

THE METROPOLISATION OF TIMIȘOARA, ROMANIA AN EVALUATION BY URBAN FUTURE METHODOLOGY

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ABSTRACT: *Timișoara is one of the biggest five cities from Romania, an important Growing Pole in DKMT Euro-region. Timișoara is also very close by the Western National borders, close by four European capital, Bucharest, Belgrade, Budapest, and Wien that are less than 600 km away. After the political, social and economic changes after 1989 the city of Timișoara has to readapt to the new reality and challenges. As an inner-periphery, Timișoara has a limited development pattern, but the suburbanization could be the most efficient answer. This paper present the applying of the Urban Futures Methodology for evaluating the urban public policy in various scenarios of further evolution of the city. This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research and Innovation, CCCDI-UEFISCDI, project number 66/2017 COFUND-ENSUF-3S RECIPE (1), within PNCDI III.*

Keywords: *Suburbanization; Urban Resilience; Inner Periphery; Urban Governance;*

Introduction

The political change from 1989 has come with a restoring of a several important rights prohibited by the communist regime for decades, with direct impact on the demographic structure: free circulation and control of birth. For a society with a very restricted possibility to travel abroad the access to a passport and to almost free traveling all over the world has generated a massive migration, especially toward West Europe. The liberalisation of the abortions has a significant impact on the birth rate. Booth these factors (together with economical changes) has generated rapid changes into the population structure from all urban communities (first) and later rural communities from Romania, but also from Central and Eastern Europe. For the first time after the forced urbanisation from these areas, it appear the shrinkage process, manifested by losing of population (after decades of “glorious” urban development all over the country). For the mono industrial cities (for example from the Jiu Valley), the shrinkage process has come with a very complex and deep social problems.

Timișoara, was an overcrowded city, with a multi-ethnic population, very close by the „Occident” (Hungary has a lighter communist regime) and thus, into the first years after the Revolution the city has lost around 50.000 inhabitants. The main cause were outmigration (mostly toward Germany), the birth control and, later, the urban sprawl toward nearby villages at less than 10 km away from the city (Fig. 1).

Even the Timișoara does not known ashrinkage stage, the population decline was a certain fact, recorded into the official documents. The city has naturally move toward a better condition of living with increasing of the locative space from 13 sqm/person in 1992 to 22,7 sqm/person in 2017. The EU standard for a quality living is minim 15 sqm/person, and Timișoara has touch this level only in 2001 (Fig. 2).

The urban shrinkage phenomenon is a very intense subject into the urban studies, mostly due to its frequent manifestation over the medium and large cities into the world. It is estimated that 38% from the European cities of this level has less population in our time comparatively with 25 years ago (Turok & Mykhnenko, 2007; Mykhnenko & Turok,

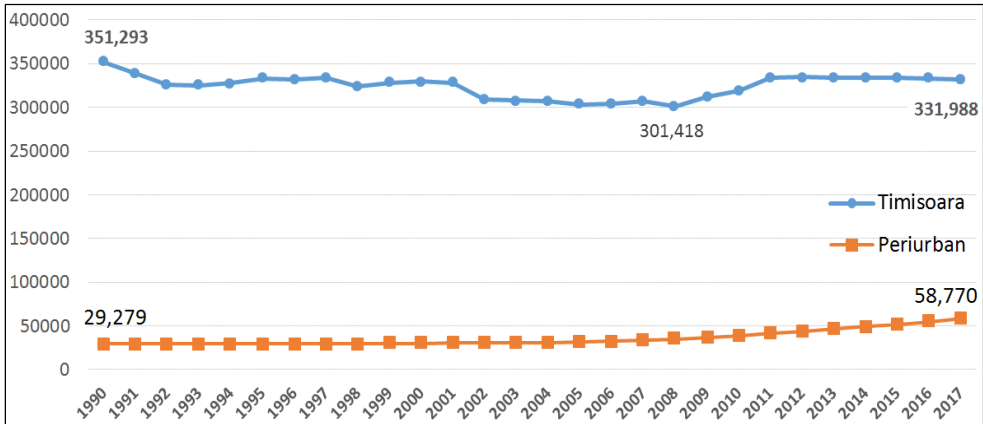


Fig. 1. The evolution of the Timișoara's population and the nearby villages after the 1989 (Sources: Romanian National Institute of Statistics)

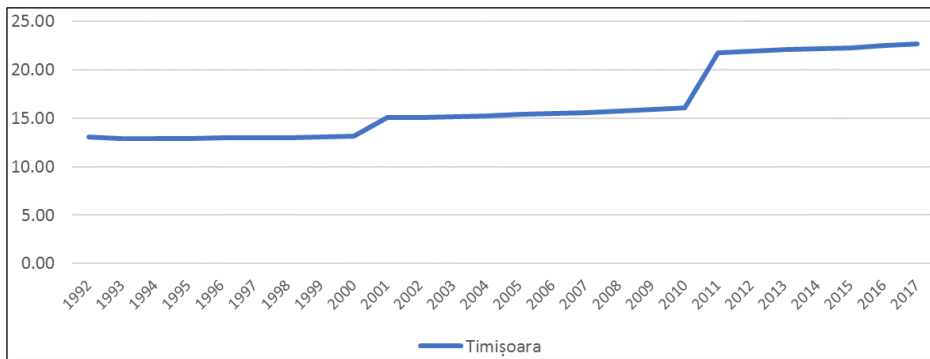


Fig. 2. The evolution of the living density in Timișoara (sqm/person)

2008, Haase et al., 2016; Langner & Endlicher, 2007; Neill & Schlappa, 2016; Richardson & Nam, 2014). A very important cause of this evolution is the manifestation of the inner-peripherally, as a pattern of urban development into a very complex social networks of people, jobs, business, resources and so on (Boom & Mommaas, 2009; Ganser & Piro, 2012; Grossman et al., 2013; Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2012; Pallagst et al., 2014; Oswalt, 2005).

Timișoara remain an attractive city for a large part of Romanian population but into the some time a starting point for going abroad. By other hand, the urban grid with mixt of historical and block flats building offer limited solution for densifications, so the suburbanization is a very important alternative for the further urban grow.

Methodology

For the evaluation of the impact and consequences for the development of the metropolitan area in Timișoara as an urban policy for further development we have apply the Urban Future Method into the project 3S RECIPE Smart Shrinkage Solutions. Fostering Resilient Cities in Inner Peripheries of Europe financed by a grant of the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research and Innovation, CCCDI-UEFISCDI, project number 66/2017 COFUND-ENSUF-3S RECIPE (1), within PNCDI III. On the base of the authors description, “the Urban Futures Method aims to broaden the way we thing about the form and function of urban development and regeneration by focusing on the likely

long-term performance of today's urban design solution and their associated risks. The Urban Futures Method is primarily for use when the stakeholders involved in implementing a sustainability solution consult together to make decisions as part of the redevelopment process. The greatest value comes when there is an opportunity for all partners involved to exchange knowledge and ideas and to create better solutions based upon their combined knowledge." (Lombardi et al., 2012). The UFM involve a group decision activity with the following steps: (i). identify a sustainability solution for an urban problem and its intended benefits for analysis; (ii). establish the necessary conditions for this benefits to be delivered; (iii). determine the performance of the necessary conditions in the future – will the necessary condition be in place for each from the fourth archetypal scenario? (iv). determine the resilience of the solution benefit pair to future change. Depending of the group structure the output can have different orientations, but usually the participants are mostly stakeholders or people connected with the analysed topic and thus the results remain into some frame. The UFM is based on four archetypal scenario (Lombardi et. al., 2012):

(i) The New Sustainability Paradigm: equity and sustainability. An ethos of "one planet living" facilitates a shared vision for more sustainable living and a much-improved quality of life. New socio-economic arrangements result in changes to the character of urban industrial civilization. Local is valued but global links also play a role. A sustainable and more equitable future is emerging from new values, a revised model of development and the active engagement of civil society.

(ii). Policy Reform: economic growth with greater equity. Policy Reform depends on comprehensive and coordinated action for poverty reduction and environmental sustainability, negating trends towards high inequality. The values of consumerism and

individualism persists, creating a tension with policies that priorities sustainability.

(iii). Market Forces: competitive, open global market. Market Forces relies on the self-competitive markets. Current demographic, economic, environment and technological trends unfold without major surprise. Competitive, open and integrated markets drive world development. Social and environmental concerns are secondary.

(iv). Fortress world: protection and control of resources. Powerful individuals, groups and organizations develop an authoritarian response to the threats of resources scarcity and social breakdown by forming alliances to protect their own interests. Security and defensibility of resources are paramount for these privileged rich elites. An impoverished majority exists outside the fortress. Policy and regulation exist but enforcement may be limited. Armed forces act to impose order, protect the environment and prevent a societal collapse.

Into the 3S RECIPE project it was analysed the urban resilience of the Timișoara's metropolization by Urban Future Method. For this it was organized one workshops with 16 local stakeholders from Timișoara City Hall, Romanian Development Agency, National Institute of Statistics, experts for the urban commission of County Council, Timișoara Intercultural Institute NGO, Vitamina NGO and West University of Timișoara.

Following the UFM methodology there were identified several benefits of the metropolisation of the Timișoara and a correspondent necessary condition for each of these benefits, such as: urban planning and organization at a large scale, preserving local identity, access to social services for a large amount of population from nearby villages, implementing of the principle of urban ecology, the improving of quality of life, the diversification of the occupation, the economic development, the extension of the infrastructure and of the transportation system and, last but not least, the

diversification of the leisure activities . Into each of these necessary conditions in each the workshop debate, it was established (on archetypal scenario (Table 1). the base of argues) the chance to occur for

Table 1 The evaluation of the necessary conditions for each archetypal scenario

	New sustainability paradigm	Policy reform	Market Forces	Fortress world
NC0. Increasing the population volume	YES – Increasing the population volume would be facilitated by this scenario aiming a better quality of life and active civic participation of citizens	YES – because this scenario aims to reduce poverty and social inequality, promoting welfare (although such living conditions may reduce the birth rate)	MAYBE – depending on the market forces dynamics, population may grow or decreases	NO – this scenario promotes a minority with access to the resources and drives away the poor majority
NC1. Linking of the development strategies to generate synergies at the metropolitan area	YES - raising awareness of public sphere and prioritizes solving common issues/social problems into an integrative approach. The correlation of the Timișoara's and nearest villages' strategies generate a sustainable urban ecosystem	YES - the only way to gather/focus the resources and achieve social integrated development on all levels so that the entire metropolitan population to can benefits of a better life	MAYBE – depending on the interest of actors (playing on the free market), could appear divergent mechanisms favourable for speculation which contravene common strategies	NO – in this scenario resources are available only for a privileged rich elite. This elite will promote only its agenda, independent by the common policies and regulations/social development
NC2. Strengthening local values, construction of an integrative spirit and a metropolitan mentality	YES – Timișoara has a green identity, being called „The City of Roses” Timișoara's cosmopolitan identity should be preserved and transformed into a more inclusive, metropolitan identity. All these elements are favorable for an sustainable harmony cohabitation/conviviality with an active civic society and an increasing quality of life.	MAYBE – depends on the development of civil society and on the collaboration between the public institutions, political actors at the central level, local administration and local/regional ONG's. The reform of the public policies can be oriented even at micro level (with promoting of the Timișoara's spirit) or at macro level (with promoting European values)	MAYBE –if the newcomers and the new economic agents will use and promote the local brands, local specificity. Market forces could increase the local entrepreneurship competitively or the multinational corporations.	YES – The focus on preserving local identity, Timișoara's values and habits, will highlight the differences/gaps at the metropolitan area's borders, and could increase the isolation of the metropolitan area.
NC3. Expand and diversification of social services, education and health facilities	YES – poverty reduction, increasing the quality of life and environmental sustainability could be achieved by coherent social strategies and policy offering diversification of social services, education, health facilities, social economy offer (depending on the community needs and problems).	YES – a shared vision of a more sustainable environment and improved quality of life will respond to the need and diversification of social services. The dynamics of metropolitan realities will claim a permanent adaptation of the social services to improve the quality of life and to ensure a sustainable environment.	MAYBE – if the social services private providers will get a profit by diversifying these services.	NO – the privileged elite have no interest in expanding social services, or to diversify social resources and social services for the fortress outsiders
NC4. Developing housing policies	YES – the active engagement of civil society will continuously remind and prioritizes on the public agenda the need of a coherent housing policy aiming an equitable future.	YES – the metropolitan area will continuously need a housing policy reform, with focus on better living conditions to reduce poverty and well-integrated regulation to ensure environmental sustainability. The housing policy is directly associated with the development, mobility, environment youth, education policies.	YES – the land owners and the real estate developers will compete for building houses with increased living conditions and residential areas well equipped (playing grounds, recreational facilities, transportation and so on)	NO –the powerful groups will not be interested to support the costs of a housing policy

<p>NC5. The transfer of some urban functions to periphery (of the metropolitan area)</p>	<p>YES – a sustainable solution of development consists in the availability of urban functions (would be less time consuming and will reduce the pollution and the transportation costs). Also, the suburbs will develop real social life and would be transformed from the „residential dormitory” into a „living/vivid social community”.</p>	<p>YES –there is a need for the stakeholders consensus towards a master plan centered on the urban functions needed by the metropolitan areas</p>	<p>MAYBE –uncontrolled investments could produce irreversible effects on the community life. Urban functions at the peripheries can have or not have a potential competitiveness comparable with those of the city center</p>	<p>NO - the privileged group will tend to oppose the transfer of the urban functions at/outside the fortress borders</p>
<p>NC6. A more diversified work opportunity</p>	<p>NO – caring for a sustainable living and effort for improving the quality of life assume rejection of specific work domains and limit the diversity of work opportunities that are not eco-friendly.</p>	<p>MAYBE–work opportunities may diversify in social services area, in education and health care, but also new domains that can facilitate the work integration for vulnerable categories of population (social entrepreneurship, social economy organisations for unqualified workers, but also encouraging IT industry and other high qualified jobs in sustainable, and eco-friendly domains).</p>	<p>YES– a powerful labour market creates a more diversified work opportunities, encourages start-ups, and increases the competition on the labour market.</p>	<p>NO – the powerful group tend to be more conservative and oppose to any diversity/diversification for outsiders.</p>
<p>NC7. Attracting new economic agents into metropolitan area (in the suburbs)</p>	<p>MAYBE – welcomes the eco-friendly investors and economic agents and reject the others.</p>	<p>YES – a well-planned and integrated strategy for the development of the metropolitan area will increase the trust of the economic agents to invest and the active measures for maintaining the environment sustainability (the development of industrial parks adequate equipped).</p>	<p>YES –stimulating the dynamics of labor market -ensures new jobs, available land and attract work force from the region (within a 200-250 km radius, near the metropolitan area).</p>	<p>MAYBE –if the dominant group will need more workers or other economic agents to control resources</p>
<p>NC8. Improving and diversifying the public transportation system (e.g. new routes for public transportation, diversifying alternative transportation, car sharing services)</p>	<p>YES –facilitate and promote a healthy lifestyle, a cheaper and sustainable ways/alternatives for the present public transport services. The new geographical configuration of the metropolitan area allows changing and improving of the transportation system.</p>	<p>YES – an integrated development strategy for the metropolitan area should stimulate public investments in alternatives for the public transport services, to ensure the connectivity between different residential areas.</p>	<p>MAYBE – if stimulating public-private sustainable partnerships, or if economic agents will develop (new) transport facilities for their own employees.</p>	<p>NO – a better connectivity links different communities, but could not divide.</p>
<p>NC9. Developing routes infrastructure: fast routes, expanding the bicycle tracks, metropolitan train, commissioning the Bega navigable channel</p>	<p>MAYBE– reduces transport costs, increases connectivity in the metropolitan area; but is questionable if will improve the quality of life for the inhabitants and if will ensure the environment sustainability.</p>	<p>YES –increases the connectivity between residential areas, industrial facilities and urban facilities (saving time currently spent in traffic jams and reduce transportation costs); considerable investments for developing routes infrastructure.</p>	<p>MAYBE –limited possibility to co-opt private investors for developing routes infrastructure (the legislation states that the routes infrastructure should be in the exclusive administration of the public authorities).</p>	<p>NO –is not in the interest of the dominant group to develop routes infrastructure outside of fortress.</p>
<p>NC10. Developing community centres, cultural centres and leisure centres/entertainment</p>	<p>YES – it will ensure the „community life”, increases the role of the civil society and stimulates an active citizenship.</p>	<p>YES – stimulates cultural policies, cultural NGO’s, and cultural projects/events accessible for the large public (e.g. represents one of the pillars of programme Timișoara - European Cultural Capital 2021).</p>	<p>YES –increasing investments into entertainment facilities, cultural centres (as a profit opportunity, entrepreneurship development in the cultural field)</p>	<p>NO –limited access to culture facilities for a small elite.</p>

(source: author work)

Conclusion

First of all, the fourth scenario, Fortress World is less available for a further integrative urban development of the city. Also, this kind of approach, very directive it is into a deep contradiction with the cosmopolite and free spirit of the city. The most suitable perspectives for the metropoli-

sation of the Timișoara is public policy scenario and new sustainability scenario. In both of these approaches the complex utilisation of all involved resources (land, people, urban infrastructure, public services etc.) and a public urban policy toward the development of the metropolitan space represent a more surely way to develop a resilient extended urban space.

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