URBAN SPACE PATTERNS AND HOMELESSNESS IN BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

18th International Conference on Urban Planning and Regional Development in the Information Society

20-23 May

REALCORP 2013

Rome, Italy
STRUCTURE

- **Homelessness**
  - Homelessness dynamics in Bucharest
  - Urban space patterns
  - Homelessness localisation and urban space patterns in Bucharest
HOMELESSNESS

Official definition in Romania:

the homeless people represent a social category formed by individuals or families who, because of single or combined social, medical, economic, judicial reasons or due to extreme situations, live on the streets, live temporarily at friends or acquaintances, are unable to maintain rented housing or they are at risk of eviction, they live in institutions or prisons from where they are to be discharged in the following two months and they do not have a home or a residence (Law 292, 2011).

FEANTSA (2006) - the ETHOS typology:

• rooflessness (the rough sleepers);
• houselessness (temporary sheltering in institutions or night shelters);
• insecure housing – eviction, domestic violence;
• inadequate housing – illegal camping, inadequate buildings, overcrowding.
HOMELESSNESS DYNAMICS IN BUCHAREST

• NGO’s statistics:

1996 – 1500 homeless people;
2002 – 2000 homeless people;
2005 – 3200 homeless people;
2010 – 4500-5000 homeless people.

Homelessness localization areas in Bucharest

The homeless gender in Bucharest

36% women
64% men
METHODOLOGY

- the functional urban space typology: **property type**, **physical structure**, **state of use**.

- the relation space – **homelessness localisation**.

**REAL CORP 2013**
PUBLIC SPACES

Open / Used spaces – PARKS:
- possibility to shelter: grass, trees, benches.
- possibility to satisfy some basic needs: public toilets, water supply, deposit space.

Open / Derelict spaces – GREEN SPACES – territory appropriation:
- squares,
- around different institutions.

Central railway station Park, October 2012

Municipal Hospital, October 2012

Square, October 2012
PUBLIC SPACES

Open / Used spaces
– PEDESTRIAN SPACE
– ROAD INTERSECTIONS
  - high car and population traffic – begging, informal work.

– TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE SPACE:
  - railway station, subway station,
  - high traffic areas – shelter, food and money opportunities.
  - the Central Railway Station – homeless’ hot spot for drug traffic and prostitution.

Central Railway Station, October 2012

Pedestrian space, September 2012

Pedestrian space, September 2012
SEMI-PUBLIC SPACES

Open / Used spaces

– COMMERCIAL SPACES
  - social exclusion – commercial centres, stores.
  - direct access in the interior: markets.
  - localisation nearby – begging, waste food collecting and recyclable materials from the garbage bins.

– RELIGIOUS SPACES
  - direct access in the interior: churches.
  - localisation near cemeteries – begging, getting money and food.

Closed / Used spaces

– SEWERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE SPACE
  - unclaimed space by the other inhabitants.
  - potential to organise sheltering.
  - creation of a parallel world and the homeless’ organisation as a society.
PRIVATE SPACES

Closed / Used spaces – RESIDENTIAL SPACES
- inside apartment buildings: basement, stair case, attic;
- weather conditions protection, sheltering.

Closed / Derelict spaces – RESIDENTIAL SPACES
- former nationalised houses in the central area of the city.
  - wick expression of the property rights – appropriation potential.
  - physical characteristics – protection, intimacy, relative normal housing conditions.
SEMI-PRIVATE SPACES

Open / Used spaces
– WASTE BINS
  - the locals’ help: food, clothes, money, occasional work.
  - space where the residents allow the homeless’ localisation.

– WASTE DEPOSIT SPACES
  - food opportunities, to collect and to capitalise
    paper waste, carton and metal materials.

(uncontrolled) Waste deposit space, August 2011
SEMI-PRIVATE SPACES

Open / Derelict space
– VACANT LANDS

– BROWNFIELD INDUSTRIAL SPACES

Private vacant land, September 2012

Brownfield industrial space, October 2012
CONCLUSION

- homelessness has a generalised territorial distribution in Bucharest.

- **localisation** of the homeless has a temporary and seasonal character and it is influenced by:
  - the social relations,
  - the former housing area,
  - the space characteristics (accessibility, possibility to shelter, financial and food sources).

**the property type**
- the public or private spaces present the different accessibility levels of each urban space.

**the physical structure**
- the differences between the open and the closed spaces influence the security level of the homeless, their sheltering way, their relation with the general population and their opportunities to obtain income.

**the state of use**
- derelict spaces attract the homeless’ localisation – freedom to appropriate the urban territory, the possibility to adapt shelters that satisfy their needs, the possibility to have a calm relation with the authorities or the locals (no disturb to not disturb and to not be disturbed).
- used spaces mean high traffic of population – better possibilities to get help and to find living resources.

- future research: direct assessment – the questionnaire method – of the homeless’ localisation reasons in Bucharest.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


This work was supported by POSDRU /107/1.5/S/80765 strategic grant, project “Excellence and interdisciplinarity in doctoral studies for an informational society”, cofinanced by the European Social Found within the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007-2013.

Thank you for your attention!