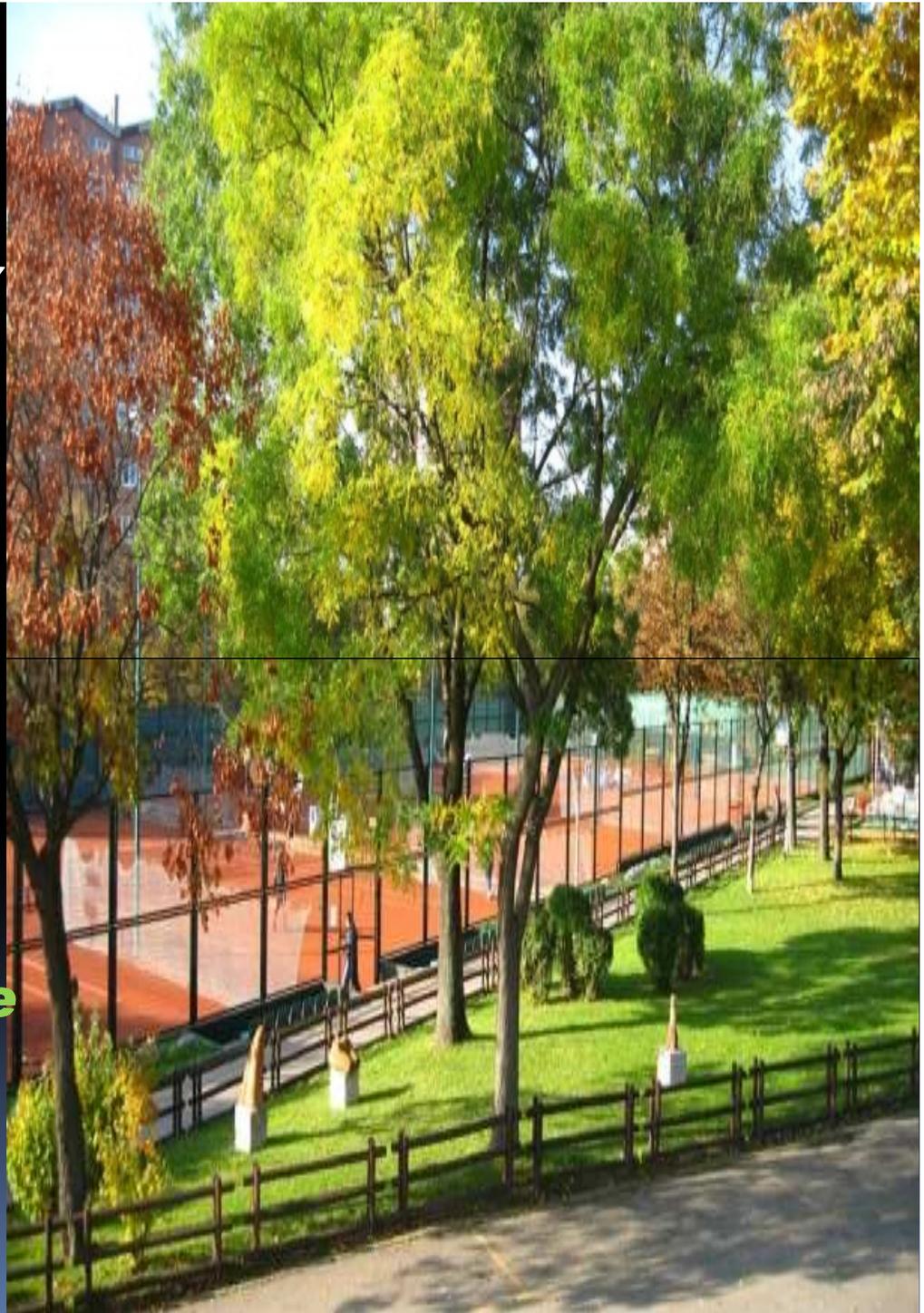


REAL CORP 2012
RE-MIXING THE CITY
TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY
AND RESILIENCE

**Livability and social
integration vs. economic
crisis and trends of
transition: case study of
local planning in Belgrade**
Biserka Mitrović
**Sanja Simeunčević -
Radulović**



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- The paper discusses the negative influence of global economic forces and **transition changes in Belgrade, Serbia as opposed to the intention of local municipalities and local inhabitants to achieve better quality of life** and better social integration in local environment.
 - The analysis of three examples of **sports and recreational areas in Belgrade** in the current local practice presents the negative effects of the poor urban land use policy as well as the positive implications of local inhabitants' initiatives.
 - In conclusion, the paper points out some **directions for solutions** for future treatment of sports and recreational facilities in the light of integral sustainable public spaces development.

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graph TD; A[PUBLIC INTEREST, PUBLIC LAND USE AND SUSTAINABILITY] --> B[TRANSITION IN SERBIA AND THE CONSEQUENCES REFLECTING ON PUBLIC SPACE]; B --> C[TREATMENT OF SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL AREAS IN BELGRADE IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSITION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT];
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**PUBLIC INTEREST, PUBLIC
LAND USE AND SUSTAINABILITY**

**TRANSITION IN SERBIA AND THE
CONSEQUENCES REFLECTING
ON PUBLIC SPACE**

**TREATMENT OF SPORTS AND
RECREATIONAL AREAS IN
BELGRADE IN THE CONTEXT OF
TRANSITION AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

...At the beginning ...

..Belgrade is the capital of Serbia, a small country in South Eastern Europe and has a population of 1,1 mill. Inhabitants (metropolitan area 1,6 mill). Territory of Belgrade covers 3.6% of Serbia's territory and is divided into 17 municipalities. At least 22.5% of the country's population lives in the city.

.. In Serbia, after more than 50 years of socialism, process of economic transition started at 2000. and is not over yet. Development of Belgrade, as the biggest and most vibrant city in the country, is under great influence of this process as well as under influence of global processes.



...At the beginning ...

- Reminding of the principle: “Think globally, act locally”
- Understanding the sustainability by the researchers, planning practitioners, investors, planning institutions, local and city government and inhabitants.
- Importance of all aspects of sustainability - environmental, institutional, social and economic sustainability and livability, reflecting on and overlapping at local level.

Public places, socially sustainable city, sustainable land use..

- **Socially sustainable city** gives priority to the **public space** in the city and does not favour (economic) growth at any cost. Imperfections of market mechanisms, the effects of (unlimited) economic growth and points of spatial conflict, being the weak points of contemporary city, present the starting point of defining socially sustainable city.
- Operationalization of the principles of socially sustainable city should be expressed through **creating the spatial conditions to minimize social differences and favouring social and territorial cohesion**.
- **Sustainable land use**, used in terms of balanced social, cultural and economic uses is **the key instrument for preservation of public space** in sustainable urban development.
- For socially balanced city, **social consensus about public interest** and its protection and promotion is very important.
- **Belgrade has a great and diversified legacy of public spaces**, activities and public land use. In the light of social cohesion and sustainability principles it is vital to **define principles and criteria** which will **take care of preservation of this legacy**, and at the same time take care of the economy of the city, making the solutions for the financing and maintenance, promotion and improvement of these areas.

Public space under the influence of economic transitional changes in Serbia

- The goals of the economic **transition** should be a provision of conditions for organized and systematic market relations, healthy competition and defining **a new relation between public and private sector**.
- In the countries with long tradition of market relations, **the rules arranging the relationship between private and public sector** are defined and respected, as well as the level of state and local government intervention in the market, according to the established criteria.
- In the case of Serbia **fundamental problem arises in the absence of these criteria**. The problem is also expressed in the **context of urban development and balanced land use**, so the solution for the most conflict situations in urban environment between public and private interest is solved in **the process of arbitrary and ad hoc decision making**.

Public space under the influence of economic transitional changes in Serbia

- The city of Belgrade, as well as many local governments in Serbia, is fighting tough economic circumstances by trying to make a financial basis **through ownership transformations within the public sector**.
- The consequences of such process in the urban environment are: **changing the city structure, lessening the functional diversity and shrinking the public space as most vulnerable and least profitable areas**.
- One of the most 'vulnerable' public areas are **sports and recreational areas**, since they are not legally treated as compulsory urban equipment for the housing areas (despite the fact they greatly increase the quality of life in urban environment).

.. Sustainability at local level in Belgrade..

- **..should focus on>>**
- Protection of public spaces, as places where most of the aspects of sustainability express in urban areas.
- Social sustainability through the vision of social cohesion and livability in the city and..
- Sustainable land use considered as a spatial platform where social cohesion is expressed.



The treatment of sports and recreational areas in Belgrade in the context of transition and sustainable development



Belgrade, as the capital of Serbia and former Yugoslavia has several sports facilities and complexes of national and international importance for professional sport and big sports events, also more than 25 sports facilities and complexes, dispersed in urban districts and secondary urban centres.

Nearly each of the 17 Belgrade municipalities has at least one sports facility and many smaller recreational areas. In addition, there are hundreds of sports and children's playgrounds in the city, relatively evenly dispersed.

All these facilities were/are situated on the public urban construction land and public ownership implied the obligation for the custody and tending by the city government institutions.

The treatment of sports and recreational areas in Belgrade_ in the context of transition and sustainable development

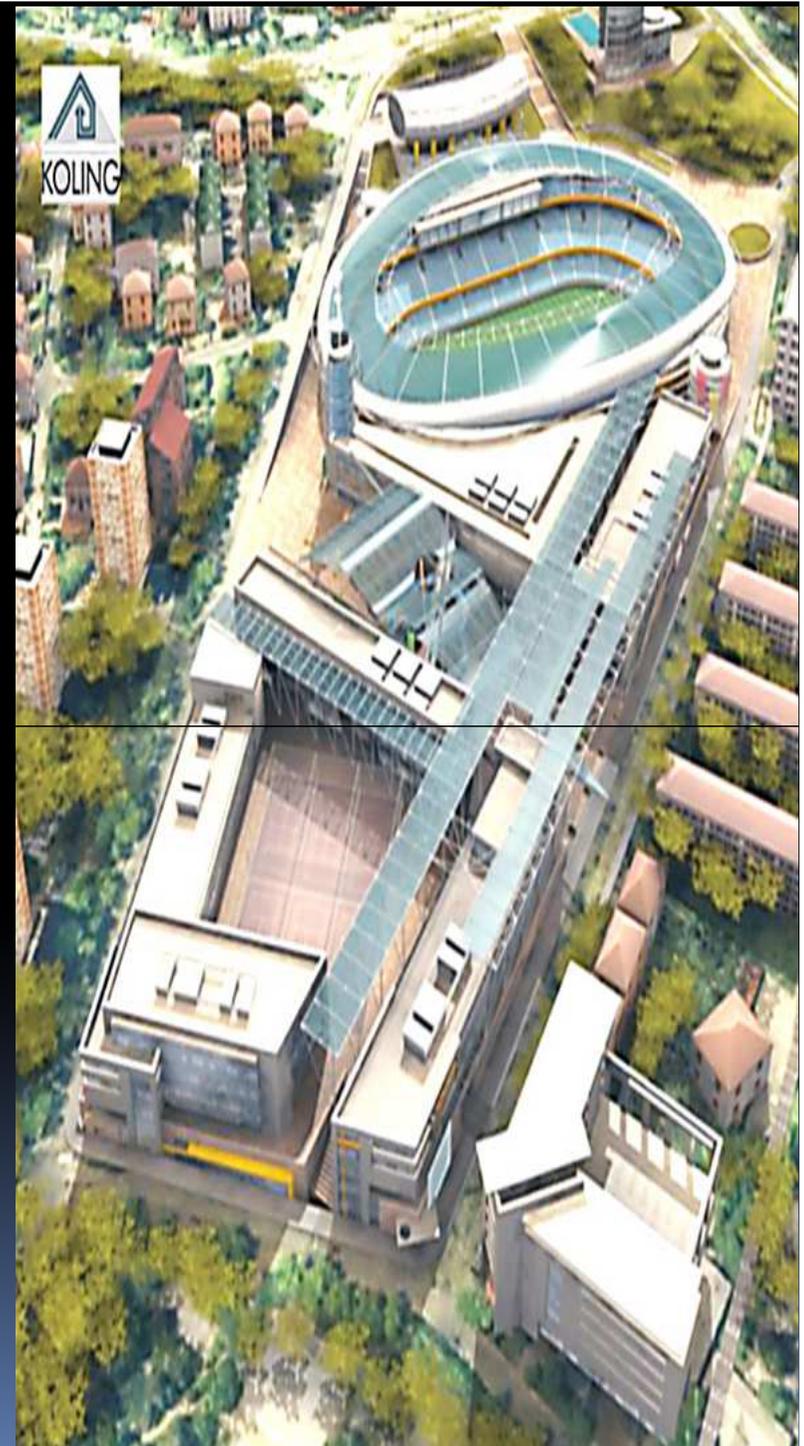
- This important resource of public facilities infrastructure, despite the fact it has been/ is often overwhelmed by problems related to the maintenance, lack of financial resources and qualified working staff, **still is a relatively diversified and balanced network.**
- To emphasize the importance of it, we have to mention the fact that many developing countries, with different or similar socio-political and economic history do not have such capital (as is the case with many Asian countries).
- In Belgrade, for more than a decade, we are witnessing an **ownership transformation of many health, education, sports, recreation and similar facilities.** The city was unprepared for this situation and the private capital needed fast actions. So in the absence of having a strategy of public- private partnership regarding sports and recreational areas, the city institutions reacted by privatising sports facilities, according to the expressed interest of investors. **Privatization of public land and buildings was and is happening ad-hoc and decisions are made individually and utterly arbitrary.**

The treatment of sports and recreational areas in Belgrade_ in the context of transition and sustainable development

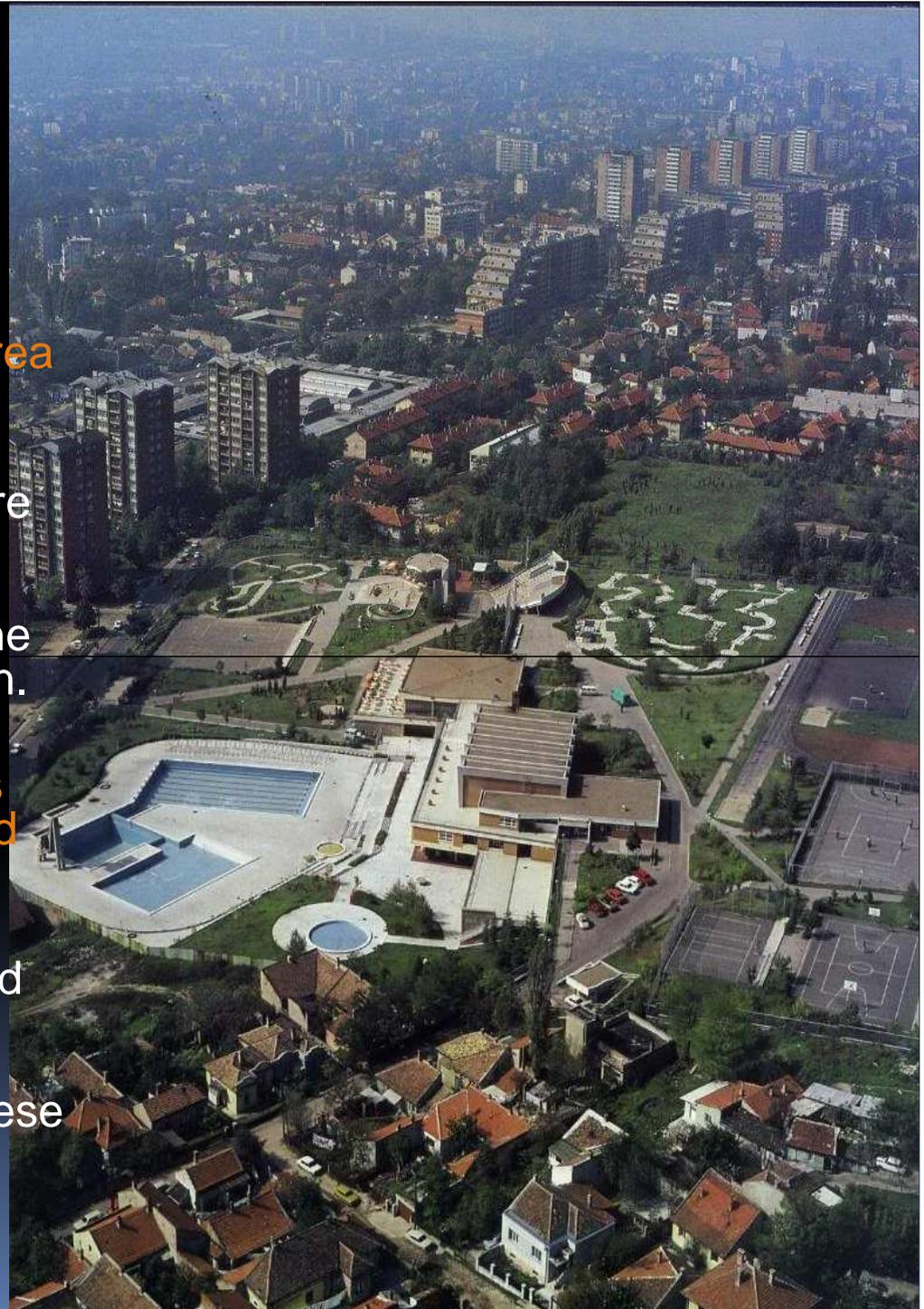
- In this situation **the local plan has become the main instrument of the privatization**, since it was the way to convert public custody over urban construction land to private.
- Detailed regulatory plans should have been defined in accordance with the **sports and recreation development policy** (which did not exist), the State and local regulations.
- Professional sports facilities have always been attractive to the investors, so the land of complexes with high potential, such as **stadiums of Partisan and Red Star sports clubs**, received the status of private urban construction land through detailed regulatory plan.



- Public facilities - **stadiums of Partisan and Red Star sports clubs** have been planned for transformation to **new purposes, such as commercial, tourist, residential, services etc.**
- Main justification for such actions were: greater efficiency after the ownership transformation, the need for rationalization of some services, high maintenance costs and the need for qualified work force.
- However, over past years situation has become more complicated since none of mentioned investments were finished and ex-public urban construction land and property is currently in the judicial process.
- **Concluding, we can make an observation that the benefits of these planning actions are very gloomy, while the costs are high.**



- A similar trend of owner transformation has been established in relation to local / district sports and recreational centres. Good example of such trends is **Sports and recreation area Olimp, in Belgrade municipality Zvezdara**.
- The Sports and recreational centre Olimp used to be in a very bad shape after not getting sufficient financial city budget support so the privatisation seemed as a solution.
- During the process of detailed regulatory plan making **the sports centre land was to be transformed from public to private use.**
- Opposite to the expectations, no significant interest was manifested in its privatization, which is understandable having in mind lower level of attractiveness of these locations.



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- Surprisingly, the citizens living in Zvezdara community have showed a great interest and willingness to **fight for the piece of green land** in their neighbourhood.
 - Though the awareness and knowledge of sustainability as well as of the planning process was not on the high level, **they have in fact acted very 'sustainably'**.
 - During the long and controversial process of designing and adopting the local regulatory plan of the Sports and recreation complex Olimp and the surrounding housing blocks, the citizens have taken the solid standpoint about the preservation of the local green, sports and recreational areas.

- The citizens of the local community of Zvezdara have made a significant pressure to the local and city administration bodies to get involved more often, thus making a great impact on the planning solution. The City municipality Zvezdara supported and confirmed the citizens' standpoint by municipal assembly decisions.
- After a couple of years of negotiation with the City administration and urban planning bodies, The local municipality administratives of Zvezdara **have managed to keep the local sports and recreation complex Olimp for its citizens**. The status and the ownership over the urban construction land assigned to the sports complex have remained public.



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- Though the case study of sport complex of Olimp in Belgrade shows that the city administrative bodies had a little respect to the sustainable idea ‘think globally – act locally’, it also tells a lot about the awareness of citizens about their own quality of life and livability.
 - From the long-term point of view, the consequences of the approach “**less interest – less action**” by planning institutions is more convenient for the development of the city than it is the case with short term actions and decisions. The problem is, however, that **the solutions resulted from the daily political decisions and in the absence of defined and clear criteria**. Inconsistency and lack of communication between different levels of institutions make their acting quite "unsustainable", emerging planning decisions of very questionable quality.

CONCLUSION

- Some of the **most important problems** and constraints regarding this topic are:
- Public sector and public urban construction land and facilities are exposed to the serious consequences of uncontrolled or poorly controlled development.
- Different and often conflicting aspirations and actions of institutions and different groups of actors.
- Absence of policy development and regulatory fragmentation.
- Arbitrariness in decision-making regarding the development and transformation of public services.

CONCLUSION

- Future solutions must certainly be based on goals and objectives relating to:
- Availability of public services for all citizens since they support the communication and create favorable social environment.
- Spatial distribution and balancing the quality of public services, specially green infrastructure, as a way of meeting the needs of population equally.
- Overcoming institutional separation of management, planning, funding and implementation in the field of public services.
- **The integral part of the solution should be the criteria for qualitative ownership transformation of public services.**

... on the bright side... (after conclusion)

the idea is spreading>>

- **The awareness of local citizen of their possible influence on the planning process is scattering over the country and in many cases the pressure has given good results.**
- **Local governments are becoming aware of the best interest of citizens and are taking their standpoints into consideration more frequently during the planning process and earlier than it is formally necessary.**
- **Addressing and pressure on political bodies becomes more efficient if local citizen are better organized and if they get involved in great number.**

Thank you for your attention!