participation created by Arnstein is a useful conceptual tool here. In this “ladder,” participation comes in five steps: 1) citizens are excluded from planning altogether—this is the case of countries ruled by dictatorship), 2) citizens are constituents (i.e., they participate only insofar as they freely vote); 3) citizens are informed of plan-making (e.g., in public displays and hearings); 4) citizens are consultants (i.e., they are directly involved in plan-making via, say, surveys, workshops, charettes, etc.); and 5) citizen are decision-makers (i.e., not only do citizens actively draft plans but they evaluate and select the final plan versions).⁶ Current legislation seems to place the citizenry in-between levels 2 and 3 of the “ladder”—citizens are informed of planning progress and the decisions are made *for* them by their elected representatives.

Regretfully, even exceeding the minimum legal requirements does not ensure meaningful public participation. An in-depth study of the preparation of the new master plan of Sofia, for example, found that the municipal authorities far exceeded the scarce standards of Bulgarian law by conducting months-long displays of draft plans and no less than seventeen open hearings. Yet, interviewed planners perceived citizen participation as unnecessary and cumbersome, believed that wide *professional* participation is a good substitute for broad citizen participation, could not recall a single idea that came from the public discussions, and assessed the influence of citizens on the process as nil. Thus, despite citizens’ improved access to government decision-making, the recent master-planning process in Sofia—much like the one during communism—ensured only token public participation.⁷ Other studies imply similar results. A critical evaluation of planning in the Czech Republic—a country often hailed for its democratic practices—exposed similar paternalistic attitudes toward the public on behalf of local governments. These attitudes were manifested in attempts to avoid the difficulties of participation by hiring public-relations-type “participation experts” who could soothe down the citizens’ concerns, or by pre-selecting which government-friendly non-profit organizations to *invite* to the hearings.⁸ Cases in Poland showed that local political culture remains authoritarian and citizens are rarely able to impact decision-making.⁹ These factors have also been identified as obstacles to participation in the post-Soviet states.¹⁰ In the relatively authoritarian Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, participation occurs mostly via government-approved non-profit organizations.¹¹

5.2.2. Factors impeding public participation

Although a full-fledged account of the factors hampering meaningful public participation is well beyond the scope of this paper, certain cultural, economic and institutional impediments must be at least acknowledged. Some scholars point to cultural inertia within the planning profession as an important cause. In this interpretation, the soul-searching professional debate that led to the shift from expert-driven to more participatory planning in other parts of the

5. See Committee on Spatial Development in the Baltic Sea region, undated.

6. Arnstein, 1969.

7. Hirt, 2005.

8. Maier, 2001.

9. Graham, 2001; Tworzecki, 2008.

10. Stec, 1997; Babajanian, 2005.

11. Farmer and Farmer, 2001.

world¹² has not fully occurred in the transitional countries.¹³ Furthermore, the professional training of planners in the region as either architects or engineers may be another key explanatory factor. This type training—as opposed to training grounded in the social sciences—continues to frame a mindset subscribing to the idea that solving urban issues requires technical but no social expertise.¹⁴

Another important factor is the mere persistence of master-planning. Among its many proven drawbacks,¹⁵ master-planning with its pursuit of an idealized long-term future at an all-encompassing citywide scale may seem irrelevant to most citizens. This is perhaps one reason why Sofia's master-planning process attracted limited public interest. In contrast, environmental impact hearings of smaller-scale plans appear to generate more active citizen involvement because of their greater potential for immediate impact.¹⁶ Development plans for specific construction projects also routinely attract active citizen input. For example, attempts to build a high-rise business centre on a much cherished central park in Sofia were prevented through citizen protest.¹⁷ Similarly, when local authorities withdrew vital information regarding specific plans for a neighbourhood in the Chisinau (Moldova), citizens successfully mobilized to hamper the plan's execution.¹⁸

A crucial precondition for participatory planning is a strong civil society. The concept of civil society is complex and highly uneven across the globe.¹⁹ In the transitional countries, civil society is often measured by the presence of powerful (often Western-funded) non-governmental groups. However, given the tendency of post-communist states to *prefer* dealing with such groups in order to avoid the complexities of broader participation,²⁰ the mere presence of such groups does not always reflect a strong civil society,²¹ nor does it indicate that meaningful participation in governance occurs.

Urban regime theory may be another useful conceptual tool. This theory acknowledges the presence of urban regimes—relatively stable coalitions of actors with access to institutional resources. Such regimes include governments as well as business interests and various civil organizations. Whereas one may be inclined to speculate that the end of communism represents the replacement of old with new (ostensibly democratic) urban regimes, this is not necessarily the case as many new regimes have been dominated by members of the old communist elites who capitalized on early opportunities to seize power and capital assets via privatization. In Russia, for example, some critiques note that new urban regimes are exceptionally friendly to big businesses, many of which are led by members of the old *nomenclatura*.²²

Stone's classic typology may be relevant here. It identifies four types of urban regimes: caretaker regimes (focused on routine service delivery), development regimes (focused on the aggressive promotion of economic growth), middle-class progressive regimes (focused on issues such as environmental protection, historic preservation, participation and affordable housing), and lower-class opportunity expansion regimes (focused on human development and equitable access to resources). The latter two regime types are more open to active citizen

12. See Healey, 1997.

13. Nedovic-Budic, 2001; Stanilov, 2007c, 2007d.

14. Hirt, 2005.

15. Watson, 2007.

16. Almer and Koontz, 2004.

17. Hirt, 2005.

18. Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, 1998b.

19. Watson 2006, 2007.

20. Stec, 1997; Rose-Ackerman, 2007.

21. Cellarius and Staddon, 2002.

22. E.g., Pagonis and Thornley, 2000.

input in governance.²³ Arguably, post-communist urban regimes comprise mostly caretaker regimes (such as those in the Balkans and parts of the Caucuses, which operate within the context of weak institutions and scarce resources) and pro-development regimes (e.g., those in the Russian and Kazakh capitals). Middle-class progressive regimes likely exist only in the Baltic and Central European states, where most of the relatively successful cases of participation have been documented.

5.3. Progress and success stories

Regardless of the above-cited impediments, important progress has been made. Successful citizen participation comes in varied forms: from spontaneous citizen activity to formally organized citizen involvement channelled via well-established non-profit organizations. Broad participation often occurs in environmental planning; e.g., in hearings following environmental impact assessments of specific development projects, as such projects may tangibly impact the daily lives of the nearby public. Many such cases have been noted in Central and Southeastern Europe. In the Czech Republic, for example, participation in environmental planning hearings is very high and, as some studies suggest, largely attributable to the active role played by environmental non-profit organizations.²⁴ In Hungary, similarly high levels of participation have been reported arguably due to broad public awareness regarding environmental health problems linked with specific projects.²⁵ In nearby Slovenia, collaborative land-use planning processes have developed with urban planners taking lead in utilizing a number of progressive participation techniques including surveys, interviews, workshops, charettes and collective mapping exercises. In the Slovenian town of Komenda, for example, the final product has been described as a genuinely citizen-driven plan, which produced more innovative planning solutions than an alternative plan prepared by a professional consulting group.²⁶ An equally hopeful, yet very different story has been told from neighbouring Serbia, where scholars note the importance of bottom-up, civic urban networks. These networks set up informal city websites and have been able to initiate open public discussion on urban problems.²⁷ High levels of participation have also been reported in strategic planning in the Baltic nations.²⁸ This success has been attributed due the relatively strong civil societies there, the willingness of local authorities to engage the public early in the planning process, and the very nature of strategic planning as an action-oriented planning approach with greater potential to attract citizen input. In Central Asia, successful participation has been reported from the more democratic states like Kyrgyzstan. For example, environmental non-profit organizations played a visible role in preparing the National Environmental Action Plan. In this case, a well-established environmental group in the capital of Bishkek took a mediating role between the Kyrgyz government and local environmental groups, and facilitated collective plan-drafting.²⁹ At the local level, a success story developed in the Kyrgyz city of Karakol, where heated land-ownership disputes with the potential to cause civil unrest were resolved after the establishment of a grass-root community council.³⁰ Studies have repeatedly shown the importance of mobilizing indigenous (rather than foreign-imposed) structures like the traditional Kyrgyz councils of elders in order to facilitate successful participation.³¹

23. Stone, 1993; Mossberger and Stoker, 2001

24. Carmin, 2003.

25. Palerm, 1999.

26. Golobic and Marusic, 2007.

27. Milovanovic, 2001.

28. Tsenkova, 2007b.

29. Farmer and Farmer, 2006.

30. International Centre for Policy Studies, 2006.

31. Earle, 2005.

5.4. Conclusions and policy recommendations

Public participation holds many important benefits for planning, including generating more creative, diverse and context-based planning goals and solutions, increasing the odds of plan implementation, finding ways to accommodate difference and prevent social exclusion, and enhancing public education.³² Given the powerful potential of public participation, it is clear that further reforms must be implemented. First, national planning laws must be upgraded to require more extensive participation. At present, laws typically require only the bare minimum. They must be revised to mandate that participation starts early on and occurs at multiple points of the planning process. Second, at the local level, detailed schedules must be set up for multiple venues of public participation. These venues should go well beyond the traditional approach of merely informing the public and must include techniques such as surveys, focus groups, workshops, design charrettes and collective drafting exercises. Third, special efforts must be made to reach out to the broader public (e.g., through surveys and direct solicitation of public opinion). Although non-profit organizations may play an important role, their participation is not always synonymous with broad public involvement. Furthermore, outreach efforts must target groups which are commonly excluded from the planning process (minorities, disabled, young people, etc.). Next, alternatives to master-planning such as strategic short-term and smaller-scale spatial planning should be further developed since they attract higher levels of citizen involvement. Finally, university curricula must be remodelled to include new mandatory courses focused on the benefits and techniques of public participation. This last recommendation will be further discussed in Chapter 10.

32. Watson 2006, 2007.

Table 7. Laws and practices regarding public participation in select countries

Country	Public right to access information	Public right to information on initiation of planning	Public right to participate in plan-making	Public right to challenge already adopted plans	Assessment of the state of participatory practices
Belarus	<i>De jure</i> , citizens have right to access public documents and records. Basic rights (petition, assembly expression, information) are guaranteed by constitutional Articles 33–40. Citizens have right to take part in decision-making on “state/public affairs” via referenda, and discussion of draft laws.	No legal requirements for public announcement of the initiation of planning activity.	Building Normative Act states that master and detailed regulatory plans must be displayed for public discussion prior to adoption. No specific national rules for other venues of participation exist, although master and detailed plans are subject to Law of Public Environmental Review which mandates some participation. Municipalities free to choose their own rules of participation.	No possibility to challenge adopted planning documents. However, citizens and non-governmental organizations permitted to challenge individual building permitting decisions under Environmental and Sanitary Well-being Laws.	There is little possibility to avoid at least some level of public participation in regional and municipal planning as it is required by law. However, neither public display nor a few hearings necessarily result in active citizen involvement. Citizen participation in planning varies on a city-by-city basis but is generally low, although it is reportedly higher in the state capital of Minsk.
Estonia	Constitutional Articles 44–47 guarantee right to information and several others (association assembly, petition, expression). Planning and Building Act defines planning as public activity and mandates public disclosure and right to access of information in planning.	Decision to initiate planning at any level (national, regional, municipal, detailed regulatory) must be publicly announced in an official newspaper within a month of decision to plan.	No legal mandate for participation in national plans. Public display mandated for regional plans. Public display of two-to-six weeks and public hearings are mandated for all stages of drafting municipal plans, and at preparing or amending detailed plans. Law on Environmental Impact Assessment also mandates some public participation.	Under the Planning and Building Act, every person has the right to appeal plans on the grounds of being in conflict with Planning and Building Act or violation of personal rights guaranteed by other legislation.	There is little possibility to avoid at least some level of public participation in regional and municipal planning as it is required by law (for detailed regulatory plans local government may waive some participation mandates). However, neither public display nor a few hearings necessarily result in active citizen involvement.
Latvia	Basic rights (petition, assembly expression) guaranteed by constitutional Articles 100–104; Article 115 mandates access to environmental information. Public participation in planning mandated by Law on Spatial Development Planning and Law on Information.	Decision to initiate planning at any level must be publicly announced to plan in an official newspaper. Two phases of participation are mandated by law, the first of which is upon initiation of planning (national planning is exempt). At that time, region/municipality must conduct public consultation.	Second phase of mandatory public consultation comprises public display and hearing after completion of plan’s first draft. Municipality must prepare a report on public comments one month after public discussion. Law on Environmental Impact Assessment also mandates some public participation.	Information is not available.	Information is not available.

Continues...

Country	Public right to access information	Public right to information on initiation of planning	Public right to participate in plan-making	Public right to challenge already adopted plans	Assessment of the state of participatory practices
Lithuania	Basic rights (petition, assembly expression, information) guaranteed by constitutional Articles 25–26 and 33. Law on Territorial Planning mandates participation in planning. It also requires that draft plans are accessible to all citizens at all times.	Decision to initiate planning at any level (national, regional, municipal, detailed regulatory) must be publicly announced to plan within ten days of decision to plan in appropriate media.	Agency conducting planning must ensure one-to-two month long public display of drafts. Municipalities free to choose own rules of public discussion. Law on Assessment of Impact of Planned Economic Activity on Nature also mandates some public participation.	Under Law on Territorial Planning, every person has the right to appeal adopted plans.	There is little possibility to avoid at least some level of public participation in regional and municipal planning as it is required by law (for detailed regulatory plans local government may waive some participation mandates). However, neither public display nor a few hearings necessarily result in active citizen involvement. Pro-active local governments such as that in Vilnius have sought public input in strategic planning by far exceeding formal requirements.
Poland	Basic rights (petition, assembly expression, information) guaranteed by constitutional Articles 58–63. Article 5 notes government must ensure sustainable development; Article 74 guarantees access to environmental information.	Physical Development Act mandates that the initiation of regional, municipal and detailed regulatory plans must be announced in the media.	There are no requirements for participation in planning process at national and regional level. Physical Development Act requires that participation occurs at municipal and detailed regulatory planning level.	There is no possibility to appeal adopted plans. However, citizens have right to go to court in order to demand that plans do not get adopted.	There is little possibility to avoid at least some level of public participation in municipal and detailed planning as it is required by law. However, neither public display nor a few hearings necessarily result in active citizen involvement.
Russia	Basic rights (petition, assembly expression, information) guaranteed by constitutional Articles 29–33. Article 32 gives citizens the right to participate “directly” in “state affairs.” Urban Development Act gives right to access all information about the urban environment.	Urban Development Act does not specify that the initiation of national, regional or municipal plans must be disclosed. It only specifies that the initiation of detailed development plans must be publicly disclosed.	Urban Development Act gives citizens right to participate in plan-making at all levels through public hearings and discussions. Plans must be publicly displayed for three months before adoption. Municipalities free to choose their own rules of participation.	Under Urban Development Act, every person has the right to appeal adopted plans.	There is little possibility to avoid at least some level of public participation regional, municipal and detailed planning as it is required by law. However, neither public display nor a few hearings necessarily result in active citizen involvement.

Sources: Baltic Sea ConceptShare, 2007; Committee on Spatial Development in the Baltic Sea region (undated); Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, 1998a, b; and the respective constitutions of the cited countries available on-line.

6. Urban Planning and Sustainable Development

This chapter reviews the role of urban planning in sustainable development in the transitional countries. As defined by the Brundtland Commission,¹ sustainable development is “*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*” Clearly, the concept is multi-faceted: it implies environmental, economic and socio-cultural sustainability simultaneously.² Yet, these fundamental aspects of sustainability are often in conflict (e.g., economic growth based on the relentless exploitation of nature causes irreversible environmental damage and strict environmental regulations often impact the poor disproportionately). Many scholars have argued that urban planning sits at the intersection of the fundamental aspects of sustainability and has the potential (and responsibility) to resolve conflicts between them by promoting environmentally friendly cities and regions, while facilitating economic growth and fostering social equity and cultural diversity.³

In essence, sustainable development frames a constant thread throughout all chapters of this report. For example, both planning’s role in ensuring broad public participation (Chapter 5) and planning mechanisms for dealing with informal urban development (Chapter 7) have major implications for social equity. In this sense, both these chapters address the issue of planning for sustainable development. To avoid further redundancy, this chapter focuses on planning’s role in promoting urban development in ways to effectively deal with the crucial environmental challenges of our time. The chapter first briefly summarizes the environmental legacy of the communist period. Second, it outlines current environmental challenges in the region (these were also partially addressed in Chapters 1 and 2). Third, it presents select success stories in planning for environmentally sustainable development. Fourth, it discusses the role of urban planning in sustaining the rich cultural diversity of the region (i.e., planning for heritage conservation). The chapter concludes with brief policy recommendations.

6.1. The environmental legacy of the communist period

As noted in Chapter 1.5, the Soviet model of economic growth was based on an all-out drive to out-compete the “West” in heavy industry: steel, cement, chemicals, machinery, etc. By the mid-1970s, the Soviet Union was already the world’s leader in many of these resource-intensive and highly polluting industries. Some measures of the grave ecological and public health costs of the Soviet model include: in the late 1980s, 16 per cent of the vast Soviet territory was classified as being under severe environmental stress; 37 Soviet cities had air quality norms ten or so times worse than national standards, and in 68 Soviet cities cancer risks exceeded national standards by a factor of about a hundred.⁴ Heavily industrialized cities like the Almaty and Karagandy in Kazakhstan, for instance, could be easily declared as public health disaster zones.⁵

The devastating environmental costs of the Soviet mode of development have received much publicity. Yet, not all aspects of Soviet-style growth were ecologically harmful. To begin with, contrary to popular belief, communist laws did not neglect the environment. They

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1. Brundtland Commission, 1987.
 2. United Nations, 2002.
 3. Campbell, 1996; Allen and You, 2002; Watson, 2007.
 4. Green, 1993.
 5. Beisenova, 1998.

were in fact often stricter than laws in capitalist countries but were commonly ignored. Second, although there were hundreds of ecological disaster zones across the region, there were also enormous stretches of lands untouched by humans—lands which often exceeded, in absolute numbers and in percentages, such lands located in capitalist states. For example, 30 per cent of the territory of Central and Eastern Europe comprised completely virgin, pristine lands at the onset of the transition.⁶

Perhaps most importantly for this report, communist urban forms were by many measures more environmentally friendly and, thus, more sustainable than capitalist urban forms. Communist cities had several characteristics which distinguished them clearly from their capitalist counterparts, as Chapter 2.2 noted. They were more compact and had smaller ecological footprints; they were high-density and had a clear urban edge rather than sprawling and mono-functional suburban-type peripheries; they had better integrated land uses and were less socially polarized; they had abundant parks and greenbelts; and, they had reliable public transit systems.⁷ Ironically, all these aspects of the communist city are hallmarks of urban sustainability. Even more ironically, if not tragically, most of them were lost during the transition.

6.2. Current challenges to urban sustainability

To combat the heavy environmental, economic and social consequences of climate change and natural resource depletion, human settlements must undertake planning which promotes: compact and mixed-use urban forms, urban regeneration (e.g., brownfield recycling), the protection of green and agricultural lands, and the prevention of urban sprawl. It also needs to create efficient public transportation systems in order to reduce dependency on individual car travel and thus minimize greenhouse emissions. It must also promote construction practices which foster energy and resource conservation in buildings and infrastructure. These aspects of sustainable planning must be facilitated by urban management and governance regimes embedded into a functioning civil society and a solid institutional and legal framework (as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5).⁸

As noted earlier, it could well be argued that since 1989 the transitional countries have moved in the *unsustainable* direction. Significant challenges exist along all aspects of urban sustainability noted above (i.e., in overall spatial structure, organization and green space, in urban transport, and in construction practices).

First, in terms of urban spatial structure, many cities have lost their once-compact form and have acquired sprawling peripheries comprising low-density housing and big-box retail, as noted in Chapter 2.2. These new peripheries have consumed substantial amounts of green and agricultural land.⁹ Furthermore, although the crucial role of green urban infrastructure in adapting cities for climate change is well recognized,¹⁰ vast amounts of public green spaces have been allowed to vanish within urbanized areas as well.¹¹ In just two years, from 1999 to 2001, Moscow for instance lost about 750 hectares of forests located in its once-lush Green

6. Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, 1994; Pavlinek and Pickles, 2004.

7. E.g., see Hamilton, 1979; Häussermann, 1996; Hirt, 2006.

8. E.g., EAUE, 2003 and 2004; Tsenkova, 2004.

9. Blinnikov et al, 2007, Makharova on Moscow, 2007; Hirt, 2007c on Sofia; Sykora 1999a and 1999b on Prague; Timar and Varadi, 2001, Dingsdale, 1999, Kok and Kovács, 1999, Kovács, 1994 on Budapest; Ruoppila, 1998 on Tallinn; Kreja, 2006 on Warsaw; see also EAUE, 2003 and EEA, 2006a.

10. E.g., Gill et al, 2003.

11. E.g., Szulczewska and Kaliszuk on Warsaw, 2003; Hirt and Kovachev, 2006 on Sofia.

Belt. Between 1991 and 2001, forests in metropolitan Moscow declined by 15 per cent, grass areas shrunk by 55 per cent, whereas impervious surface increased by 26 per cent.¹²

The social and gender implications of post-communist sprawl have gone largely unnoticed. For example, a recent study showed that whereas women are affected unequally by post-communist suburbanization (i.e., because of women's more limited mobility patterns and heavier reliance on mass transit as opposed to individual car travel, women have greater difficulties in accessing urban jobs and services than men), municipal plans for the new suburbs assume no gender disparity.¹³ These and other problems of suburbanization are addressed in Chapter 7.

There are also growing challenges regarding transport and mobility mostly because of limited municipal budgets and lack of state investment in mass transit infrastructure. In the mean time, car ownership in most of the Eastern European countries has more than doubled over the last 20 or so years (see Table 8) and is rapidly increasing in the Caucasus region and Central Asia as well. In Latvia, car ownership increased from 83 to 297 cars per a 1000 people between 1985 and 2004.¹⁴ Planners in the capital of Riga now regard traffic congestion and air pollution as some of the city's worst problems.¹⁵

There are equally crucial challenges regarding sustainable land management, housing and infrastructure (the latter is addressed in Chapter 8). To begin with, because of the communist emphasis on heavy industry, large cities across the region have unusually high ratios of industrial land, typically between a quarter and a third of their territories.¹⁶

For example, St. Petersburg's industrial lands comprise 44 per cent of its total land, Moscow's are 32 and Cracow's are 28 per cent (as compared to, say, 5 per cent in Paris). During the transition period, the combined effect of economic collapse and post-industrial restructuring terminated most production activities in the old urban industrial districts. Yet, industrial development did not cease altogether; it just relocated outside of the city boundaries. Another process that began to take place during the late 1990s is the relocation of industrial uses from the largest metropolitan areas to secondary urban centres. Due to this trend, the capital cities in East and Central Europe have attracted very little new industrial development. In contrast, secondary cities like Brno, Plzen, and Ostrava in the Czech Republic; Katowice, Wroclaw, and Lodz in Poland; and Debrecen, Szeged, and Győr in Hungary have developed as major industrial hubs. As a result of all these processes, vast chunks of the industrial fabric of the largest East European cities became derelict. By 2000 or so, such areas reached approximately 30 per cent of the land in Budapest and Warsaw, 40 per

Table 8. Car ownership in select Eastern European countries, 1985–2004

Country	Cars per 1000 people			
	1985	1995	2000	2004
Bulgaria	119	196	247	314
Czech	200	295	335	373
Estonia	114	267	339	350
Hungary	136	217	232	280
Latvia	83	134	235	297
Poland	99	195	259	314
Romania	n/a	97	139	149
Slovakia	136	189	236	286
Slovenia	255	357	437	456

Source: Eurostat, undated.

12. Boentje and Blinnikov, 2007.

13. Hirt, forthcoming.

14. See also EAUE, 2003.

15. Virvas, 2001.

16. Kessides, 2000.

cent in Bratislava¹⁷ and even 60 per cent in Belgrade.¹⁸ How these brownfields will be redeveloped has become a major urban planning issue.

Another pressing issue is the need for rehabilitation of historic neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods were commonly in decline during communism as the state priority after 1960 was to build new housing districts. Whereas the historic housing stock in the urban core was left to deteriorate, the new mass-produced buildings in the housing estates were done on the cheap with priority placed on minimizing construction costs and maximizing output. The economic crisis of early-to-mid 1990s made the problem significantly worse. Following the recent economic recovery, new higher-standard housing began to emerge both within cities and at their edges, and the process of renovation of old buildings, particularly in the most attractive urban locations, began to pick up speed. However, most of the old housing stock in urban areas is still mired by problems related to leaking roofs, decay of internal plumbing and massive energy losses from poor insulation. It has been estimated that buildings in the former communist cities generally use two to three times as much heat as buildings in comparable climates in Western Europe.¹⁹

The communist-era housing districts are in the most alarming state. Despite the advantages these buildings had at the time of their construction, today they have serious maintenance issues. In fact, some buildings are under an imminent threat of collapse. They also have very low indicators of energy efficiency. Yet, millions of people—typically, about half or more of the population of large cities in Central-East Europe—live in such communist-era districts, as illustrated in Table 9. How urban planners can deal with a problem of such magnitude in times when housing costs have skyrocketed and public funds for social housing are scarce is yet to be determined.

The extent of sustainability challenges varies widely across the region. Problems in wealthy Central Europe pale compared to those in poor Central Asia and are compounded in states plagued by civil wars and refugee crises (e.g., Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Georgia and Tajikistan). The next section discusses some planning efforts to address these issues.

Table 9. Population residing in large communist-era housing estates in select cities

City	Share of population (%)
Bratislava	77
Bucharest	82
Budapest	38
Katowice	60
Kaunas	52
Ljubljana	24
Prague	32
Sofia	60
Tallinn	55
Warsaw	56

Source: EAUE, 2000.

6.3. Planning for sustainability

6.3.1. National environmental and sustainable development plans

As sustainability issues have become more pressing, most transitional countries have adopted national environmental plans. The new Central and East European members of the European Union have harmonized their national environmental legislation with European Union standards. However, depending on the perceived and real costs of adopting strict environ-

17. EAUE, 2003.

18. Town Planning Institute of Belgrade, 2003; see also Buckley and Tsenkova, 2001 on Sofia.

19. World Bank, 2006b.

mental standards and local public opinion support, implementation levels vary widely.²⁰ Some national sustainable development strategies have been criticized for being vague. An evaluation of the National Strategy of Slovakia, for example, noted that it includes laudable goals but suffers from general formulations of strategies and provides virtually no details on budgeting, monitoring and evaluation.²¹ The National Strategy lists literally hundreds of objectives as bullet points, such as “*support of nature-friendly approaches in utilization of natural resources as a substitute for utilization of nature-unfriendly technocratic and large-scale production ways of management*” or “*ensuring environmentally sound long-term use of natural resources*” (p. 267), but does not specify who will implements these goals or with what means.²²

Table 10 lists national sustainability-related plans in the Western Balkans, where all countries aspire to European Union membership. Although the new programmes contain sweeping environmental agendas, some lack in specific timeframes and mechanisms for monitoring. Furthermore, the prospects of programme implementation are uncertain because

Table 10. National Environmental Plans and Programmes in the Western Balkans

Country	National plans and programmes adopted as of 2005	National plans and programmes drafted as of 2005
Albania	National Environmental Action Plan; Water Strategy; Waste Management Plan; Coastal Zone Management Act; European Partnership Action Plan.	National Environmental Strategy; Strategy for Hazardous Waste.
Bosnia	National Environmental Action Plan; Mediterranean Action Plan; Strategy for Solid Waste Management.	Strategy for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development; Biodiversity Strategy; Nature Protection Strategy; Water Protection Strategy
Croatia	National Environmental Action Plan; National Water Protection Plan; National Flood Control Plan; Contingency Plan for Accidental Marine Pollution.	Water Management Master Plan; National Waste Management Strategy; National Strategy for Sustainable Development; National Strategy and Action Plan for the Protection of Biological and Landscape Diversity; Plan for Protection and Improvement of Air Quality.
Macedonia	National Environmental Action Plan; Water Management Master Plan.	National Strategy for Sustainable Development; National Waste Management Plan; National Strategy for Water.
Montenegro	Strategy on Hazardous Waste Management; National Waste Strategy.	
Serbia		National Environmental Action Plan; National Environmental Strategy; Strategy for the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources; Air Pollution Strategy; National Strategy for Waste Management.

Source: Regional Environmental Centre, 2005.

20. See Andonova, 2004; Kayicki, 2005.

21. Cherp et al, 2004.

of unclear institutional responsibilities. On the positive side, Croatia's new Air Protection Act has been praised for building the ground to adopt specific limits on pollutants from industrial and vehicle emissions. However, the National Environmental Action Plan of Macedonia has been critiqued for defining several important objectives but failing to translate them into specific legislative steps. An updated version of this plan is currently under way, which will ostensibly mitigate these weaknesses.²³

A recent evaluation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Belarus similarly noted that whereas the strategy includes a comprehensive outline of the principles of sustainable development and suggests many promising goals and objectives, it leaves unclear who will implement these objectives and with what funds. For example, the strategy concludes with a brief chapter on sustainability indicators, but does not specify which institutions (and at what stages) should monitor the implementation of these sustainability indicators.²⁴ A study of a broad set of state laws and programmes in Russia also found considerable state interest in promoting sustainable development but, again, a rather vague path to implementation.²⁵

6.3.2. Examples of successful local planning for sustainable development

Regardless of many impediments, planning has accomplished significant strides toward sustainable development. Dozens of cities have adopted Local Agenda 21 programmes and have made sustainable development a key part of their plans and strategies.²⁶ This sub-section presents some cases of successful planning, as recognized by the European Academy of the Urban Environment (EAUE) and other sources.

The Czech capital Prague is a city often lauded for good planning. Although like most other large cities in post-communist Central Europe it has recently experienced significant urban sprawl and traffic congestion, several recent planning initiatives have moved Prague toward a more sustainable mode of growth. One of the initiatives is the local Environmental Information System. The programme is funded through the city budget and acts as a comprehensive database of maps, thematic studies and statistics of all aspects of Prague's environment which are made available to any interested national, international or private parties. High levels of environmental awareness due in part to the Information System resulted in a progressive Integrated Transport Plan, which reorganized and restricted car access and parking in Prague's world-renowned historic centre. Paired with the more recent Plan of Public Transport Priority, the Transport Plan has notably reduced downtown traffic and has improved the efficiency and reliability of several modes of mass transit.²⁷ And, although like most large post-communist cities Prague has experienced significant sprawl, a coalition of local environmental groups is leading an active campaign to limit the trend by working to tighten land-use regulations (such as agricultural zoning) and ensure compliance with air quality standards, which are threatened by sprawl-related traffic in the rural municipalities around Prague.²⁸

The Polish capital of Warsaw provides encouraging examples of how to solve one of the greatest sustainability issues of post-communist cities—the renovation of communist-era housing districts. The district of Natolin Wyzyny, for example, was upgraded after the

22. Government Council for Sustainable Development, 2001.

23. Regional Environmental Centre, 2005, Costi, 1998.

24. Cherp et al, 2004; see also National Sustainable Development Commission of Belarus, 2004.

25. Oldfield, 2001.

26. Tsenkova, 2004.

27. EAUE, 2003: 33, 36–37; 2004: 40–41.

28. Garb, 2000.

establishment of a Housing Association comprising the local residents. The Association put together a renovation plan in 1994 with three main goals: keep rents affordable, renovate building to increase energy efficiency and enhance quality of life. Using subsidies from the Polish government, as well as funds from the sale of commonly owned vacant open spaces to private developers, portions of the housing rents and communal fees, the Association accomplished the renovation of 90 per cent of the district's building stock in four years. Renovation works included: roof repairs, thermo-insulations, and replacement of outdated heating and water piping. In addition, several new mixed-use projects were constructed throughout the district.²⁹

Another large Polish city, Gdansk is a pioneering example of sustainable transport planning. In 2001, Gdansk received funds from the United Nations Development Programme with the help of the Polish Ecological Club. The city set up a broad-based Cycling Task Force with the goal of reducing transport-produced green-house emissions. The task force prepared a plan called the Cycling Infrastructure Project. The plan was implemented using both local and international funds. In 2004, Gdansk became the first large city in Poland with a complete, inner-city cycling route network and has since then received international environmental awards.³⁰

The city of Elk is another good Polish example of progressive environmental planning. The city is located on the high shore of the Elk Lake and the River Elk, both of which have undergone severe environmental deterioration. A pilot plan for environmental action was initiated in 1991. The plan led to a substantial improvement in the lake and river water quality following the modernization of the town's waste water facilities. Related outcomes include reclamation of the town landfill area. A series of other pro-sustainability plans were passed through the 1990s such as a Local Agenda 21; a strategic programme for sustainable development; a spatial management plan, which addressed issues of sustainability in land-use planning; and a community environmental action plan, which targeted enhancing environmental awareness among Elk's citizenry and ultimately led to the establishment of the Elk Education Centre.³¹

Yet another progressive Polish case is the city of Bytom, which adopted three environmental plans in the 1990s: an Environmental Master Plan, an Environmental Action Programme and an Environmental Working Programme. The plans dealt with problems of sustainability from the level of broad long-term goals to that of specific short-term strategies. Bytom's success in plan implementation has been credited to several factors, including: a proactive municipal government, an environmentally aware citizenry, cooperative industries in the region, and progressive county authorities. Prior to initiating the sequence of environmental plans, Bytom's government conducted extensive consultations, which led to a written covenant regarding the plans' general framework signed by the municipality of Bytom, several neighbouring municipalities, the county authorities, and the region's main industries. Bytom also set up a detailed year-to-year budget, which included a combination of local, county and national funds. The budget was linked to a detailed, year-to-year implementation schedule.³²

The Hungarian capital of Budapest provides good examples of urban rehabilitation. As most other large communist cities, it had vast areas dedicated to industrial use (about 4,800 hectares in the 1960s). These areas began to decline as early as the 1980s—a process which

29. EAUE, 2004: 40; EAUE, undated.

30. EAUE, 2004: 37.

31. EAUE, 2004: 32–33.

32. Brieskorn et al, 1996.

only accelerated after communism (some 30–40 per cent of industrial areas were derelict by the late 1990s). As the large communist-era industries became obsolete, the city’s industrial workforce was reorganized in hundreds of smaller-size private firms mostly in machine production and, lately, in the knowledge-intensive light-industry sector. Whereas some of Budapest’s former industrial zones continue to decay, many others have been converted into vibrant mixed-use development areas, which include new and renovated industrial facilities, and commercial and residential structures. The municipal government has been widely lauded for its pro-active role in aggressively marketing the old industrial sites in order to attract local and foreign capital. However, it is clear that Budapest’s success in brownfield renewal is at least partially due to the country’s vibrant economy and thus may be hard to replicate in the poorer transitional countries.³³ Budapest has been also been praised for successfully renovating its older urban areas which had experienced significant deterioration during communism. Ferencvaros, Budapest 9th district, is a good example. This historic area was destined for demolition and Modernist-style renewal (i.e., construction of large buildings made of pre-fabricated panels and abolition of the traditional street network) in the 1970s. Plans were “softened” during the 1980s in order to preserve some of the district’s historic building stock.³⁴ However, these state plans were not realized and housing was privatized after 1990. A new plan for district rehabilitation was put together by the district government in the mid-1990s and successfully implemented. The district was significantly upgraded both via renovation and adaptive re-use of old buildings, and new construction. The success has been attributed to the pro-active district government and interested private developers, who formed a joint public-private venture. Although the project has been criticized for causing the displacement of low-income residents³⁵—hardly a model for sustainable development—it has received glowing reviews for its mixed-use and human-scale urban design layout, as well as for its sustainable and energy-efficient construction methods.³⁶ Ferencvaros is a good illustration of the conflicts between the environmental and the social equity aspects of sustainable development, which urban planners must address.

6.4. Planning for heritage conservation

Preserving the diversity of cultures is a key component of sustainable development. It is often referred to as sustainability’s “fourth pillar.” Urban planning can play a crucial role in promoting cultural sustainability by working to preserve and enhance the richness of built environments and material artefacts that testify to the complex and multi-cultural history of cities in the region, and by engaging diverse communities in the planning process. In doing so, planning has the potential to build values of tolerance and appreciation of diversity and thus contribute to stronger civil societies and peace.³⁷

The civic-building role of planning is especially important in the transitional countries for at least two reasons. First, very few, if any, of the transitional countries may be classified as mono-ethnic nation-states; on the contrary, most have extremely diverse populations whose complex history is well reflected in the multi-layered urban landscapes across the region (as noted in Chapter 3). And second, the turbulent 1990s were a period of ethnic and civil wars in several transitional countries. These tragic developments led not only to hundreds of thousands of deaths, but also to endangered historic landscapes— both because of war destruction and because the ethnicities who won the wars have hardly shown respect for the

33. Kiss, 2007.

34. Locsmandi, undated.

35. Sýkora, 2005.

36. EAUE, 2004: 39; Locsmandi, undated.

37. Hawkes, 2001; see also Brundtland Commission, 1987.

built heritage of rival groups. In the Balkans, for example, the Byzantine and Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries in Kosovo, which are on the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), have been object of sustained attacks and vandalism, although the Kosovo war ended ostensibly in 1999. The monuments were declared as World Heritage in danger in 2006.³⁸ The only other endangered monument in the region from UNESCO's World Heritage list is the Walled City of Baku, Azerbaijan, although this is due to an earthquake and the pressure of urban development in the absence of effective heritage preservation policies, rather than ethnic conflict.³⁹ However, many other historic cities are facing grave threats, as will be further discussed.

6.4.1. Heritage conservation during communism

The region is home to hundreds of magnificent built landscapes. Many transitional countries have entire cities (or large portions of cities) on UNESCO's World Heritage List, as Table 11 illustrates. The value of these landscapes has been long recognized. The Soviet Union dedicated significant resources to conservation (mostly after World War II), which ostensibly exceeded resources spent in the United States for the same purpose.⁴⁰ The first law on heritage conservation, the Cultural Heritage Act, in Czechoslovakia was passed in 1958. Prague's centre was declared an Architectural Reserve in 1971 and some 3,600 additional buildings were designated as historic monuments.⁴¹ This act outlawed building demolition and major alterations. The communist problem in heritage conservation—much like that in environmental protection—was not the lack of laws but the lack of their implementation.⁴²

Table 11. Urban landscapes on UNESCO's *World Heritage List*

Country	Urban landscapes included in UNESCO's World Heritage List	Years of UNESCO's designation
Albania	Gjirokastra and individual monuments/areas	1992–2005
Armenia	Individual monuments/areas	1996–2000
Azerbaijan	Walled City of Baku (part of Baku) and individual monuments/areas	2000–2007
Belarus	Individual monuments/areas	2000–2005
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Individual monuments/areas	2005–2007
Bulgaria	Nessebar and individual monuments/areas	1979–1985
Croatia	Dubrovnik and individual monuments/areas	1979–2000
Czech Republic	Centre of Prague, Centre of Cesky Krumlov, Centre of Telic, Holacovice, parts of Telic and individual monuments/areas	1992–2003
Estonia	Centre of Tallinn and individual monuments/areas	2002–2004
Georgia	Individual monuments/areas	1994–1996
Hungary	Parts of Budapest, Holloko and individual monuments/areas	1987–2002

38. UNESCO, undated.

39. German World Heritage Foundation, undated.

40. Shvidkovsky, 1975

41. Johnson, 1982; Hruska, 1975.

42. Stulic, 2001.

Country	Urban landscapes included in UNESCO's World Heritage List	Years of UNESCO's designation
Kazakhstan	Individual monuments/areas	2003–2004
Kyrgyzstan		
Latvia	Centre of Riga and individual monuments/areas	1997–2005
Lithuania	Centre of Vilnius and individual monuments	1994–2004
Macedonia	Parts of Ohrid	1979
Moldova	Individual areas/monuments	2005
Montenegro	Kotor	1979
Poland	Centre of Warsaw, Centre of Cracow, Torun, Zamosc and individual monuments/areas	1979–2006
Romania	Centre of Sighisoara and individual monuments/areas	1993–1999
Russia	Centre of St. Petersburg, Centre of Moscow, Centre of Yaroslav, parts of Novgorod, and individual monuments/areas	1992–2005
Serbia	Individual monuments/areas	1979–2007
Slovakia	Banska Stavnica, parts of Bardejov, Vikolinec	1993–2000
Slovenia		
Tajikistan		
Turkmenistan	Individual monuments/areas	1999–2005
Ukraine	Parts of Kiev, Centre of Lviv and individual monuments/areas	1990–2005
Uzbekistan	Centre of Bukhara, Centre of Shakhryabz, Samarkand and individual monuments/areas	1990–2001

Source: UNESCO *World Heritage List*, undated.

Soviet-style conservation, however, had a distinct ideological flavour—monuments were destroyed or, conversely, preserved and rebuilt depending on what role they could play in communist propaganda. For example, in an effort to wipe out religion Stalin undertook the widespread destruction of Russian churches, including Moscow's famous Cathedral of Christ the Saviour (the church was rebuilt in 2000). In contrast, to symbolize Polish victory over the Nazis, Polish authorities with Stalin's full blessing implemented the extraordinarily ambitious and meticulous reconstruction of Warsaw's bombed-out historic centre. This strong ideological underpinning had additional ramifications. Whereas significant funds were invested in landmark urban areas and monuments (e.g., downtowns), "regular" historic urban neighbourhoods suffered from perpetual disinvestment, especially after 1960 when the new housing districts became state priority.

6.4.2. Current heritage conservation laws

All transitional countries have adopted laws regarding heritage conservation and most have ratified the major international conventions.⁴³ Table 12 summarizes current laws in select countries from the former Soviet Union. There is no doubt that these laws demonstrate

43. UNESCO, undated: 237–238.

Table 12. Laws on heritage conservation in select countries

Country	Laws pertaining to heritage conservation
Armenia	Law on the preservation and use of historical and cultural monuments and historic landscapes (1998)
Azerbaijan	Law on the preservation of historical and cultural monuments (1998)
Belarus	Law on the preservation the historical and cultural heritage (2006)
Kazakhstan	Law on the preservation and use of the historical and cultural heritage (1992)
Kyrgyzstan	Law on the preservation and use of the historical and cultural heritage (1999)
Moldova	Law on the preservation of monuments (1993)
Russia	Law on material objects (monuments) representing the culture heritages of the peoples of the Russian Federation (2002)
Tajikistan	Law on the preservation and use of objects of the cultural and historical heritage (2006)
Ukraine	Law on the preservation of cultural heritage (1999)
Uzbekistan	Law on the preservation and use of objects of the historical and cultural heritage (1999)

Source: UNESCO, 2007.

significant state interest in preserving historic urban landscapes. However, as with other state laws, they tend to set a general framework without prescribing specific actions, budgets or penalties for violation. Thus, these laws have been critiqued for serving as vague declarations. In Russia, for example, the federal agency responsible for the implementation of the Law on Monuments is the Ministry of Culture, along with the local or regional State Inspectorates for Monuments Protection. However, these agencies do not have enough staff, resources or influence to ensure that the protection of state or locally designated historic buildings and landscapes is ensured when local authorities approve or amend detailed development plans or issue building permits. Furthermore, the process through which buildings and landscapes are granted with either a federal or a local designation as historic monuments is not always clear.⁴⁴

6.4.3. Additional impediments to heritage conservation

There are several impediments to heritage conservation in addition to loose national laws. In practice, heritage conservation efforts are enabled as much by national as they are by municipal laws (plans and regulations) and policies (e.g., direct funding, tax policies, etc). Furthermore, availability of funds, public and private, is as important as any legislative framework.

A mid-1990s study of St. Petersburg—a city whose centre comprises the world’s largest UNESCO urban heritage site—identified several such impediments to the conservation of its spectacular landscapes. To begin with, municipal funds for preservation were generally used to maintain the most significant structures and little was left for direct investment in the thousands of other historic buildings of the city. Yet, an estimated 32 per cent of the residential stock and 18 per cent of the non-residential stock in historic St. Petersburg was classified in “substandard” condition (“substandard” means that over 40 per cent of a building is heavily damaged). At the same time demand for commercial space has increased. Although the historic areas are designated as Protected Zones under municipal laws, planners have been

44. Butler et al, 1999; Victorovic, 2007.

reluctant to enforce the pertinent strict guidelines for building restoration according to original design since abiding these guidelines would be prohibitively expensive for most developers. Thus, developers were often granted leeway to reuse or alter buildings without full compliance with the law and, in some cases, were allowed to demolish and replace them.⁴⁵

Moscow—another city of remarkable historic treasures—appears to face equally grave problems although it is currently experiencing unprecedented economic growth. According to the Moscow Architecture Preservation Society, about 400 buildings which were either federally or locally designated as historic monuments have been lost since 1989 (other experts put the number at 700). Among them are architectural landmarks such as the famous Hotel Moskva from 1935. The issue in Moscow seems to stem not so much from lack of public funds but from an aggressive municipal policy to encourage glitzy large-scale developments such as malls and office towers in order to endow the old city with an image of a World Capital.⁴⁶ Historic urban landscapes are threatened not just by physical decay or demolition but also by an overall deterioration in their visual integrity. Ironically, economic growth (as in Moscow's case), commercialization, and the growing presence of armies of tourists have compounded the problem significantly. The prospects of easy economic profit combined with lack of clear planning rules (or lack of their implementation), have transformed countless historic neighbourhoods in the region into kaleidoscopic landscapes of giant commercial signs and misplaced Las-Vegas-style architectural references to the various home countries where tourists may come from.⁴⁷

6.4.4. Examples of successful planning for heritage conservation

The historic centre of the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius is a successful example of heritage conservation planning. This occurred as a result of a series of plans and actions undertaken by local, national and international stakeholders. The centre of Vilnius, Old Town had experienced substantial deterioration through most of the 20th century. In the 1950s, large parts of Old Town were designated for demolition and Modernist-style renewal. In the 1960s and 1970s, these plans were replaced with more contextual designs for rehabilitation which, however, were only partially executed. After Lithuania's independence from Soviet rule in 1991, Vilnius regained its status as a national capital. Reviving the historic heart of the city became a crucial component of nation-building. Still, because of the economic crisis of the early 1990s and the fragmented nature of property ownership which followed post-communist privatization, little was accomplished until the mid-1990s. Serious restoration efforts started after Old Town was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. About that time, the Lithuanian government passed the Law on Immovable Cultural Heritage and set up the State Heritage Protection Commission. In 1996, the national and municipal governments in collaboration with experts from the World Bank, the United Nations World Heritage Centre, Denmark, Norway and Scotland put together the Old Town Revitalization Strategy. The strategy was prepared after extensive public consultations, surveys and visioning exercises. Implementation started in 1998 with funds from the World Bank, as well as the state and local governments. Private funds were generated by a successful International Donors and Investors Conference, as well by the Vilnius Old Town Renovation Agency, which is as a public-private venture. Between 1998 and 2003, about 20 million euros of public funds were invested in upgrading the infrastructure and common spaces of Old Town. Paired with substantial infusion of private-sector money into individual building rehabilitation, these efforts have served to transform Old Town from a half-dilapidated to a vibrant urban heart in

45. Butler et al, 1999.

46. Myers, 2003; Moscow Architecture Preservation Society, 2007; Victorovic, 2007: 135.

47. E.g., Sarmany-Parsons, 1998; Hirt, 2006.

just about 10 years. An important criticism has been directed at the heritage conservation programmes in Vilnius, however. Because restoration has been driven (at least partially) by state objectives to remake Old Town into a symbol of state identity, scholars have noted that it is undergoing a process of “Lithuanianization”; i.e., spaces and buildings connected to Lithuanian nationhood are glorified to the neglect of the complex and multi-cultural history of Old Town—a place which was once home to thriving Jewish, Polish, Russian and Tatar cultures as well.⁴⁸

If preserving multi-culturalism is a key component of sustainable development, the second largest city of Poland, Lodz may be a good example. The city has been home to a rich mosaic of cultures: Polish, German, Russian, and Jewish. Yet, during consecutive stages of history those who had the power—Poles, Germans or Russians—suppressed the urban heritage of their rivals and re-planned the built fabric according to their nationalist ideals. The same approach prevailed during the 1990s resulting from strong anti-Soviet and anti-Russian public opinion in Poland. However, in recent years there has been a more positive reassessment of the role of German and Russian heritages in Lodz’s identity. A number of district rehabilitation plans serve as testimony to this new trend. For example, the plan for the restoration of the Old Market involved not only physical rehabilitation but also the creation of various public art pieces in honour of early 20th century local religious leaders, Jewish, Eastern Orthodox and Lutheran, as well as the historic owners of the buildings framing the Old Market, many of whom were Jewish and German industrialists. Similarly, plans for restoring the industrial complex *Manifaktura*—ostensibly the largest brownfield revitalization project in Central Europe—include museums which symbolize the multi-cultural heritage of Lodz.⁴⁹

An excellent example of comprehensive, citywide planning for cultural sustainability is the Urban Development Concept of the Slovenian capital of Ljubljana. As other cities in the region, Ljubljana’s historic core had deteriorated during the mid-20th century, when restoration practices focused on ancient and medieval sites and individual landmarks. Following the adoption of Ljubljana’s Sustainable Development Strategy in 2001, the City enacted a new master plan entitled Urban Development Concept for Ljubljana. Although in many ways this document is similar to a traditional master plan, it places an unusually heavy emphasis on analyzing, preserving and enhancing the identity of Ljubljana’s built fabric. Rather than practicing heritage planning in a narrow sense by focusing on the preservation and rehabilitation of existing structures, Ljubljana’s planners used morphological analysis of two- and three-dimensional characteristics of built forms in six historic and spatial layers of the city in order to determine what make these layers unique (the six layers are: medieval, early modern, early 20th century, mid-20th century, 1960–1990 and post-1990). Following from this analysis, they prepared urban design guidelines for future development or alterations specific for each layer. The Concept is progressive in that it does not focus on individual buildings or city blocks but rather on integrated landscapes. It also takes the concept of heritage conservation to a higher level by emphasizing not conservation *per se* but the integration of past, present and future development in ways to enhance Ljubljana’s cultural and architectural identity.⁵⁰

6.5. Conclusions and policy recommendations

This chapter summarized the complicated path toward sustainable urban development in the transitional countries. Regretfully, urban sustainability challenges were compounded through-

48. Vaisivilaite, 2005; Kulikauskas, 2006.

49. Michlic, 2005; Young and Kaczmarek, 2008.

50. Dimitrovska Andrews, 2006; Dimitrovska Andrews et al, 2007.

out most of the 1990s as a result of the severe economic crisis and the early chaos that followed property privatization, as well as because environmental and cultural issues became a low political priority. Since about 2000, however, significant strides have been made. To begin with, national planning documents have taken a stronger stand in promoting sustainable development. At the local level, many cities have adopted Local Agenda 21s, sustainable development strategies and heritage preservation plans. It is clear that planning for sustainable development comes in diverse forms. For example, in heritage conservation planning, successful efforts come sometimes in the form of master plans (e.g., Ljubljana), but in other cases in the form of specific district plans (e.g., Lodz and Vilnius). They may also come as strategic plans focused on a specific topic (e.g., transport plans in Prague). Furthermore, the actors in charge of the planning process are also diverse. In some cases like Bytom (Poland), the municipal government took the lead; in others, like in Budapest's Ferencvaros the key driving force was the district government; yet in others like Warsaw's Natolin Wyzyny, the Housing Association of local residents played the lead role.

Based on the above review, the following reforms are recommended. First, national legislation, plans and strategies must be refined to incorporate clear institutional responsibilities, as well as unambiguous sustainability benchmarks, monitoring mechanisms, implementation schedules and budgets. Local plans and strategies should be revised in a similar manner. Second, more creative municipal financing and regulatory techniques must be used. Many cities around the world have positive experiences in using methods such as tax breaks, tax-increment financing, enterprise zones, or transfer of development rights programmes in order to achieve urban revitalization, brownfield re-development, heritage conservation and green-space protection. Learning from such cities will be invaluable. Third, financial and regulatory incentives must be utilized to encourage clean and sustainable industries, including culturally and environmentally sound tourism. As noted in earlier chapters, local governments must invest in alternatives of master planning and in soliciting more extensive public participation in the planning process, as many creative solutions come outside of City Hall. Finally, local authorities must go beyond regulatory planning—this type of planning has powerful ability to prohibit unwanted growth but limited ability to invite desired development. Ljubljana's example of morphological analysis and urban design guidelines is a good example.

7. Informal Urban Development and Sprawl

This chapter comprises two main topics. The first one addresses issues related to the rise in the share of informal urban development throughout the region during the transition period. It provides an overview of the forces behind this process, the types of forms that informal developments take, and the impacts that the cumulative effect of these practices have on the transitional cities. The second part of the chapter takes a look at the burgeoning problem of urban sprawl as one of the most visible processes of urban spatial restructuring during the post-communist period. The variety of suburban growth types and the factors behind their formation are discussed in brief. The chapter concludes with an overview of the appropriate planning responses that can mitigate the negative impacts of suburbanization on sustainable development in the cities in the region.

7.1. Forces driving informal urban development

As earlier noted, the communist period was marked by ruthless government control over all forms of construction activities in urban areas. The majority of the assets and components of the urban development process were under the direct ownership and management of state and local governments and government-owned enterprises, who were the main land owners, investors, developers, contractors, and realtors in the field. This situation changed very quickly after the collapse of the communist regimes.

The vacuum of power, which set in during the first years of the transition period in most countries of the region, created an environment in which an “anything goes” attitude characterized the prevailing behaviour of an emerging group of private real estate investors (see also Chapter 4). These investors exploited thoroughly the potential to profit from weak planning and building deregulation, especially during the early years of the transition.

The early post-communist years were also a period when a growing share of economic activity began to take place in the informal sector. Some countries in the region (particularly those in Central Europe and the Baltics) made significant strides in airing out their shadow economies especially during the late 1990s. In other countries, however, the share of the informal sector continues to be very large. In Central Asia, the informal sector is responsible for between one-third and one-half of the total economic output.¹ The growth of the informal sector was a direct result of the economic crisis of late communism and early post-communism which provoked various “coping strategies,” not always in line with the law.² After being abused by the communist and other authoritarian governments for decades, “*people no longer perceive[d] it as morally wrong to exploit any system (communist, capitalist or 'transitional')*.”³

Another main cause of the proliferation of informal urban development practices is related to the inability of governments to manage urban growth under new and challenging conditions. In some instances this was simply a case of cities not being able to absorb the influx of new population. A notable example is the Albanian capital of Tirana, which doubled its population between 1993 and 1997 through the influx of migrants from rural areas and refugees running away from the ethnic wars in the western Balkans—a problem which was

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1. Library of Congress, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c; 2007d.
 2. Smith and Pickles, 1998.
 3. Sztompka, 1991, cited in Hamilton, 1999.

already highlighted in Chapter 4.3. Similar population explosion was experienced in the Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek during the late 1990s. Overall, the chronic lack of human, financial, and legal resources limited the institutional capability of governments to exercise oversight during the period of the construction boom that followed the economic recovery of the region (see also Chapter 4).

In many cases the ability of local governments to manage urban development in the early years of the transition was hindered by the inadequacy of existing laws designed to regulate urban growth under an entirely different socio-economic system.⁴ Many of the regulations developed subsequently lacked sufficient legal power or clarity about mechanisms of implementation. In some countries, for instance, it was unclear for a long time which ministry is in charge of urban affairs (see also Chapter 4).⁵ The absence of basic policies at the national level for the future development of cities created a climate facilitating “*the realization of individualized political ambitions,*” which, in turn, have “*formed and maintained an unregulated, politicized, corrupt, and unstable mode of ‘wild’ urban development practices.*”⁶

The low levels of law compliance after the collapse of the old communist system should not come as a surprise. History has demonstrated that conformity to new laws is rarely “*a hallmark of rapid change.*”⁷ Widespread corruption among public officials in the transitional countries further undermined the efforts to establish efficient control over a dynamically evolving real estate development sector. The practice of legalizing unauthorized construction after it has been completed created a public attitude that all development activities will be legalized eventually (see also Chapter 4).⁸

7.2. Types of informal development

The multitude of forces described above facilitated the proliferation of a wide variety of informal development practices. These could be summarized in the following categories:

- **Unauthorized adaptations of existing structures.** These relatively minor infractions date back to the widespread practice from the communist period of enclosing apartment balconies in order to increase living space.⁹ During the transition period, this practice was extended to include conversions of apartment basements and garages to commercial space, which was needed to accommodate small-scale retail and service shops. These incremental adaptations of the built environment include also unauthorized extensions of existing buildings. While these are quite common practices throughout the world, their application within the context of communist housing estates has produced some more extreme interventions, including partial lateral extensions of multi-family housing in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi, and the addition of new residential floors on top of the prefabricated mid-rise apartment buildings in the Armenian capital of Yerevan.¹⁰
- **Deviations from regulations.** This practice, quite common in the construction of new buildings, involves unauthorized changes in the officially approved projects. These can

4. Stanilov, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d.

5. Tosics, 2004.

6. Sýkora, 1999a.

7. Marcuse, 1996.

8. Grochowski, 2002.

9. The amount of residential space per person in the region has been quite low compared to the average Western European standards of 35 m². In Sofia it averages 15 m², in Bucharest 17 m², in Prague 18 m², and in Bishkek 14 m². (Urban Audit, undated).

10. Danielyan et al, 2007.

be related to changes in plan layout, most often driven by a desire to maximize development potential, or changes in authorized land use. A popular practice, for instance, has been the conversion of attic space to residential units in the capital of Serbia, Belgrade.¹¹

- **Unauthorized construction of new buildings.** This type of unauthorized development is comprised of two sub-categories: construction without building permit but with title to the land, and construction without permit and without title to the land.¹² In many transitional countries the establishment of title to property through restitution has been a process tangled up in legal, social, and ethnic conflicts.¹³ In addition, bureaucratic procedures and lack of political will further impeded the revision of existing regulations and the timely preparation and adoption of new plans (see also Chapter 4). These circumstances often exhausted the patience of private investors who decided to take the risk of initiating development without clear title to the land or without an official building permit in the hope that legalization will eventually follow. Some used this situation as an opportunity for land grabs and for obtaining large profits from illegal construction activities. A good example of such practices is the spurt of new upscale hotel developments along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast during the late 1990s and early 2000s.
- **Squatter settlements.** As in many other parts of the world, this type of informal development in the region is comprised of clusters of unauthorized housing built by migrants settling in on un-serviced areas of the urban periphery.¹⁴ Many of these settlements have appeared as a result of the ethnic and civil wars raging in South-eastern Europe, the Caucasus region, and Central Asia during the 1990s. Quite understandably, the state and local governments in these cases were unwilling to take action against squatter developments built by refugees and displaced residents. Other squatter settlements have emerged in cities throughout Central Asia and the Caucasus region as a result of the migration of rural residents to urban centres in search of better economic opportunities. The struggling economies of these cities have not been able to absorb this population influx, thus forcing the migrants to seek low-cost living arrangements in poorly served areas at the urban edge. Here, rural migrants are often joined by impoverished urban residents fleeing high-cost urban neighbourhoods, who also resorted to live in self-built housing without access to basic services in order to minimize living expenses.¹⁵ It should be noted that instances of squatter settlements can also be found in the periphery of and within the urban territories of many other transitional countries as well. Clusters of squatter dwellings inhabited primarily by Roma minority residents, for example, are common throughout Eastern Europe. These settlements, however, are not a new phenomenon. They have been present in Eastern European cities for decades and comprise a vivid testimony to the inability and unwillingness of current and past governments to address successfully the severe and chronic problems faced by this minority group.

The great quantity and variety of informal and unauthorized development in the transitional countries is clear evidence of the inability of state and local governments to

11. Vujović and Petrović, 2007.

12. This form of unauthorized development is different from the next category (squatter settlements) by the fact that properties developed in this manner are not found in clusters, are often non-residential, and are rarely substandard in the quality of their construction and design.

13. Glock et al, 2007.

14. World Bank, 2006b.

15. Gentile, 2004.

manage urban growth in the context of profound and rapid societal transformations. This situation has had a significant impact on the built environments of post-communist cities and on the quality of life of their residents.

7.3. The impacts of informal urban development

The physical legacy of widespread unauthorized development has become a permanent part of the post-communist urban fabric, exacerbating the existing urban problems and creating many new ones.

The inadequate management and coordination of urban growth and development during the transition period and the subsequent highly fragmented pattern of investments in real estate and infrastructure has created a very chaotic urban landscape. The planned growth of urban settlements has been undermined further by unauthorized “spontaneous” construction activities, which have made the delivery of infrastructure and services a very challenging task. The opportunities for efficient service delivery have been further compromised by the lack of coordination between governmental agencies.

The negative outcomes are not limited to inefficiencies of service delivery. The lack of development control has created social tensions in areas where new, either officially sanctioned or unauthorized, development compromised the quality of life of existing urban residents because of the *en masse* disappearance of open space, increased traffic congestion, and environmental degradation.

It should be noted, however, that informal construction practices have provided economic and housing opportunities for a large segment of the population in the transitional countries which could not afford the official channels of pursuing their needs. The remodelling of balconies, garages, and basements as modest business ventures, and the construction of self-help housing on rooftops or in marginal urban and peripheral areas forsaken by government authorities have become strategies for survival in a period when government-provided safety nets have been abruptly and permanently removed.

7.4. Forces driving suburbanization and sprawl

One of the most notable processes of urban restructuring in the post-communist cities is the explosive decentralization of urban functions (see also Chapter 6).¹⁶ While suburbanization during the communist period was quite limited in its scope, since the second half of the 1990s it has become a defining characteristic of the transformation of cities in the region. In some Eastern European countries the rate of suburbanization has surpassed that of cities in Western Europe. The latest studies of land-cover changes on the continent ranked cities in Estonia, Latvia, Croatia, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria among the most sprawling urban areas in Europe.¹⁷ A testimony for the magnitude of the forces of urban decentralization is the fact that within a little over a decade, they produced a startling variety of spatial types and exerted a powerful impact on daily urban activities.

Both external (global) and internal forces are fuelling the suburban phenomenon. At the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries, urban decentralization has increased throughout the world¹⁸ due to accelerated urbanization rates, increasing globalization of capital and labour, growing affluence of select groups, the advance of neo-liberal

16. Borén and Gentile, 2007; EAUE, 2003; Stanilov, 2007a, 2007b.

17. EEA, 2006a, 2006b.

18. See Stanilov and Scheer, 2004.

ideology emphasizing deregulation, and the cultural spread of Western (i.e., American) suburban lifestyle ideals.¹⁹ Although these forces vary in their influence across the region (e.g., strong population growth occurs in Central Asia, whereas globalization forces are more powerful in Eastern and Central Europe), their general effect has been to foster decentralization everywhere.

Forces specific to suburbanization in the transitional countries are related primarily to public policies accompanying the deep socio-economic restructuring. The first and most important factor is the privatization of land following the restoration of private property rights. Land privatization allowed the establishment of a land market where property could be traded freely,²⁰ a condition that did not exist during the communist period. The second critical component of public policy initiatives implemented during the transition period was the general relaxation of development controls allowed in the name of fortifying private property rights and the liberalization of the market. New legislation passed in most Eastern European countries during the 1990s allowed the conversion of land to urban uses to be realized with considerable ease. The third pillar of suburbanization in the transitional countries is the decentralization of political power from central to local governments, which was discussed in Chapter 4. The process began in the early 1990s in the states leading the reform movement in Central Europe, and gradually spread further east. The essence of the process was to make local governments more independent from the central government by granting them more power to manage their affairs, including their budgets and tax incomes.²¹ The drastic reduction of state subsidies that ensued encouraged most local governments to utilize various methods to increase their revenues, including through creating incentives for development on greenfield sites in the urban periphery. A notable component of the decentralization policies was the creation of large numbers of new municipalities in some Eastern European countries, most of which formed rings around the larger urban centres. These municipalities immediately began to compete for revenues by providing all sorts of incentives in order to entice new tax-yielding development, most of which is concentrated in greenfields.²²

The combined effect of the external, global forces and the internal public policies described above has directed a significant share of investments during the transitional period to the urban periphery, triggering a massive realignment of urban and metropolitan activities. One simple example is the fact that many middle-class urban residents now routinely shop at new suburban hypermarkets rather than in their own urban neighbourhoods.²³

7.5. Types of suburban development

The variations of suburban development types generated by the diversity of forces and actors participating in the processes of restructuring urban space in the transitional countries can be summarized in the following categories:

- **Growth of squatter settlements.** The emergence of this type of suburban formations was described earlier in this chapter. It should be noted that this is a new phenomenon at the urban periphery (as opposed to the old, Roma minority squatter communities found mostly within urban areas). It is most common in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and some Balkan countries. According to informal estimates, up to 300,000 people

19. Stanilov and Sýkora, forthcoming.

20. While land reform is completed in most Eastern European states, it is still only partially or not at all carried out in some countries of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

21. Nedovic-Budic, 2001.

22. Pichler-Milanović, 2005.

23. Garb and Dybicz, 2006.

may be living in migrant settlements on the outskirts of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.²⁴ In Albania, where ten per cent of the national population has migrated to Tirana in the last ten years, most migrants have found accommodation in makeshift housing on the outskirts of the capital city.²⁵

- **Growth of existing villages and towns in the metropolitan periphery.** Two distinct subgroups are found within this type. The first one comprises small satellite settlements within metropolitan agglomeration zones, which have become targets for the relocation of poor and working-class urban residents searching for lower-cost living arrangements. Due to their relative distance from the metropolitan centre and the modest quality of the dwelling stock, these communities are one of the few affordable residential options. Here residents can also find low-cost alternatives to the high-priced public services provided in the city. These alternatives include the use of wood rather than electricity or natural gas for heating, access to water from local wells rather than the municipal grid, waste disposal in local roadside dumps rather than via hi-priced municipal garbage services, etc. In addition to these savings, residents of those peripheral villages and towns often have to pay lower local taxes. The availability of these cost-saving alternatives has made satellite communities a preferred choice also for migrants to metropolitan areas coming from rural or provincial towns. The second, albeit smaller group of settlements in this category is composed of villages and towns that fall along new growth corridors formed by the expansion of metropolitan areas in directions dotted with parks and new recreational and shopping facilities. Unlike the former group, however, the settlements in this, second group are the choice of affluent upper and middle-class households. The original settlements in this path of metropolitan expansion serve as nodes of initial suburban growth. Over time, however, they typically coalesce to form a sprawling swath of new development.
- **Transformation of former “dacha” settlements into bona fide suburbs.** A typical feature of cities in the region during the communist period was the presence of large clusters of land located just beyond the urban edge, which were designated for private gardening. The land in these zones was divided in small allotments which could be purchased by individuals. The phenomenon, found also in Western European cities, was not limited to Central and Eastern Europe but included cities throughout the Soviet Union as well. Today, for instance, approximately 80 per cent of the population in Tashkent, Uzbekistan has access to such properties.²⁶ Construction on the garden allotments was initially limited to small-scale seasonal buildings. After the fall of communism, however, these restrictions were lifted, which allowed a growing group of affluent residents to build large and expensive single-family homes. Within a short time, many of these areas were transformed into upscale suburban communities. The most notable examples can be found in the western edges of the metropolitan areas of Moscow²⁷ and Budapest.²⁸
- **Planned suburban communities.** The initial phase of affluent residential suburbanization was driven by upper-income residents moving into individually constructed homes. Economic growth in the more advanced transitional countries increased the share of the middle class. The increase in wealth accumulated by larger segments of the population and the establishment of a mortgage finance system supported a new

24. UNDP, 2003.

25. World Bank, 2006b.

26. Akerlund, 2006.

27. Medvedkov and Medvedkov, 2007.

28. Kovács and Tosics, forthcoming.

trend in the suburban residential market—that of large-scale master-planned suburban communities. Many of these new projects are backed by large international real estate investors applying their time-tested development schemes without much regard for the local context.

- **Non-residential suburban development.** Residential uses are not the only sector of urban activities impacted by the forces of decentralization during the post-communist period. In the last ten years, big-box shopping centres, malls, and office parks have sprung up throughout the metropolitan areas of the transitional countries, as discussed earlier. These new commercial developments have gravitated towards more affluent suburban growth areas, reinforcing their further expansion. New warehousing and light industrial facilities are scattered beyond this suburban ring, forming clusters around transportation nodes and corridors in the exurban periphery.

The complexity of suburban patterns in the transitional countries and the rapid pace with which the decentralization processes take place have created unprecedented pressures on the urban systems and have jeopardized their balanced, sustainable growth.

7.6. Impacts of suburbanization and sprawl

Like in many other countries throughout the world, urban sprawl in transitional cities has created or exacerbated a number of economic, social, and environmental problems.

The economic impacts of suburbanization in the region are reflected in the added pressure on financially strapped governments to provide infrastructure and services to rapidly decentralizing metropolitan areas. This problem is not simply related to extending road, sewer, and water lines to the fast-growing suburbs. In many cases throughout the region, both national and local governments have become active promoters of decentralization through their economic development policies. Public officials have committed substantial funds in order to secure pristine pieces of land at the urban periphery and to provide them with infrastructure and services in an attempt to create enterprise zones intended to entice prospective foreign investors. Following the same economic growth imperatives, big-box and shopping centre developers (which gravitate by rule towards the cheaper land in the urban periphery) are given a green light by the local authorities with little consideration given to the impact of the new developments on traffic patterns or on the economic viability of the traditional main-street-type businesses in the urban core. However, investments in suburban infrastructure are a particularly unwise strategy in the context of the transitional countries because of the dire need of infrastructure investments in the existing urban areas where old infrastructure facilities, built many decades ago during the height of the communist period, are crumbling.²⁹ As a result of commercial and residential decentralization of activities to the periphery, where existing infrastructure capacity is quite low and public transit access quite limited, traffic congestion in most metropolitan areas in the region has reached unprecedented levels, as noted in Chapter 6. The economic impacts of being stuck in traffic have only recently begun to appear more frequently as items for discussion on the agenda of policy-makers.

Social polarization is another well-known effect of intensive suburbanization. Urban decentralization is not a socially benevolent process. It creates more distance between the haves and have-nots, and increases spatial stratification by concentrating wealth in certain urban areas and poverty in others. It also carries gender impacts as it typically restricts suburban women's opportunities to participate in business and civic life. Unfortunately, state and

29. See Chapter 8 in this report.

local economic development policies in the transitional countries, which have placed priority on serving the needs of investors over those of community residents, have exacerbated these social and gender inequalities. This situation is worsened further by the drain of revenues from central cities caused by the relocation of increasing shares of affluent residents and economic activities beyond the urban boundaries. This in turn reduces tax flows into the municipal coffers of urban governments.

The process of suburbanization and the public policies which support it have contributed not only to the erosion of the social fabric of the transitional cities, but have caused further environmental degradation. Urban sprawl has led to an increase in air pollution as suburbanization has induced greater travel demand. The haphazard, low-density pattern of suburban growth has made public transit service to the growing suburban areas a very difficult proposition. This, coupled with the newfound love of the emerging middle-class for a suburban lifestyle (including heavy reliance on personal modes of transportation and a preference for suburban shopping, work, and entertainment environments), has wreaked havoc on the urban transportation system and, ultimately, increased the levels of air pollution. The proliferation of new suburban developments throughout the region has also resulted in the rapid disappearance of farmland, open space, and environmentally sensitive areas (as discussed in Chapter 6.2), thus reducing the access of urban residents to these areas and worsening water, air, and soil pollution.

All of these economic, social, and environmental issues related to urban decentralization seem to have caught the governments of the post-communist cities by surprise. In city after city and country after country, urban planning authorities have failed to respond adequately to these challenges, with their roles ranging from being passive observers to active accomplices in the process of suburbanization.

7.7. Urban planning and policy implications

For the most part of the transition period, the decentralization of urban activities was viewed by public authorities and urban residents alike as an inevitable process and a welcome sign that the former communist cities are becoming more like the rest of the developed world.³⁰ This view was particularly popular during the first phase of the transition period, sometimes referred to as the “Wild East” period, which came to a conclusion by the end of the 1990s.³¹ Development that took place during that time generated a critical mass of urban sprawl in most of the transitional countries, before public administration began to consider proper development controls.³²

One of the major failures of public policy regarding the process of suburbanization in all transitional countries is the reluctance of state governments to establish national urban development strategies. The presumption shared by state authorities across the region was that with the decentralization of power, cities should be able to manage their own urban problems. This position ignored the fact that the roots of many urban problems are planted in larger societal structures, and that their solutions often call for approaches that transcend municipal boundaries. A good example in support of this statement is the process of urban decentralization—whether suburban expansion is discouraged or encouraged—is determined to a great extent by the rules set up on a national level. Particularly important in this sense have been the laws adopted in national legislative bodies that regulate issues such as private

30. Hirt, 2007a; Stanilov, 2007c.

31. Golubchikov, 2004; Nuissl and Rink, 2003; Sýkora, 1999a.

32. Häussermann, 1997.

property rights, the conversion of agricultural land to urban uses, the protection of the environment, and the rights of local governments to regulate urban development. All of these, as noted earlier, have provided significant support for the forces of suburbanization. Last but not least, the absence of a national urban growth strategy is a policy in itself. The lack of concrete national programmes and plans for urban regeneration in the transitional countries in the areas of housing renovation, brownfield redevelopment and infrastructure improvement has aided the processes of inner-city decline and has thus indirectly fostered suburban expansion.

The response of local governments to the challenges of urban decentralization and sprawl has been in line with these national government policies. Lacking a strong legal basis for regulation and a coherent national vision for urban growth, local authorities have embraced an economic development agenda, which has been exceptionally friendly to revenue-generating investment proposals at the expense of broader, long-term environmental and social concerns. The intensification of competition between local governments for attracting outside investments has successfully pushed social and ecological concerns further down the list of government priorities.

The intensifying competition for investments among municipalities coupled with the fragmentation of the political landscape brought by the decentralization of power from central to local governments has made the establishment of metropolitan-wide urban growth policies an extremely challenging task. The communist-era practice of annexing territories to the central city, as the need for urban expansion arises, has been discontinued as a non-viable political choice. In the context of growing political independence, suburban municipalities in the metropolitan areas of Moscow, Budapest, Warsaw, and other major cities in the region are amassing resources that allow them to challenge the previous dominance of the central-city government in matters related to urban growth regulation. These suburban municipalities have become sophisticated promoters of their locational advantages. By perpetually highlighting their suburban-type resources such as cheap land, low costs of living, and favourable environmental conditions, they have become increasingly successful in attracting investors from the central city to the suburban periphery.

As the decentralization of urban activities is picking up pace in many countries of the region, its impacts are beginning to move closer to the focus of public attention. The more sprawl metropolitan areas generate, the more visible become its consequences. Most critical in this sense have been the mounting problems of traffic congestion and air pollution. The realization that both public and natural resources are limited has created pressure on local and national governments to reconsider their current positions and policies at least to an extent. Some transitional countries, such as Slovenia, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, are moving forward with the development and adoption of national urban development strategies emphasizing the importance of concentrating resources for the redevelopment of inner-city areas and curbing investments supporting suburban sprawl. These governments have been aided by the experience accumulated by other European countries and by European Union structural development programs and funds. The experience from some of the earlier pre-accession programs, which prioritized big infrastructure projects fostering suburban sprawl, has highlighted the need to fine-tune the structural policies of the European Union in order to place a greater emphasis on improving the quality of urban environments.

As smart-growth alternatives to urban sprawl begin to emerge as an area of public concern in the former communist countries, many of the new planning documents and programmes have made an attempt to address more clearly the issue of metropolitan growth management. While these documents seem to hit the right tone, most of their initiatives appear to be not more than symbolic gestures which lack effective supporting legal

mechanisms, detailed strategies, and proper funding for adequate implementation (as mentioned in Chapter 6.3).³³ The reversal of urban decentralization would require a much more determined approach to regulating the powerful forces which unleashed it during the transition period. Anything other than a coordinated national plan embraced by regional and local governments with a strong financial and institutional backing by international organizations will fall short of this goal.

33. Sýkora, 2006.

8. Infrastructure Policies

This chapter discusses issues related to the provision of infrastructure (roads, public utilities and telecommunications) in the transitional countries and the impact of this type of investments on the patterns of urban development in the region. The chapter begins with an overview of the existing infrastructure conditions and the public policies guiding this critical sector of urban growth management. This is followed by a critical overview of government policies which prioritize investments in big-ticket mega-projects. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the impact of infrastructure investment policies on the marginalization of certain groups of urban residents and the role that infrastructure investment decisions play in the context of sustainable urban development.

8.1. Existing conditions

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the communist countries was that basic public infrastructure and services covered urban areas almost universally. This has been one of the most valuable urban legacies of the communist period—a time when adequate provision of essential infrastructure and services was a clearly stated public goal. The basic elements of the urban infrastructure systems—roads, water and sewer mains, power and telephone lines, educational, recreational and health facilities—were built during the first decades after World War II. Subsequent extensions and upgrades were made during the 1970s, and more minor ones during the 1980s. During these last two decades, the communist regimes concentrated the lion share of public investments in the construction of new large-scale industrial facilities and housing estates at the urban periphery, as it was already mentioned in the previous chapters. This strategy led to prolonged disinvestment in inner-city neighbourhoods, whose infrastructure began to crumble. It should be noted also that, due to the communist emphasis on quantity rather than quality, the extensive coverage of urban areas with basic infrastructure was often accomplished at the expense of its quality and reliability.

Thus, by the early 1990s, post-communist governments inherited extensive urban infrastructure. But this infrastructure showed serious signs of aging and required urgent renovation. The much needed upgrade, of course, did not take place during the transition period. On the contrary, funding for infrastructure expansion and maintenance was severely curtailed due to the economic crisis and the dramatic withdrawal of state subsidies from municipal affairs. The situation was further exacerbated by the new patterns of urban development characterized by haphazard, unplanned and often unauthorized construction activities, and the lack of basic spatial coordination—the problems highlighted in the previous chapter. Following the post-2000 economic recovery of the region,¹ the pace of private investment in urban development clearly began to outpace the ability of governments to match it with adequate infrastructure.

Today, the majority of cities in the transitional countries are facing severe challenges in the provision of quality public infrastructure and services to all their urban residents.

8.1.1. Transportation infrastructure

As noted in Chapter 6.2, automobile use in the region has skyrocketed. The new reality of heavy individual car travel has placed a heavy burden on the existing road infrastructure. The

1. See Chapter 1 in this report.

street network of cities in the region, designed and constructed half a century ago with the idea of carrying vehicular traffic several times below current levels, is experiencing major difficulties handling the new traffic volumes.

In an attempt to alleviate congestion, urban governments have concentrated the majority of investments in road capacity improvements. This policy has had limited impact on improving traffic flows as it has simply generated more automobile use. Public transit systems in the region have been particularly hurt by these misguided transportation policies. The drastic reduction in subsidies for the mass-transit sector has decreased the share of urban trips carried by public transit from 80 to 90 per cent at the end of the 1980s to 50 per cent in recent years. Placing so much emphasis on road construction and the needs of the automobile has further reduced the availability of funding for the other, equally important areas of infrastructure and service delivery.

8.1.2. Public utilities

While access to basic services measured by network connections remains widespread in the region, the reliability of services, such as clean and reliable water supply, adequate sanitation systems and waste collection, is a major problem. Current measures of infrastructure performance in many countries are alarming. The problem of shortage of safe drinking water is especially acute. For instance, according to some sources, up to 34 per cent of water samples in Belarus, 22 per cent in Russia and 15 per cent in Georgia do not meet chemical standards for drinking water. Regular water supply is a chronic problem in a number of nations including Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The situation is typically much better in large cities, especially in national and regional capitals where service delivery reaches near complete coverage, but much worse in secondary cities and rural areas. Furthermore, even in large cities, there appear to be a significant disconnect between the relatively positive picture painted by governments and the realities on the ground.² The gap between connection and reliability in water delivery systems is particularly critical in small and medium cities in Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.³ Illegal pipe tapping, lack of sanitary facilities, and water rationing has caused additional physical stress on already partially damaged utility equipment, thus increasing the risks of urban illnesses.⁴

Sanitary conditions in many urban areas of the region are worsened by the widespread presence of inadequate urban sewer systems. The situation is particularly alarming in Central Asia where most cities have severely outdated sewer treatment facilities. In Uzbekistan, for instance, only 40 per cent of the most densely populated areas have sewage systems.⁵ Throughout Central Asia, the pace of the development of urban wastewater systems has not been able to keep up with population growth. In the Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek, with a population of about 1 million residents, the existing infrastructure facilities are designed for only half a million.

Waste management is another area where urban governments throughout the region are failing to meet their basic obligations. Waste storage facilities in many urban areas exceed capacity and violate health standards. Solid waste management is a particularly severe problem for cities in Central Asia. In Uzbekistan, only five of the 261 garbage dumps meet environmental compliance standards. Only one third of the cities in Kazakhstan are serviced

2. Tsenkova, 2004.

3. World Bank, 2006b.

4. USAID, undated (a,b,c,d).

5. USAID, undated (a,b,c,d).

with adequate solid waste collection and disposal. Under these circumstances, urban waste that is not collected ends up in informal dumpsites or simply disposed along roadsides.⁶

While the infrastructure crisis is most severe in the cities of Central Asia and the Caucasus region, similar problems exist in the Eastern European countries as well. There, the rapid suburbanization of metropolitan areas has placed an additional burden on the existing infrastructure. As discussed in the previous chapters of this report, this pattern of decentralization of urban activities has put tremendous pressure on municipal governments to extend services to the new outlying growth areas. This new trend has further eroded governments' ability to provide efficient service within the already urbanized areas. As the rate of urban expansion has outgrown the ability of municipal governments to provide services, it is not uncommon to see impressive new residential houses located in areas where minimal infrastructure is limited to a few dirt roads and precarious hook-ups to the power and water grids.

8.1.3. Telecommunications

This is an area where the most notable improvements have been registered throughout the region. The telecommunications revolution has reduced the cost of these services across the globe and the population of the transitional countries has eagerly taken advantage of these new opportunities. The explosion of the telecommunication sector in the region has been a result of pent-up demand generated by the slow, technologically obsolete, and bureaucratic system of service delivery during the communist period, as well as by the decades-long government-imposed isolation of these countries from the rest of the world. Not surprisingly, a common household investment in the early 1990s, in spite of the high costs, was the purchase of a satellite dish, clusters of which adorned many balconies in the communist-era prefabricated housing estates.

This wave was followed by the advance of cable TV, wireless phones, and, ultimately, the Internet. The use of the Internet has expanded rapidly throughout the region parallel to the fast growing number of broadband providers and users. The growth of digital communications has spread to all countries of the region, including those in Central Asia which otherwise face the most severe infrastructure shortages. Between 1999 and 2005, the number of Internet subscribers increased from 3,000 to more than 250,000 users in Kyrgyzstan, and from 7,000 to more than 800,000 in Uzbekistan.⁷

8.2. Infrastructure policies

8.2.1. Funding for infrastructure and services

The need for massive investments in urban infrastructure has clearly exceeded the ability of municipal governments in the region to finance such costly undertaking. The push to turn the delivery of public services into self-financing commercial operations has been undermined by the inadequacies and inefficiencies of the inherited infrastructure networks, and by the limited financial capacity of residents to pay for the true costs and necessary upgrades of existing services. Most local governments in the region have been unable to finance infrastructure investments from current budget revenues. Their ability to finance improvements through the

6. USAID, undated (a,b,c,d).

7. Library of Congress, 2007a.

sale of bonds has been also quite limited due to a widespread mistrust in the transparency of all their financial operations.⁸

A secondary source of funding for infrastructure improvements, which has cushioned some of the blows incurred by local government budgets, is the financial assistance provided by international institutions such as the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. These institutions have funded some major infrastructure projects, primarily focused on upgrades of road infrastructure and urban transportation systems, and more recently on the construction of solid waste and sewer treatment facilities. In addition, countries in Central and Eastern Europe have benefited from generous pre- and post-accession European Union funds also designated for infrastructure. This support, however, has been limited to the small group of new member states. Furthermore, the appropriation of European Union funds is not proceeding as smoothly as planned.

Under these circumstances, privatization and outsourcing of public utility services to the private sector has become the most popular strategy of reforming municipal service delivery. Since the late 1990s, the process has advanced quickly in Central and Eastern Europe, but it is still moving slowly in the countries of the former Soviet Union. The commercialization of service delivery has resulted in significant reduction in subsidies and a transfer of the costs needed for operating and upgrading the systems to the users. This has resulted in drastic increases in the price of services and has consumed ever greater portions of meagre household incomes.

8.2.2. Mega-projects and redevelopment

A popular strategy employed by many governments in the region during the later stages of the transition period has been to concentrate public investments in large-scale development projects. Significant shares of public resources have been provided in support of mega-investment schemes intended to project a positive image of a specific city or country. Yet, the impact of these investments on the lives of ordinary residents has been questionable at best.⁹

Towards the end of the 1990s, many local governments, sensitized to the need to act aggressively in the global competition for capital, began to develop new enterprise zones at their municipal peripheries. In some cases, these efforts have been spearheaded by national organizations placed in charge of providing land, infrastructure, and various other incentives to prospective investors.¹⁰ A consequence of many of these development programs has been the acceleration of urban sprawl. The location of most of the newly formed enterprise zones at the suburban fringe has undermined opportunities for investment in existing urban areas.¹¹

The streams of financial assistance provided by international institutions have generated their own share of adverse effects on community development as well. Too often, projects funded by such sources require significant financial and institutional commitment by the beneficiaries, consuming the bulk of their operational capacity. Furthermore, initiatives funded by international institutions often have diversionary effects (i.e., disproportionate shares of state and local resources are committed to these mega-projects), which leads to the neglect of other important areas of public concern.¹²

8. UNCHS, 2001.

9. UNCHS, 2001.

10. Sýkora and Ouředníček, 2007.

11. Nuissl and Rink, 2003.

12. World Bank, 2006a.

8.3. Conclusions: The impact of infrastructure policies and investments

8.3.1. Sustainability and urban form

Government policies regarding infrastructure provision are among the most powerful tools that local authorities have at their disposal for regulating urban growth in a manner that allows adequate and efficient delivery of services to all residents. An enlightened approach to managing the patterns of growth through a combination of restrictions and incentives is an essential prerequisite to advancing the principles of sustainable urban development. Unfortunately, a clear recognition of the link between public infrastructure investment policies and sustainable growth has been largely absent in the region during this critical period of metropolitan spatial restructuring.

The implementation of sustainable urban development principles requires a concerted public effort, one that involves the cooperation of all levels of government following a clearly established and agreed upon set of social goals. Preventing urban sprawl and revitalizing urban areas are tasks that require strong and enlightened leadership—the type of leadership that could challenge public conventions entrenched during the transition period about the priority of economic concerns over social and environmental issues and the supremacy of individual rights over public interests. Unfortunately, such a paradigm shift has not yet occurred either at the national or at the local level in most of the transitional countries.

In a region characterized by an enormous waste of resources in the past ensuing serious environmental degradation, a compelling case could be made for an urban growth management approach emphasizing environmental resource preservation. Far from it, since most state funding is now committed to freeway and road construction, and local government efforts are focused on increasing road capacity, the automobile has become the officially sanctioned dominant mode of transportation. This has led to further increases in environmental pollution and the proliferation of auto-oriented (sub)urban development. This trend is also reinforced by the abundance of enterprise zones set up by national and local governments at the urban periphery. The channelling of public resources to newly emerging suburban employment and retail centres (or exclusive golf course developments as in the case of Bulgaria, for instance) stands in stark contrast to public disinvestments in basic infrastructure and service provision in distressed urban areas.

8.3.2. Marginalization of groups

The disparity between the large public infrastructure investment needs and the inability of governments to provide adequate service delivery in urban areas has contributed to rising social inequality in the cities of the transitional countries.

While significant public resources have been dedicated to attracting economic investments to specially designated areas, poor urban neighbourhoods have been chronically underserved. Such areas have become vulnerable to public health hazards due to limited access to safe drinking water and the lack of proper sanitation. They have suffered the most in terms of a general degradation in the level of maintenance of their physical infrastructure and built environment. Crumbling pavements, utility mains, and rooftops are becoming normal sight in the everyday life of their residents. In most cities, where service reliability has deteriorated, it is the poor neighbourhoods that experience most frequent service breakdowns.¹³ And in the poorest urban areas such services might not be available altogether. Very poor communities

13. EBRD, 2007.

located in peripheral areas are barely linked to the urban transportation and utility networks. In such areas, limited access to private and public transportation means severely restricts their residents' mobility and reduces their chances to find employment, thus only reinforcing the poverty cycle.

The sharp increase in the cost of services is another factor that has impacted urban residents differentially. While the incomes of the upper- and middle-class households have increased sufficiently to allow them to bear the rising costs of public utilities, the lower-income groups have been severely affected by the skyrocketing prices of municipal services. Many of these residents, who have difficulties covering their basic living costs, have decided to disconnect themselves from the utility systems altogether.

In many transitional countries, a disparity in the provision of infrastructure and services exists also between primary cities and those in the lower tiers of the urban settlement network. As the lion share of new economic investments during the transition period has been concentrated in capital regions, the rise in the incomes of their residents has outpaced significantly that experienced in the rest of the country. This has been reflected accordingly in the amount of tax revenues collected by their local governments. Subsequently, this disparity has influenced the ability of local governments to provide services. In Georgia, for instance, the share of households residing in secondary cities reporting reliable access to potable water is only one third of the share of such households living in the capital city. This situation is not unique to the Caucasus region.

Addressing the issues related to social inequality in the provision of infrastructure and services is an area of public policy that has not received proper attention in the transitional countries. Yet, it is a critical component of socio-economic growth, which should not be overlooked if cities in the region are to embrace the principles of sustainable development as a guiding strategy. Clearly, an overarching reconsideration of state and local priorities with respect to infrastructure provision is in order.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation of Urban Plans

9.1. The need for monitoring and evaluation

Since the beginning of the 1990s, urban planning in the transitional countries has undergone a dramatic evolution, which closely reflects the broader transformations of post-communist societies. As Chapter 4 pointed out, following the deep professional crisis during the early years of the transition, by the end of the 1990s urban planning managed to re-establish itself as an important government function and a much needed mechanism for regulating the use of land, space, and other precious public and private resources. While the field of urban planning in most transitional countries has made significant advances in adapting to the realities of market-based economic relations and democratic governance, very little progress has been made to this day in embracing monitoring and evaluation as integral parts of the urban planning process.

Several factors could be highlighted as underlying causes of this unfortunate situation. One factor is the lack of traditions in monitoring and evaluation. The objective assessment of stated goals was not a strong element of communist planning, which was dominated by strict ideological imperatives. Little concern was given to how suitable the plans were to meet actual local needs or how well they managed to achieve their objectives. Admitting failure was never an option; in fact, until their very last days communist regimes continued to produce reports glorifying their achievements. This legacy is hard to overcome especially since the political structure in most former communist states is still entrenched in centralized approaches to government and is not conducive to independent reviews of plans and plan implementation.

Another set of constraints impeding the incorporation of objective monitoring and evaluation as integral parts of the urban planning process is rooted in the new political reality. In the context of political turbulence which has been typical of most countries in the region during the transition, the value of accountability to the public has been diluted by the constantly shifting balance of political powers. Thus, plans, initiatives, and programmes adopted by one government have been easily dismissed on political grounds by the next government voted into power. The opposite political situation characterizes these countries in the region, which have stable but autocratic regimes. In the communist tradition, tolerance of government criticism in such countries is low and the idea of government performance evaluation remains a politically unacceptable proposition.

Finally, the low level of plan monitoring and evaluation in the region has been rationalized on economic grounds; i.e., governments have consistently claimed that limited budgets do not permit designating resources for such purposes. More pressing needs to address a wide range of urgent problems with scarce institutional and financial resources—the argument goes—has forced governments to slash funding for secondary needs like monitoring or evaluation. This justification for inaction is of course quite dubious and points to the unwillingness of authorities to allow public scrutiny of their actions.

The current state of affairs in plan monitoring and evaluation in the region should become a key target for further institutional reforms. The urgency for reform is premised on the vast amounts of public and private investments that are managed through the process of urban planning and the enormous consequences urban planning has for the quality of life of current and future generations. Another reason for the need to enforce the practice of effective

plan monitoring and evaluation is the sheer pace of the socio-economic and urban development processes taking place in the transitional countries. Such swiftly developing urban environments require continuous re-evaluation and adjustment of goals. The lack of feedbacks and correctives in the planning system could lead to dire economic, social, and environmental consequences that will be very difficult to undo in the future.

9.2. Possible methods of improvement

One of the most effective methods of strengthening plan monitoring and evaluation in the post-communist countries is the promotion of new, more flexible approaches to plan development and plan implementation that allow relatively quick feedback loops into these processes. The application of the strategic planning approach has been tested with success in a number of capital cities in the region.¹ These experiences have indicated that the success of strategic planning could be guaranteed only when it proceeds within the context of deep institutional reforms designed to promote the democratization of the planning process (see Chapter 4.4).

While significant progress has been made in increasing the level of citizen involvement in many countries of the region, these efforts have been concentrated primarily in the area of organizing broader public discussions of proposals and alternatives prepared by expert teams (see Chapter 5). To a lesser extent, some progress has been achieved in engaging the public more actively in the processes of goal-setting and plan development. However, very little has been accomplished in integrating broader public participation in the process of monitoring and control. Significant advances in this area can be achieved by requiring independent reviews of progress toward attainment of established goals. Such assessments could be carried out by non-profit organizations, citizen groups, expert committees, or professional firms immune to political influence.

Access to knowledge in plan monitoring and evaluation accumulated from good practices around the world and within the region is another underutilized method of increasing the effectiveness of urban planning. The opportunities for exchange of ideas and experiences within the global planning community have increased significantly after the fall of communism. As a result, urban planners from professional and academic circles, as well as public officials engaged in all aspects of urban management, have undertaken active cross-national exchanges. These exchanges have begun to bear fruit, but they still take place on an *ad hoc* basis—as opportunities for such contacts present themselves—rather than in a structured way that would allow such experiences to become routine practice.

The positive outlook for establishing stronger transnational cooperation in the area of urban planning is a good reason to be optimistic about future advances in the practice of urban management in the region. The integration of Eastern European countries in the European Union has broadened their participation in programmes and projects under the guidance of international organizations with well-established traditions in monitoring and evaluation. The need to follow established procedures for the appropriation of funding from international institutions has increased awareness for the value of accountability. The recent push to tie more directly the availability of funds from these sources to past performance should further strengthen the areas of plan monitoring and evaluation in the recipient countries.

1. Tsenkova, 2007b.

9.3. Progress and success stories

There are a growing number of cases where the implementation of such practices has already produced some promising results. Most notably, a number of dynamically evolving cities in the region, including Budapest, Prague, Moscow, Riga, and Bratislava, have already initiated, prepared, and adopted full-scale revisions of their first-generation post-communist master plans from the 1990s. Even in cases, where the preparation of the first post-communist plans has taken significantly longer, new revisions are already on the board. The Bulgarian capital of Sofia, for instance, which adopted its plan in 2007 after a decade of an excruciatingly painful, politically charged process, already has put forward for public discussion a revised version of the same plan. The short lifespan of the first generation of post-communist master plans offers a couple of different but not necessarily contradicting interpretations. First, it is a testimony of how quickly post-communist cities are changing. Second, it offers evidence that the initial master plans failed to predict and direct urban change successfully. The quick emergence of a second generation of master plans is also a reflection of a desire to make the process of urban planning more flexible, adaptive, and responsive to the dynamic context within which urban planning in the transitional countries takes place. It is also a clear recognition of the need for planning as a basis for managing socio-spatial relations in turbulent times and the ability of the maturing democratic societies in the region to mobilize resources for the accomplishment of this task.

Another positive sign pointing to the increasing importance of plan monitoring and evaluation in the region is the growing popularity of strategic planning. In the last ten years, most capital cities from the Baltics to the Balkans have gone through a process of strategy development that has produced varying degrees of success.² Most enthusiastically the strategic approach to urban planning and public management has been embraced by the Baltic states. A critical component of their success was their dedication to establishing clear “road maps” for institutional reform, designed to support the successful integration of the strategic approach in urban planning. This has included the implementation of performance-driven public management reforms, which have played a key role in transforming Lithuania, for example, from a slow reformer in the mid-1990s to one of the best performing post-communist states by 2006. Another characteristic of the successful adaptation of strategic planning principles in Lithuania and Latvia was related to the fact that these countries employed external models but with substantial modifications to their local context and needs, thus avoiding the possible pitfalls of the implementation process.

Another group of success stories from the region, underscoring the value of plan monitoring and evaluation, has been generated by the participation of transitional countries and city governments in internationally funded programs and projects. The active involvement of many Eastern and Central European countries in the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON)³ is a clear testimony to the value of such broad initiatives which cut across national boundaries and provide valuable experience for the participating parties. Although significant difficulties have hindered the absorption of international aid at the optimal levels afforded by these programmes, this experience has elevated the awareness of public institutions in the participating countries about the need to enforce transparency and accountability in all their actions related to the use of public resources.

2. Buckley and Tsenkova, 2001; Nedovic-Budic, 2001; Maier, 2000.

3. ESPON is the premier EU-funded research programme focused on territorial development and spatial planning.

9.4. Conclusions and policy recommendations

The scarcity of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of urban, regional, and national planning initiatives carries costs that transitional societies cannot afford to pay. In the absence of feedback mechanisms measuring the success of planning activities vis-à-vis their stated goals, the continuation of this practice raises the risk of misallocation of vast public resources. The path to progress in this area is highlighted by examples of successful integration of plan monitoring and evaluation as critical components of the urban planning process found in many cities of the region and beyond. The essential elements necessary for success may be summarized as follows. First, old bureaucratic methods of urban planning and management reliant on centralized, command-driven approaches must be replaced by dynamic, goal-oriented planning methods allowing quick feedback loops into the planning process. Second, as it was pointed out in the previous chapters, innovative planning approaches such as strategic planning and performance-driven public management should be incorporated more widely. Third, as Chapter 5 discussed, broader public participation must be sought as a way of bringing transparency and accountability to the urban planning process in all of its phases, including plan monitoring and evaluation. Fourth, broader knowledge exchange and cooperation among planning professionals and public officials across the region and beyond its boundaries are necessary in order to increase awareness of best practices. Finally, involvement in programmes and projects supervised by multinational organizations must increase not solely because of its immediate financial benefits, but also because it provides learning opportunities which raise awareness of the need for accountability. The adoption of these strategies for improving the level of plan monitoring and evaluation is the next critical step in carrying forward the process of planning reforms in the transitional countries.

10. Urban Planning Education

This chapter discusses the state of planning education in the transitional countries. First, it briefly introduces the history of formal planning education with a focus on education during the communist period. Second, the chapter analyzes how planning education has changed after 1989. It critiques the persistent scarcity of integrated planning degrees, but acknowledges several positive developments in planning education such as the growing prominence of courses on sustainable development in the planning curricula. The chapter concludes with brief recommendations for educational reforms.

10.1. History of urban planning education

As Chapter 3 noted, planning in the transitional countries has ancient origins. In Russia, specifically, formal physical planning occupied an increasingly important role among other government functions at since Peter the Great executed his grandiose plans for a new national capital in the early 18th century. As elsewhere in the so-called Western world, Russia's town planners throughout the 18th and 19th century were trained as architects and engineers; an autonomous planning degree did not exist. The first institution of civil engineering in Russia was the Institute for Road Construction Engineering, established in 1809. In 1832, it became the St. Petersburg School for Civil Engineers. The first School of Architecture was founded in 1841. The two schools eventually merged to form today's acclaimed St. Petersburg State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering. Through the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this university produced architects and engineers who rivalled those from Europe's most distinguished architectural and engineering academies. By 1930, the University had three fields of specialization: architecture, civil engineering, and economics and project management. Planning courses were split between the three specializations. A degree in City Building was formally created in 1949 and in 1952 it became a separate department. Although this department offered courses in the humanities and social sciences (e.g., art history and some geography and economics courses) it remained very much rooted into a technocratic—architecture and civil engineering—academic culture.¹ The first university in economics in Russia was the St. Petersburg's Business School dating back to 1897. It later became the Leningrad Institute of the Economy and today is the St. Petersburg State University of Engineering and Economics.² This university, among of course many others in Russia, was responsible for educating the armies of economic planners, which were needed during the communist period. In essence, although planning-related courses were abundant in both architecture-civil engineering and economics universities, an inter-disciplinary degree in urban planning did not exist during the Soviet period.³

The story in Central and Eastern Europe was quite the same. In Czechoslovakia, for instance, physical planners and urban designers were educated at the Departments of Urban Planning of the Faculties of Architecture at the Technical Universities in Prague and Brno, whereas economic planners graduated from Universities of Economics as the one in Prague. Additionally, geographers and sociologists, who also provided input in various plans at national and local scales, came from schools in the humanities and social sciences like

1. See Leningrad Civil Engineering Institute, 1982.

2. St. Petersburg State University of Engineering and Economics, undated.

3. Shove and Anderson, 1997.

Charles University in Prague and Masaryk University in Brno.⁴ Similarly in Bulgaria, physical planners and urban designers attended the Higher Institute of Architecture and Civil Engineering in Sofia; whereas economic planners had degrees from higher institutes of economics, and geographers and sociologists came from the universities specializing in the liberal arts and social sciences like Sofia State University.

10.2. Current state of planning education

There are many universities teaching urban planning in the transitional countries. Table 13 lists selected universities in Central and Eastern Europe and shows which faculties or colleges house the planning programs. As the table illustrates, the majority of these programs are located in architecture academic units, which testifies to the persistence of the physical, design side of planning. There are a few cases when planning is located in academic units specializing in the social sciences (e.g., geography and economics). Even fewer are those which have an autonomous college dedicated to inter-disciplinary planning (e.g., the School of the Built Environment, Spatial Policy and City and Regional Management at Lodz University in Poland). This of course is not a problem *per se*: in the United States, for example, urban planning programs rarely have an autonomous academic unit. Typically, they are housed in schools of architecture and landscape architecture, civil engineering, public policy, geography or natural resources. This diversity of planning “homes” attests to the inter-disciplinary nature of the profession itself. Upon closer inspection of case studies, however, it appears that planning programs in the transitional countries have not sufficiently changed since communist times to develop a truly integrated, inter-disciplinary planning curriculum.

Table 13. Select universities offering urban planning courses

Country	City	University	Faculty within the university	Planning degree (specialization)	Membership in AESOP
Albania	Tirana	Technical University of Tirana	Faculty of Architecture and Planning	YES	NO
Armenia	Yerevan	Yerevan State Institute of Architecture and Construction	unknown	YES	NO
Bulgaria	Sofia	University of Architecture and Civil Engineering	Faculty of Architecture	YES*	YES
Croatia	Zagreb	University of Zagreb	Faculty of Architecture	YES*	NO
Czech Rep.	Brno	Brno Technical University	Faculty of Architecture, Urban Design and Planning	YES	YES
	Ostrava	Ostrava Technical University	Faculty of Civil Engineering	YES	YES
	Prague	Czech Technical University at Prague	Faculty of Architecture, Faculty of Civil Engineering	YES	YES

4. Maier, 1994.

Country	City	University	Faculty within the university	Planning degree (specialization)	Membership in AESOP	
Estonia	Tartu	Estonian University of Life Sciences	Faculty of Geomatics	YES	YES	
Hungary	Baranya	Janus Pannonius University	Faculty of Engineering	unknown	NO	
Latvia	Riga	University of Latvia	Faculty of Architecture	YES*	YES	
Lithuania	Vilnius	Vilnius Technical University	unknown	YES	NO	
Poland	Poznan	Adam Miskiewicz University	Faculty of Economic Geography and Spatial Economics	YES	YES	
	Gdansk	Gdansk Technical University	Faculty of Architecture	Yes*	YES	
	Lodz	Lodz University	Faculty of the Built Environment and Spatial Planning, and Urban and Regional Management	YES	YES	
	Krakow	Krakow University of Economics	Faculty of Regional Studies	YES	YES	
	Warsaw	University of Warsaw	Faculty of Architecture	YES*	YES	
	Olsztyn	Warmian and Mazurian University	Faculty of Planning and Rural Development	YES	YES	
	Wraclaw	Wroclaw Technical University	Faculty of Architecture	YES*	YES	
	Romania	Bucharest	Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urbanism	Faculty of Planning and Landscape Architecture	YES*	YES
Technical University of Civil Engineering			unknown	YES	YES	
Russia	Krasnoyarsk	Krasnoyarsk State Academy of Architecture and Civil Construction	unknown	YES	NO	
		Moscow	Moscow Architecture Institute	Faculty of Architecture	YES	NO
		Moscow Land Development University	unknown	unknown	NO	
	Moscow	Moscow State University	Faculty of Geography	YES	NO	
		St. Petersburg	St. Petersburg State University	Faculty of Geography and Geo-ecology	NO	NO
		St. Petersburg	St. Petersburg State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering	Faculty of Architecture	unknown	NO
	Ekaterininburg	Ekaterininburg	St. Petersburg State University of Engineering and Economics	Faculty of State and Municipal Administration	unknown	NO
			Ural State Academy of Arts and Architecture	Institute for Urbanism	unknown	NO

Country	City	University	Faculty within the university	Planning degree (specialization)	Membership in AESOP
Serbia	Belgrade	University of Belgrade	Faculty of Geography, Department of Spatial Planning	YES	YES
Slovakia	Bratislava	Slovak Institute of Technology	Faculty of Architecture	YES*	YES
Slovenia	Ljubljana	University of Ljubljana	Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering, Department of Town and Regional Planning	unknown	YES
Macedonia	Skopje	University St. Cyril and Methody	Faculty of Architecture	YES*	YES
Ukraine	Ukraine	Kharkiv Engineering Institute	unknown	unknown	NO

Note: Asterisk (*) denotes degrees focused on physical planning and urban design.

Sources: AESOP, undated, and individual university websites.

A mid-1990s evaluation of universities in Prague, for instance, found that every type of planning course offered in West European universities is offered in one or more Prague universities; specifically, at the Prague Technical University (Faculty of Architecture and Faculty of Civil Engineering), the University of Economics, and the Natural Science Faculty of Charles University. Although the Technical University offered a graduate program, Spatial Planning, as part of Architecture and a graduate certificate in Urban and Regional Planning as part of Civil Engineering, the study concluded that both programs have a heavy focus on physical planning and, thus, a truly inter-disciplinary planning degree in Prague did not exist. There have been, however, positive developments. By now, the Civil Engineering Faculty has established a degree in Urban Development and Regional Planning, which offers courses beyond a narrow physical orientation, such as economics and local government, and regional studies and development strategies. Still, the department does not yet offer courses in such urban planning essentials as geographic information systems, sustainable development and citizen participation in planning (presumably, such courses could be taken elsewhere).⁵

In Serbia, a Spatial Planning degree (graduate and undergraduate) is offered at the Faculty of Geography at the University of Belgrade. This is one of the oldest spatial planning degrees in the region, established in 1976. Table 14 summarizes the current undergraduate curriculum. As the table shows, there is an emphasis on geography and geology courses, although social sciences such as economics, sociology and ecology, as well as regional and strategic planning are also well represented. The curriculum is comprehensive and rigorous. However, the humanities side of planning—history, art, architecture and urban design—is elective. To obtain this perspective in-depth a student must arrange to take courses at the Faculty of Architecture, across town. Also, like in the Czech case, courses on public participation in the planning process are not well established.⁶

In the Bulgarian capital of Sofia, the University (formerly, the Higher Institute) of Architecture and Civil Engineering offers an autonomous Bachelor's degree in urban planning since 2002 and a Master's since 2006. Faculty from the university has identified some

5. Maier, 1994; Czech Technical University in Prague, undated.

6. This information was obtained by personal communication with faculty from University of Belgrade.

Table 14. Undergraduate courses in Spatial Planning at University of Belgrade, Serbia in 2007

Year	Semester	Courses offered
Year 1	First	Introduction to Spatial Planning; Sociology; Geology; Climatology; Demography of Serbia; Fundamentals of Information Systems; Environmental Basis of Spatial Planning; English Language I.
	Second	Hydrology; Dynamic Geomorphology; Contemporary Theory and Practice of Spatial Planning; Introduction in Geographic Information Systems; Fundamentals of Infrastructure; Urban Economics; English Language II.
Year 2	First	Fundamental Methods and Techniques in Spatial Planning; Principles of Regionalism; Environmental Opportunities and Challenges in Spatial planning; Planning for Agriculture; Social Planning; Cartography and Topography; Electives: History of Spatial Planning, or Natural Resources.
	Second	Planning Methods; Functional Regionalism; Regional Development; Tourism Planning; Planning of Residential Areas; Infrastructure Planning; Thematic Cartography. Elective: Urban Ecology, or Urban Design.
Year 3	First	Regional Planning and Development; Political Geography; Strategic Urban Planning; Industrial Planning and Development; Use of Geographic Information Systems in Spatial Planning; Rural Geography; Regional Geography of Serbia.
	Second	Studio Project; Residential Planning; Urban Regulation; Infrastructure Forecasting; Spatial Management; Spatial Modelling; Electives: Advanced Geographic Information Systems, or Urban and Rural Regeneration.
Year 4	First	Advanced Environmental Planning; Ecological Complexity; Strategic Planning for Residential Areas; Spatial Planning and Economic Development; Urban Functional Organization; Government Actors and Spatial Change.
	Second	Planning for Natural and Cultural Heritage Conservation; Spatial Planning for Energy; Spatial Planning for Brownfield Redevelopment; Planning of Infrastructure Corridors; European Legislation in Spatial Planning; Regional Policy in Serbia and the European Union; Financial Principles and Mechanisms of Regional Development in Serbia and the European Union.

Source: Personal communication with faculty from the University of Belgrade.

impediments to their development into comprehensive planning degrees, including the mere fact that under Bulgarian law, the University of Architecture and Civil Engineering cannot hire in permanent positions faculty with degrees other than the ones identified as primary (e.g., other than architecture). In other words, faculty with training in, say, economics or law, can only be employed under a temporary status. This of course hardly helps the curriculum.⁷

Going back to St. Petersburg State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering, urban and environmental design is taught in the Faculty of Architecture, whereas the Faculty of City Building offers courses in urban management and economics. Governance and economics courses are also taught at the Faculties of State and Municipal Administration and the Faculty of Urban Management at St. Petersburg State University of Engineering and Economics. Regional development and sustainable development courses are taught at St. Petersburg State University Geography Faculty. In Moscow, the Faculty of Geography of Moscow State University offers arguably the most integrated planning degree in the city.⁸

7. Troeva, 2007.

8. St. Petersburg State University; St. Petersburg State University of Engineering and Economics, undated.

There are further signs that integrated urban planning degrees will become more common in the near future. Programs in State and Municipal Administration (such as the one at St. Petersburg's State University of Engineering and Economics) operate under state educational guidelines. These guidelines now include the option for a Regional Planning concentration, which offers a more balanced, integrated and comprehensive curriculum including courses in economics and management but also in history, theory and land-use planning and design. Some of these improvements are done within the context of international cooperation. The Polytechnic Institute of Pskov which is in northwest Russia, for instance, has capitalized on building an integrated planning degree in collaboration with the University of Massachusetts.⁹

Another important area of educational progress across the transitional countries has been the growing prominence of sustainable development in the higher education curricula. This trend of course is not related solely to planning education but is evidence of a broader shift. Its consequences for urban planning are unmistakable as the new courses are available to planning students. The Russian government has approved requirements for incorporating environmental courses in several disciplines across the humanities, and across the social, natural and policy sciences. Approximately 150 state and 750 private universities in Russia have created courses in ecology and environmental law and policy during the transition period. In St. Petersburg State University, for example, 14 out of the 20 faculties have required coursework related to sustainable development. There are about 280 sustainable development courses offered at various universities across the city.¹⁰ Similarly encouraging examples come from across the region. In Latvia, for instance, the Technical University of Riga now has ten required courses on sustainable development at the undergraduate level.¹¹ The University of Latvia, also in Riga, has offered interdisciplinary degrees in environmental sciences and policy since 1991.¹² The Kaunas Technical University recently opened the first multi-disciplinary graduate degree in sustainable development in Lithuania.¹³ Sustainable development courses have become standard practice across many universities in Kyrgyzstan, although an autonomous degree in sustainable development does not yet exist.¹⁴

Another measure of progress is that many universities in the region have aggressive programs for international exchanges of ideas, instructors and students. In fact, many of the successful cases of education reform mentioned above are outcomes of productive international collaborations. The most prominent schools offering planning degrees in Central and Eastern Europe are active members of the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP), as Table 13 illustrates. Regretfully, however, planning schools in the successor states of the Soviet Union (with the exception of those in the Baltic region, which are part of AESOP) do not belong to either the European or the Asian associations of planning schools. This makes the former Soviet Union the largest chunk of the globe which does not take part in the Global Planning Education Association Network (GPEAN).

10.3. Conclusions and recommendations

Education in urban planning has strong traditions in the transitional countries. As in most other parts of the globe, planning originated as a subfield of architecture and civil engineering. What distinguishes the history of planning (and the history of planning education) in the transitional countries from that elsewhere in the world is the unusual

9. Forsyth and Gross, 1998.

10. Verbitskaya et al, 2002.

11. Valtere, 1996

12. Spricis, 2001.

13. UNECE, undated.

14. Hadjamberdiev, 2004.

prominence of the technocratic economic planning tradition. This was due to the key role of national industrial planning during the communist period.

Since the end of communism, universities teaching planning and related disciplines have made important steps toward developing curricula, which are more integrated and attuned to the principles of sustainable development. At least two major challenges remain, however. First, integrated planning degrees continue to be the exception. The division between architecture-based and other planning degrees is yet to be overcome and diplomas in physical planning continue to comprise the most populous stream of all planning degrees, followed by those based in economics and geography. Yet preserving the pre-eminence of degrees embedded into physical planning threatens to prolong the dominance of idealized master plans made of beautiful colour renderings with little relation to social, economic, and environmental conditions on the ground. Second, since both architecture and economics are technocratic fields, their prolonged dominance over planning education poses challenges to moving the planning process in a more citizen-driven, participatory direction. Planning's difficulties in dealing with informal, "illegal" development and in addressing growing social polarization in the region, which were discussed in the earlier chapters, are but two reflections of how disconnected urban planners may be from the citizenry they ostensibly serve. It is clear that more focused efforts to reshape higher education are needed to make urban planning successfully address the crucial challenges facing the transitional countries in the 21st century.

Epilogue

Since the end of communism in 1989, urban planning in the region has undergone a remarkable evolution. To begin with, the context within which it operates was fundamentally altered. The radical economic crisis which dominated the region during the 1990s, coupled with demographic decline, ethnic conflicts and political instability, caused considerable decline in the quality of life for the majority of the region's nearly half a billion urban residents. The only exception was a relatively small class who capitalized on the uncertain conditions and accumulated wealth through various quasi-legal means.

The social and economic downturn during the early, "Wild East" transitional period of the 1990s was accompanied by overall environmental deterioration, despite the fact many of the region's most polluting industries went bankrupt. This environmental degradation was caused by many factors, including the restructuring of urban forms from compact to sprawling, the massive loss of green space, the decline of mass transit options, and the growing pre-eminence of individual automobiles as means of urban transportation. The diverse historic urban heritage of the region was also exposed to serious threats.

Arguably, many of the problems described above could have been prevented by strong government commitment, at national and municipal levels, to a more sustainable mode of urban and regional development. Such commitment, however, was absent throughout the 1990s because of a combination of factors such as: the presence of ostensibly more pressing, short-term problems associated with the severe economic crisis and ethnic confrontations which took precedence over long-term social and environmental concerns; the ascent of a neo-liberal ideology which favoured the operation of markets within the context of minimal government intervention; and the overall weakness of all political institutions, including those responsible for urban planning.

As the "Wild East" part of the transition came to a close by about the year 2000 and the regional economies showed new signs of strength, the prospects of reinvigorating urban planning in order to promote a more sustainable mode of urban and regional development substantially improved. This is particularly true for the Central European and Baltic countries, which joined the European Union in 2004. Arguably, judging from their levels of economic development and institutional stability, these countries have already exited the transition stage altogether and have entered the realm of the so-called developed nations. In these eight countries, the principles of sustainable development are now enshrined in a number of national, regional and municipal plans and there are many examples of successful implementation efforts, such as rejuvenated brownfields, refurbished urban neighbourhoods and communist-era housing districts, more efficient mass transit systems, and improved environmental indicators. Furthermore, in these eight states the levels of citizen participation in the planning process have become considerably higher than in the recent past. The urban situation seems to have also partially improved in the newest, Balkan members of the European Union, as well as in those which now have official candidate status.

In Russia—the region's largest nation—the last few years were marked by strong economic performance. The country is now the world's eleventh largest economy. Newfound prosperity has reinvigorated national self-confidence although, regretfully, democratization trends have not proceeded always in parallel to economic growth. Still, judging from plans and planning education reforms, Russia's planning too is slowly moving toward a closer embrace of the principles of sustainable development.

The overall economic situation appears most bleak in select countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus region, where significant institutional improvement is also yet to occur, and the transitional period toward prosperity and stability is still ongoing. Urban areas in these nations are in urgent need of upgrading their basic infrastructure and public services. In fact, failure to implement such an upgrade in the near future will pose considerable dangers to the environment and public health.

The way forward for urban planning in the region is towards strengthening its institutions; opening up the planning process to a greater variety of stakeholders beyond the customary, narrow circles of government experts and established non-profit organizations; broadening planning's scope to consider social, economic and environmental issues in a holistic way; improving methods of plan monitoring and evaluation; and expanding the repertoire of basic planning instruments beyond the traditional land-use-based master plan and regulatory schemes.

Underlying these reforms must be a reconsideration of the responsibility of national institutions to ensure the balanced development of urban regions in their respective states. Thus far, most national governments have taken the roles of passive observers of urban change, observes content to delegate the most important planning responsibilities to municipal bodies, as if state withdrawal from urban problems represents a testimony of institutional democratization. Such a misguided interpretation of democratization omits the obvious point that urban changes proceed within the context of broader structural processes, including national laws and policies regarding industrial development, environmental protection, and the all-important balance between private rights and long-term public interest.

As a sign of progress in this direction, many of the transitional countries, especially the new and prospective members of the European Union, have by now adopted various national plans and programmes regarding urban development. Unfortunately, however, many of these documents remain vague declarations, as this report has highlighted. Doubtlessly, clarifying the implementation strategies for achieving the objectives outlined in these otherwise laudable policy documents is an urgent area of reform, as are methods for programme monitoring and continuous re-evaluation. The latter point certainly applies to national programmes as much as it does to lower-level, regional and municipal, plans.

Another necessary prerequisite for the successful management of urban issues in the region is a fundamental ideological shift regarding the role of urban planning at all levels—a shift which has thus far occurred only partially. The early post-communist years provided an exceptionally hostile environment for planning. This hostility was premised on neo-liberal doctrines of minimal government interference in the economy. Such an ideology was perhaps a predictable reaction to the overbearing and inefficient top-down planning schemes produced for decades under communism. Yet, the twenty years of transition showed that the neo-liberal doctrine, like its defeated communist rival, has many flaws. Without any consideration of long-term public interests, unbridled market forces based on relentless exploitation of natural resources cause considerable social and environmental damage, whose heavy costs are simply transferred to future generations. Furthermore, markets themselves are negatively impacted by the lack of adequate public planning and regulation as evidenced by the falling real estate values of many fancy single-family homes located in areas without basic infrastructure in many countries in the region—areas which lost their desirable environmental qualities by the very construction practices which produced the fancy homes to begin with.

It is well known that modern urban planning emerged as a profession in the mid-19th century precisely to counter the most destructive effects of unregulated capitalism on the city. The twenty years of post-communist transition, which were characterized by free-reigning private interests and weak public policies, are a reminder and a proof that the 21st century needs a reinvigorated urban planning.

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