

**THE LARGE-SCALE MULTI-STORY HOUSING EXTENSIONS  
AS A PREVALING EXPRESSION OF THE POST-SOCIALIST  
URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS.**

**THE CASE STUDY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD  
STARA ZELEZNICKA KOLONIJA, THE CITY OF NIS**

*UDC 711.168:316.334.56(497.11 Niš)=111*

**Petar Vranic<sup>1</sup>, Ljiljana Vasilevska<sup>2</sup>, Tigran Haas<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Occupational Safety Nis, University of Nis, Serbia

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture, University of Nis, and  
Republic Agency for Spatial Planning, Head of Organizational Unit in Nis, Serbia,

<sup>3</sup>School of Architecture and Built Environment, Royal Institute of Technology – KTH, Sweden

**Abstract.** *This study considers how unstructured extensive housing upgrading has influenced social relations within fully upgraded multi-story housing areas during post-socialist urban transformations in the city of Nis. Two perspectives were adopted in the analysis: the evaluation of the planning and management of the upgrading process, and changes in the social relation in respect to changes in the built environment and social structure within the neighborhood after upgrading. The investigation is based on a triangulation approach relying on interviews, policy and regulation reviews, and observations. The research was carried out as a case study, analyzing the upgrading process at the city level but elaborating its effects on the example of the neighborhood of Stara Zeleznicka Kolonija (SZK). The research suggests a regressive approach to the planning of the upgrading process with critical implications both for community life in the fully regenerated neighborhoods, and the quality of the built environment. The research also indicates that within an inconsistent legislative environment, market-driven housing regeneration processes may lead to generic development with the denial of local social and physical specificities.*

**Key words:** *multi-story housing extensions, post-socialism, urban transformation, Serbia, Nis*

---

Received June 7, 2014

**Corresponding author:** Petar Vranic

Faculty of Occupational Safety Niš, University of Niš, Čarnojevića 10a, 18000 Niš, Serbia

E-mail: petarvvv@gmail.com

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The breakdown of state socialism and market reformation, often portrayed as the tension between planning and the market (Hodgson, 1998), brought intense structural transformations to the region of Central and Eastern Europe (Nedovic-Budic, 2012; Hamilton et al., 2005; Tosics, 2004), which have greatly influenced urban development in the post-socialist states (Vujosevic and Nedovic-Budic 2007, Blacksell and Born, 2002; Dingsdale, 1999; Enyedi, 1998). The institutional infrastructure in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) countries underwent continuous changes during the transformation process. On the one hand, changes were caused by the establishment of a new market mechanism (Harvey, 2003), and, on the other hand by political restructuring (Andruzs, 1996). Those changes influenced urban planning and policy approaches, and thus the developmental patterns of the CEE cities (Sýkora and Ouredníček, 2007; Hirt & Kovachev, 2006; Fisher and Jaffe, 2000; Temelová, 2007; Kreja, 2007; Sýkora, 1998).

One of the most prominent imbalances that happened during the period of post-socialist transformations took place in the housing sector, in terms of policy reforms (Pichler-Milanovich, 2001; Petrovic, 2001; Tosics and Hegedüs, 2003; Tsenkova, 2000, Priemus and Mandič 2000) spatial distribution (Rudolph and Brade, 2005; Tammaru, 2001), and socio-spatial changes (Sykora, 1999; Polanska, 2010; Deda and Tsenkova, 2007; Badyina and Golubchikov, 2005; Ruoppila and Kährrik 2003). The quick withdrawal of government and state subsidies for public amenities resulted in a deep crisis in the housing sector in the CEE region. This trend had noticeable consequences on current housing conditions in post-socialist cities (Stanilov, 2007; Lowe, 2000). Radical housing reforms contributed to a sharp drop in the housing production and the maintenance of the existing housing stock. The crisis in housing production was already noticeable at the end of the 1980s, but it reached a critical point around 1993, in all CEE countries, with a critical production level in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Serbia (Lux, 2001; Tsenkova, 1996; Vujovic and Petrovic, 2007). By the year 2000, none of CEE countries had reached their production level from 1990 (Stanilov, 2007; Economic Commission for Europe 2006). Thus, housing production in recent decades in the CEE, in general, can be considered limited. On the other hand, weakened institutional structure continues to be a drawback in the establishment of consistent housing strategies.

In the case of Serbia, due to the dissolution of the country, the civil war, inflow of close to eight hundred thousand refugees in the country, and long political and economic isolation, the transformation process was greatly slowed down (Backovic, 2005), including the redefinition of the housing sector. Considering the severe circumstances under which the post-socialist urban transformation in Serbia happened, the privatization of publicly owned facilities was not enough to absorb the alarming crisis in the housing sector. The wholesale privatization was almost finished during 1993 (Djordjevic, 2004), but due to hyperinflation it failed to establish a financial platform for new housing strategies. Furthermore, the exponential decline of GDP, which reached a 50% downturn during the post-socialist transition, has negatively affected both the purchasing power and production capacity on the housing market. Between 1990 and 1998 the total housing output decreased, reaching a rate of 0.4 new units per 100 existing residences in 1998 (Economic Commission for Europe, 2006). Under such conditions the overall standard of space consumption decreased as well. In the years around 2000 close to 30% of the population lived in overcrowded residences with an average of 3 persons per room (Stankovic, 2004). The

lack of a structured housing program and limited public support for the maintenance and management of the existing multi-story housing areas resulted on the one hand, in the further deterioration and the accelerated decay of housing stock and, consequently, in the urgent need for building reconstruction, and on the other, a boom in illegal construction on the housing market, both in the form of new objects and an upgrade of existing ones. At the end of 2003 close to half a million applications for legalization were submitted (Economic Commission for Europe, 2006).

There were few laws that influenced the housing development in Serbia in this period. *The Law on Local Self-Government 2002* named the municipality as the basic territorial unit for local self-government. Even though it promised a downscaling and decentralization of governance, the real scope of the local authorities' jurisdiction objectively remained relatively weak due to the tight budgets of most of the local authorities. Another limiting factor in the public intervention of local authorities came with *The Law Assets of the Republic of Serbia from 1995*, which secured state ownership over property, and prevented local governments from purchasing land on the market and creating the capacity for public housing. Thus, it created a platform for the repositioning of private developers as the driving force in housing development. And as a response to the increased number of illegal practices, the state passed the *Act on Legalization adopted in Serbia in 1997* under the *Law on Urban Planning and Construction from 1995, 2003*. On the one hand, this act helped the legalization of huge housing stock, but on the other it did not prevent further illegal practices on the market, and instead, it simplified the legalization procedure (Vujovic and Petrovic, 2007).

Under such conditions, considering the limited budget and spatial capacity of the local authorities to support new public housing development, the underdeveloped primary real-estate sector, the low economic capacity of private developers, the urgent need for the renovation of existing housing stock and low purchase power on the housing market during the economic recession, multi-story housing extensions (MSEs) emerged as a suitable ad hoc response for the piled up problems, establishing itself as a dominant model of regeneration of the existing multi-story housing areas, and playing a considerable part in addressing housing demand during the post-socialist transformation. For the basic restoration of the apartment buildings, homeowners ceded the right to use the facility to local contractors for the construction of additional flats over existing ones. As an *ideal* trade-off agreement, it was conducted from the scale of the single building to the scale of the neighborhood. Without a consistent legislative frame to regulate the process, the MSE has been conducted as a self-organized process for more than 10 years, primarily regulated by the market, which has affected both the quality of the existing multi-story housing areas and the social relations within it. This study considers how unstructured extensive housing upgrading has influenced social relations within fully upgraded multi-story housing areas taking two perspectives: 1) the evaluation of the planning and management of the upgrading process, and 2) the changes in social relations in respect to the changes in the built environment and social structure within the neighborhood after upgrading.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Based on a triangulation approach, the research analyzes the effects of MSE process with a focus on the neighborhood level, including official planning and legislative documents at the local and national level<sup>1</sup>, in depth interviews and observations. As a case study area, the

research focuses on the neighborhood of SZK because it offers an appropriate background based on the following: 1) it is one of the most recently completed revival projects and in that sense gives fresh insight into the research problem, 2) it has experienced dramatic transformation in respect to the scale of the built environment and the change in social structure; thus, it reflects the extremes of the process and the complexity of issue, and 3) the SZK is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city, with a traditionally strong community life; therefore, it offers a historical perspective on transformations both in physical and social terms.

The participants at the city level were selected according to their role in the process, including representatives from the Institute for Urbanism in Nis (2), the City Planning Office (2), City Construction Inspection (2), architectural studios (4), real-estate agencies (2), and developers (3). In the case of the SZK, the participants were organized in two groups: sitting (32 interviews i.e. 31% of the total number of households) and newly settled tenants (11 interviews i.e. 6% of the total number of apartments). The upgraded part is not yet fully settled, which affected the response rate. The interviews were arranged in two ways: 1) direct recommendation and 2) each apartment received a call for an invitation by mail with two interview options, in person or by means of an online questionnaire (290 households in total). The interview protocol included questions about the participants' role in the process, a critical assessment of the upgrading outcome, both as a process and as a product. In the case of the SZK, the interview questions also focused on daily activities in the neighborhood before and after the upgrading and sharing the insight into power play during the negotiation process between the contractors and sitting tenants.

The transformation of common space in terms of its use was studied in detail in the SZK, over the period of one month (April 2012). The study points and peak activity hours were chosen based on the sitting tenants' responses. They pointed out places that were the core of social life before the upgrading (see Fig. 2). The main focus of the observation was on how people interact and the way they use the common space in respect to emerging changes. The study approach starts from the concept of causal relations between the quality or content and capacity of outdoor space to support optional and social activities, and the rate of occurrence of outdoor activities (Gehl, 1980).

### 3. CASE STUDY

#### **3.1. The city of Nis: housing trends and legislative during transition**

The city of Nis is the third largest city in Serbia, with a population of 391.000 in the county, and close to 1.000.000 in the wider city region. It experienced rapid growth between the 1960s and 1990s, driven by intensive industrialization and followed by an increase in population. During this period, 70% of the existing housing stock in Nis was built (KLER, 2009). [P1] In the years following the 1990s, with the breakdown of socialism and the political and economic crisis, the industrial sector collapsed, the unemployment rate increased dramatically and Nis became the capital of the poorest region in Serbia, with 22% of the population classified as poor, 39% unemployed and 20 000 employees waiting for payment from their shares after the privatization of public enterprises (Gradska Stambena Agencija Nis, 2006).

During post-socialist structural transformations, the housing sector was not of the highest priority, thus, negative development trends are evident (Vasilevska et al. 2013).

Nevertheless, since the 1980s Nis had an average of 1.1 apartment per household, due to a higher share of flats in private family houses with a very low occupancy rate, while multi-story housing areas experienced continuous overcrowding and low space consumption. In general, 19.6 % of the population lived in overcrowded apartments, three or more persons per room, while 23.6 % is on the borderline of falling into this category (Gradska Stambena Agencija Nis, 2006). Dealing with extremely negative economic trends, the city municipality did not succeed in establishing the promised housing strategy until as late as 2007 (City Assembly & City Housing Agency Nis, 2007). However, the developmental patterns that were established during the transformation process already left a noticeable trace on the overall standard of housing in the city.

One of the most prominent, but rarely discussed, legacies of the post-socialist urban transformation in Nis is the MSE (see Fig. 1). This process has been carried out over the last eighteen years, from the scale of a single building, to the scale of a housing block and entire neighborhoods. During preliminary observation we identified 283 buildings with MSEs, which represent 80% of the total inherited multi-story housing stock. Thus, in context with the expansion of mass-housing areas and the boom of family housing areas during socialism, MSE can be recognized as one of the most prevailing urban transformation in the city.



Photo by Petar Vranic

**Fig. 1** MSEs examples

As after the wholesale of state owned housing in the 1990s, according to the *Law of Maintenance of Residence Buildings and Apartments from 1993* (LMRBA), sitting tenants became collective owners of their housing estates, and therefore, responsible for their maintenance and management. Even though, HOAs obtained legal rights to manage their housing completely, due to years of economic recession, impoverished households were hardly able to keep up with basic running costs, and thus were unable to undertake any major renovation. Consequently, multi-story housing stock continues to deteriorate, entering the critical stage of service. Despite the fact that after privatization former state-owned housing officially was not the responsibility of the local authorities, the decay of a large housing stock would affect urban space and become an alarming problem in the years to come. Thus, in 1995, the CPO passed the *Act for the Renovation of Flat Roofs (ARFR)*, which allowed the MSE over the existing multi-story housing buildings, for one or exceptionally more floors. This act opened the door for private developers to utilize the existing housing stock as an infrastructure for building new apartments under favorable conditions. The ARFR was mutually beneficial, both for developers and local planning authorities. Namely, similar to ‘common-interest development’ (McKenzie, 2007), on the one hand, the CPO permitted the above mentioned MSE model with very high profit

margins, while on the other, these developments were beneficial for local government as they aimed to solve the problem of decaying multi-story housing areas without public expenditures. However, the ARFR did not contain any specific guidelines or requirements for MSE, and thus, the market determined the process dynamics, while its manifestation was largely dependent on negotiation between developers and HOAs.

### 3.2. The neighborhood of Stara Zeleznicka Kolonija

#### 3.2.1. Setting a context

The Yugoslav Railway Company (YRC) funded the development of the neighborhood of SZK in 1940/41, according to the project donated by the Swiss Railway. It was one of the first modern neighborhoods in Nis, designed as a low-rise low-density multi-storey housing area. In terms of architectural style and ambient identity, the SZK was one of the forerunners of modern architecture in the city. Despite the fact that SZK was planned as a residence neighborhood for YRC use, it never became a sleeping district like many other housing areas designed for the emerging working class that came along with rapid industrialization. This happened for two reasons: 1) it was located in proximity to the city center, 2) it was a socially mixed neighborhood, which accommodated all subsections of society within the YRC, including both managers and manual workers. According to the *Building Law from 1931* there was strict sanitary regulation for residence building and the minimum size of the apartments, as Koneska (2011) analyzes, which was the first attempt of planning officials to influence building quality through regulations or at least regulate the quality of residence. The balanced housing standards somewhat diminished the effects of class differences and prevented social exclusion within the neighborhood. At the same time, enclosed by fences with controlled access, the SZK was the first instance of a gated community in the city. The exclusive character of the SZK strengthened both its physical and social identity during the first few decades.

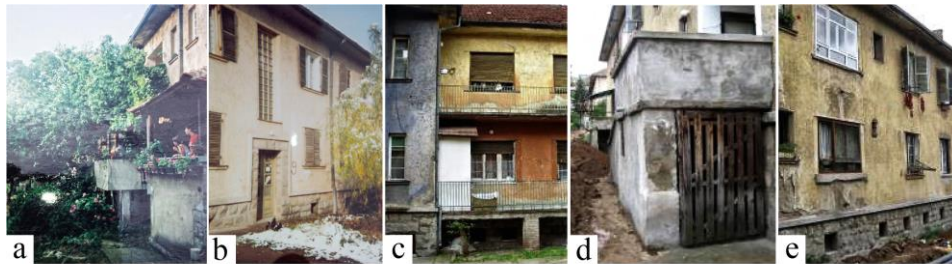
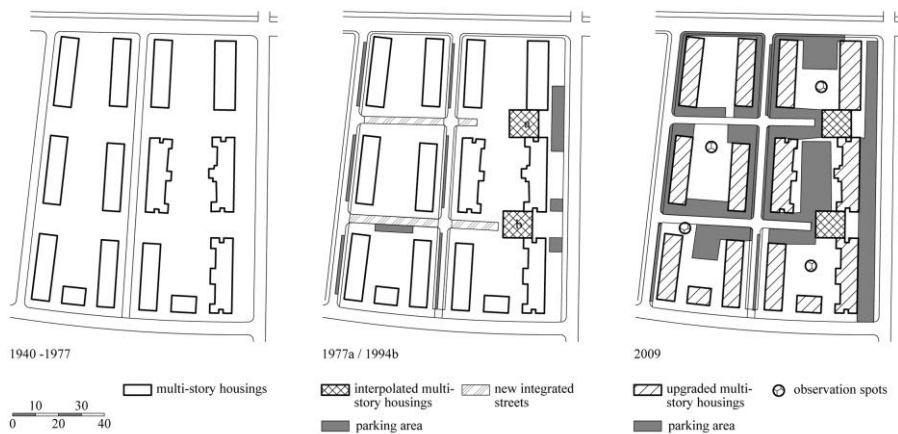


Photo by Goran Markovic (a,b), and Aleksandra Koneski (c,d,e)

**Fig. 2** The neighborhood of SZK before MSE

We can recognize two phases of its transformation: 1) during socialism in the late 1980s and early 1990s when two high-rise buildings were interpolated denying local context and 2) in post-socialist times, in the late 2000s until now, when the entire SZK neighborhood was extended (see Fig. 3). In the first phase, there were no major physical transformations within the neighborhood to date, except the interpolations of two high-rise buildings in the eastern part of SZK in 1977 and 1994. Even though these changes affected the urban-morphological characteristics of the neighborhood, the character of the neighborhood and

lifestyle was not changed considerably. During the 1960s and 1970s, the SZK gradually became integrated into the growing family-housing area at the periphery in the north part of the city, and thus became a transitional zone both in terms of urban morphology, architectural typology, and lifestyle. Unlike the purity of architecture which made the SZK stand out as a compact ambient whole in comparison to the surrounding buildings, rustic and unorganized greenery without designed playgrounds and common areas created the binary atmosphere of an urban village (see Fig. 2a), with an active use of common space. Such an environment supported the maintenance of a rural-urban lifestyle until upgrading, which allowed daily practices that are not common in typical urban neighborhoods. For instance, collective outdoor food cooking or bird breeding was a usual practice. On the other hand, based on interviews, residential mobility in the neighborhood was very low, mainly because of the traditional lifestyle, strong culture of living in multigenerational households, in the case of the SZK. This has additionally been supported by high quality apartments in the SZK. Ownership in most cases was transferred within the family, so the indirect transit character of the neighborhood was prevented. As an outcome, even today, many households consist of two or three generations living together. Consequently, social relations within the neighborhood have an intergenerational continuity. Many residents refer to the local community as an extended family with developed practice of ‘gifts and favors’. As they comment “mutual trust was that high that we never locked our apartments”.



Site plan analysis is based on site plan for SZK from 1940, source: historical archive of the City of Nis, and Detailed Regulatory Plan for SZK from 2004 and 2007, source:



Photo by Goran Markovic (a), and Petar Vranic (b,c)

**Fig. 3** The phases of transformation of SZK

However, after eight decades, in the period of post-socialism, the SZK entered a critical phase of its service (see Fig. 2c, 2d, 2e). An urgent need for renovation forced the local community to find affordable investment alternatives for capital renovation, and thus, accepted upgrading and negotiation with private developers. Since these transformations brought critical changes to the SZK, the remainder of the study focuses on the advantages and disadvantages.

### *3.2.2. The planning and management of the MSEs negotiation process*

The lack of any official effort to frame the negotiation phase, resulted in fragmented approaches, based on market demands and individual preferences. Additionally, the developer's financial capacity influenced the consistency of the MSE process. Firstly, it conditioned the scale of work one developer could undertake at a time (number of houses that can be reconstructed at the same time), which further affected the consistency of the MSE both in terms of context-sensitive design considering inherited architectural typology, and the management of the negotiation process. Secondly, the financial capacity of the individual developer directly affected the initial 'trade-off' offer, which in the case of the underestimation of the HOAs' expectations prolonged the negotiations. Thus, the objective operational level remained at the level of a single building.

For an MSE to be approved by the local authority, at least 51% of the homeowners within the relevant HOAs must support it. The interviews point out that the achievement of the consensus among homeowners itself was long and cumbersome process, since neither the ARFR nor any follow-up legislation, defined the legal framework, guidance or procedure for the negotiation between HOAs and potential developer. Thus, the negotiation dynamics and procedures have differed on a case-by-case basis. As 95% interviews shows, the HOAs negotiated just with one developer, with standard trade-off offer, which usually includes roof repair, façade and entrance hall repainting, security doors, cable TV, and in sometimes the installation of heating systems and thermal insulation, or just monetary compensation. However, in absence of prescribed requirements within the legislations or DPRs, this list changed case-by-case both in terms of number and quality of offered services and improvements on the side of developer.

Elaborating on the main challenges for the negotiation process the participants identified three main constraints. The 20% of the respondents identified the lack of awareness of their own rights as main drawback, 25% commented that the unequal distribution of power in the decision-making process within the HAs affected the negotiation, while 55% agreed that experiences of the other HOAs had crucial impact on the achievement of the consensus and agreement with developer. Conversely, developers point to individual gain as one of the major constraint for agreement.

The lack of knowledge on their legal rights and their objective positions as co-partners in the process made the most of HOAs to disregard their objectives, take an inferior position in the negotiations from the start and rely more on other HOA's experience than on their own rational demands. Thus, any potential asset increase, on the side of HOAs, involved a risk of losing a potential investor and created a commonly shared 'paralytic' effect, where many decided to avoid risk and stick to commonly accepted offer. Just one HOAs of all interviewed took the advantage of others experience. As one of our respondent comments:



“...frankly speaking, looking others experiences we realized that we can go way beyond standard developer’s offer...for instance we asked for legalization of the illegally extended balconies and the construction of new terraces etc., and he accepted all.”

On the other hand, the decision-making frame, based on consensus of 51%, as interviews suggest triggered the erosion of the community among the homeowners, consequently giving the developers room for manipulation and thus an advantage in the negotiations. 50% of the respondents commented that negotiation somewhat worsen the relations between neighbors. The replays points to two practices that emerged out of such power relations and became the major constraints for HOAs integrity in negotiations: individual lobbying and boycott. The lobbying occurred as a strategy among perspicacious individuals, who took the advantage of the situation when an agreement could not be achieved without their votes, and thus forced developers to give them additional compensation, monetary or otherwise. On the other hand, the boycott emerged when individuals did not want to accept the consensus of the majority, rejecting services defined by the agreement at any cost.

In sum, just 16% of respondents were satisfied with the contract, 8% unsatisfied, while 78% were somewhat satisfied, mainly regretting possibility to obtain more benefits out of the process. In same time, interviewed developers have a commonly shared comment “you can never satisfied them all”.

### 3.2.3. Implementation of MSE: pros and cons

When it comes to the MSE implementation, 85% of the respondents claim that investor did not fulfill the services defined by contract or has violated the part of the contract, while 16% claim otherwise, but point to a lower quality of the used construction materials. Summarizing the interviews we identified following MSE implementation irregularities. Firstly, at the scale of a single building the most common irregularity was altering the evacuation halls in the lofts into apartments, on the side of developer, after acquiring the use permit (an unlawful practice). Despite the HOAs protest, developers succeeded to legalize those apartments and avoid any sanctions, largely relying on the *Law on Legalization*, on the one hand, and as respondents commented, additional monetary compensation to the homeowners for giving up the law-suit, on the other. Secondly, some of the buildings remained unfinished few years after set deadline, thus, remaining scaffolds and construction materials affected safe use of open space. There are two reasons for that: a) a great portion of the initial developer’s capital was based on pre-paid contracts where future owners were paying between 10-15% in advance and the rest along the construction (basically financing the MSE construction); thus, unplanned discontinuity of financial supply affected construction work, and b) the boycott of upgrading on the part of the individuals among homeowners (see Fig. 4a, 4d). Thirdly, damages such as broken tiles, scratched windows or doors, were not repaired as it was stated in the contract. The same apply to greenery attached to the buildings, which were destroyed during the construction works. Fourthly, developers did not provide the sufficient amount of solid waste containers, and did not install them according to DRP recommendation (with green or wooden fences, and concrete plateau).

Furthermore, although parking problem is not an exclusive issue for SZK, the spatial change caused by the application of the MSEs, deserves special attention. All interviewed participants highlighted that developers never or usually not properly provided the

sufficient amount of parking spaces for new tenants. In respect to increased population, the number of cars in the area increased considerably. Observation on site shows that close to 50% of the POS has been altered permanently into parking area. In the analysis carried out by Koneska (2011) there were contradictions within the *Detailed Regulatory Plans for SZK from 2004 and 2007*<sup>2</sup> regarding parking requirements, which created space for manipulation for the developers. As she continues, the first DRP requirements made provisions for one parking per new apartment, in the DRP from 2007 it was change to “*as many as possible*”. At the same time, space allocated for parking was marked over state owned land. Given that the HOAs as a collective owners just of building footprints, this creates ambiguity about who is responsible for the provision of parking space. Thus, based on regulation inconsistency the developers succeeded noticeably in avoiding the provision of parking space, which became the greatest constraint for efficient functioning of the neighborhood (see Fig. 3c, Fig. 4e).

One of the most discussed issues among experts and the public in general, when it comes to MSEs, is the structural stability of the buildings that underwent MSE, especially of those that almost doubled their built up area, such as SZK. Commenting on the structural stability of MSEs, our interviewed expert had the following to say:

“...The civil engineers involved in realizing the project did not adhere to the regulations which refer to sanation, strengthening and reconstruction of multi-story objects or deliberately misinterpreted them...In the most difficult, almost absurd situation, are the buildings built as a masonry structure such as SZK, which are especially vulnerable considering the fact that they do not have any vertical reinforcements. The external interventions were done incorrectly, while other required structural reinforcements were never done.”

It was somewhat surprising that most of the interviewed have the opposite impression, claiming that the structural stability of the building is now improved, usually pointing to explicit vertical concrete enforcement on the facades.

Although the DPR recommended that extensions should correspond to the aesthetic appearance and architectural style of the host building, in practice there was not consistent enforcement of this principle, as MSEs in most of cases do not match both with their host buildings and within each other in terms of size, form, style and materials. On the one hand, this may be partly attributed to the weakly defined regulation and general lack of interest and initiative on the part of the planning officials for this type of residential development, and fragmented negotiation process, on the other. The architectural typology of the MSE was mostly functional and conditioned by existing forms, while the aesthetic distinctions were emphasized with ‘cage-like’ constructive elements with bright color code, which in most cases was generic and without respect to the local contexts.

#### 3.2.4. *Public open space and activities after MSE*

The combined results from the interviews and observation on site indicate both qualitative and quantitative decrease of open space after MSEs. The share of usable POS decreased for close to 50% in favor to parking space. In some part of SZK, more than 80% of the POS is converted into parking. Consequently, claiming their right to parking space, residences illegally occupied sidewalks and pieces of the POS, physically enclosing it

by chains and iron triangles. Without control and sanction for such a behavior, as interviews point out, this trend just increased in scale, scaling down usable open space and fueling tension among the residents. On the other hand, much of the rustic greenery planted along the street was destroyed during the construction work, which prominently decreased the environmental quality in the neighborhood. Additionally, the scaffolding and construction materials left over in the area attached to yet unfinished buildings (see Fig. 4d), and insufficient numbers and consequently overloaded waste containers, with the lack of adequate protection, decreased the environmental quality, safety and use (play) comfort of the public open space.



**Fig. 4** The neighborhood of SZK after MSE

On the one hand, this can be partly associated with indifferent attitude of the local municipality who is in charge of maintenance of the open space, and its delay to adjust it in respect to increased population, and developers who did not fulfill the agreements from the MSE contracts. Thus, open space in SZK after MSEs shows both insufficient capacities in a quantitative sense regarding the amount and in a qualitative sense regarding diversity of content to support optional and social activities in the area. The overall capacity of content for close to 300 apartments consists of four self-made benches, three flip-flops and one slider-board, which can hardly accommodate several people at the same time.

Such conditions influenced activity patterns in POS. The 84% of the respondent argued that the activity somewhat decreased in the area after MSE, considering also expected increase in respect to increased population. This claim goes in line with observation, which reveals mostly short term optional or social activities in the POS. In respect to the emergent changes the type of the activities varies case-by-case. The observation documents lower intensity and just optional activities in the part of the SZK where POS experienced regressive functional and environmental changes. Only in one out of six yards, which remained unchanged after MSEs considerable social interaction exists. Also there was two front yards where the local homeowners (old residences) strongly attached to the neighborhood, maintained the common space, planting flowers and trees, and constructing benches. These areas show constant social activities during the study. Although, we do not have sufficient sample of the new residents (just 6%) to indicate certain trends, reflecting on the use of POS in SZK all of them reply that they prefer to go to nearby parks with their kids, because of safety (car related) and comfort which is not on satisfactory level in SZK. To that account, 92% of the respondents commented that they do not see often 'newcomers' spending time in the neighborhood, and thus, do not have any social relation with them. However, given that new residents need time to attach themselves to the place and local community, and considering other socio-economic issues and lifestyle trends that influence the use of space, any early conclusion regarding social life in the SZK after MSEs on their side can be taken just as highly tentative and perceived as an initial overview. Thus, it is indicative that the MSEs indirectly influenced activity patterns within SZK, and may contribute to displacement of activities to nearby parks.

#### 4. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

As it accompanied other priorities during intense post-socialist structural transformations in Serbia, the regeneration of decaying multi-story housing areas can be treated as relatively young. As the analysis suggests, in the example of Nis, Serbia, during the post-socialist transition, this problem has been neglected within the urban planning framework and considered secondary to the ideology of market-oriented urban planning. Considering how it was carried out, as a self-organized and dominantly profit-driven process, regeneration through MSE happened more accidentally than intentionally. Thus the fusion of social policy and physical design, which is considered a necessity for the successful regeneration model, is missing. On the other hand, we can recognize some potentials of this model, such as the financial frame for the regeneration of multi-story housing areas based on private capital, which relieves the municipal budget, the empowerment of the sitting tenants in the decision-making process, and the increase of compactness of urban areas through efficient land use.

The analysis of the SZK also shows that the regeneration of the existing multi-story housing areas through MSE, dominantly regulated by the market, may lead to a reduction of the qualitative characteristics of existing neighborhoods both in physical and social terms, mostly because of: 1) the absence of an all-encompassing regeneration strategy at the city level, and consequently, the absence of a legislative frame and legal mediation of the process on the part of local planning authorities, and control over the process with specifically established evaluating criteria for the MSE, 2) disrespect of the inherited context, considering the spatial and ambient context in planning approaches (which are very noticeable in the case of the SZK, although its specificity was obvious), 3) the financial incapacity of local

developers and HOAs, which prevented a consistent MSE model in the entire SZK in terms of architectural typology and quality of construction, on the one hand, and the negotiation frame on the other, and structured initiatives on the part of the HOAs to undertake the regeneration on their own, and thus negatively affected their role in the negotiation process, 4) the divergent motives and visions of the actors involved in the process which influenced the decision-making process and its dynamics (planning authorities: the lack of a regeneration vision with an indifferent position in the process, investors and developers: a strong profit-oriented approach positioned as the driving force of the regeneration, homeowners: an urgent need for regeneration, financially incapable, with an inferior position in the process), and 5) contrasting interests between and within HOAs, which prevented the HOAs from achieving a common negotiation strategy at the neighborhood level and strengthening their position as negotiators, and, led to the erosion of the local community, a prolonged process, and the critical outcomes of the regeneration of certain objects.

Already in the early stages after MSE, there was visible evidence of divergent behavioral patterns in the use of open space, the rate of use, unfinished regenerations and façade patch-work, which indicates the potential disintegration of the local community. As Wilson and Kelling (1982) point out, the residents themselves are prone to violations of formal and informal norms of behavior (for instance, as in the case of illegal parking occupation in the SZK), if the same types of unsanctioned behavior were to repeat over and over again, without any consequences. Such treatment of open space, as Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) suggest, has a direct impact on the perception of residential areas and urban community, both from the perspective of the sitting population, as well as investors and/or potential buyers, and may lead to further inadequate use and treatment of the common space and facilities within the neighborhood. Furthermore, an abrupt increase of density decreased the privacy level and challenged how the local community will continue to maintain the daily activities that help to build a sense of belonging in a physically and socially dramatically changed environment. The challenge for the development of community life in the SZK also considers the uncertain demographic character in the newly added apartments which may become transit or constant.

The study of MSE as a model of urban regeneration, based on the case study of the SZK in Nis, shows the ambivalent character of the model, where the critical outcomes do not arise from the nature of the model itself, but from the way it is defined through institutional and legal framework and practice.

#### REFERENCES

1. G. Andrusz, "Structural change and boundary instability", in *Cities after Socialism: Urban and Regional Change and Conflict in Post-Socialist Societies (Studies in Urban and Social Change)* G. Andrusz, M. Harloe, and I. Szelenyi, Eds., Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996, pp. 30–69
2. V. Backović, "European Cities in Post-socialist Transformation." *Sociologija*, vol.47, pp. 27-44, 2005
3. A. Badyina, and O. Golubchikov, "Gentrification in central Moscow – a market process or a deliberate policy? Money, power and people in housing regeneration in Ostozhenka", *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, vol.87, 113–129, 2005.
4. M. Blacksell, and K.M. Born, "Private property restitution: the geographical consequences of official government policies in Central and Eastern Europe", *Geographical Journal*, 2, 178–190, 2002.
5. City Assembly & City Housing Agency Nis "Housing Strategy of the City of Nis", Nis: UN-Habitat, 2007.
6. L. Deda, and S. Tsenkova, "Poverty and inequality in Greater Tirana: The reality of peri-urban areas", in *The Urban Mosaic of Post-Socialist Europe: Space, Institutions and Policy*, S. Tsenkova, and Z. Nedovic-Budic, Eds. Heidelberg: Springer, 2007, pp. 152–170.

7. A. Dingsdale, "New geographies of post-socialist Europe", *The Geographical Journal* 2, 145–153, 1999.
8. M. Djordjevic, "Reducing Housing Poverty in Serbian Urban Centers: Analysis and Policy Recommendations", in *Too Poor To Move, Too Poor To Stay: A Report on housing in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Serbia*, J. Fearn, Eds., Budapest: Open Society, 2004, pp.100-101.
9. Economic Commission for Europe, "Country Profiles on the Housing-Serbia and Montenegro" (New York and Geneva: United Nation, 2006, pp. 15-79.
10. G. Enyedi, Eds. "Social change and urban restructuring in Central Europe", Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1998.
11. L.M. Fisher, and A.J. Jaffe, "Restitution in transition countries", *Journal of Housing and Built Environment*, vol.15, 233-248, 2000.
12. J. Gehl, "Life between buildings: Using Public Space", Washington: Island Press, 2011, pp.9-15.
13. Gradska Stambena Agencija Nis (2006). "Stambeni Profil Grada Niša", Nis: Javno Preduzeće Gradska Stambena Agencija Niš, 2006, pp. 7-60.
14. F.E.I. Hamilton, K.D. Andrews, and N. Pichler-Milanovic, (Eds.) (2005). *Transformation of cities in Central and Eastern Europe: Towards globalization*, New York: United Nation University Press, 2005, pp.620-621.
15. D. Harvey, "Spaces of global capital: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development", London: Verso, 2003, pp. 25.
16. S. Hirt, and A. Kovachev, "The changing spatial structure of post-socialist Sofia", in *The urban mosaic of post-socialist Europe*, Z. Nedovic-Budic, and S. Tsenkova, Eds., Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag, 2006, pp. 115-118.
17. G.M. Hodgson, "Socialism against markets? A critique of two recent proposals", *Economy and Society*, vol. 27, 407-433, 1998.
18. A. Koneski, "Uticao planskih dokumenata grada Niša na kvalitet stanovanja" specijalisticki rad, *Urbana obnova - Gradovi u novom milenijumu*, Beograd: univerzitet u Beogradu, 2011, pp. 32.
19. K. Kreja, "Spatial imprints of urban consumption: large scale retail development in Warsaw" in *The urban mosaic of post-socialist Europe*, Z. Nedovic-Budic, S. Tsenkova, Eds., Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag, 2007, pp. 253-272.
20. M. Lux, "Social housing in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia", *European Journal of Housing Policy*, vol.1, pp.189–209, 2011.
21. S. Lowe, "A tale of two cities – rental housing in Budapest and Sofia in the 1990s", *Journal of Housing and Built Environment*, vol.15, pp.249-266, 2000.
22. E. McKenzie, "Common-Interest Housing in the Communist of tomorrow", *Housing Policy Debate*, vol.14, pp.203-204, 2007.
23. Z. Nedovic-Budic', (2012). "Planning institutions: Post-socialist Home", in *International encyclopedia of housing and home*, J.S. Smith, Eds., Elsevier Ltd., 2012, pp. 202–208.
24. C. Offe, "Modernity and the State" Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996, pp. 231-235.
25. M. Petrovic, "Post-Socialist Housing Policy Transformation in Yugoslavia and Belgrade", *International Journal for Housing Policy*, vol.1, pp. 211–231, 2001.
26. N. Pichler-Milanovich, "Urban Housing Markets in Central and Eastern Europe: Convergence, Divergence or Policy Collapse", *International Journal of Housing Policy*, vol.1, pp.145–187, 2001.
27. D.V. Polanska, "The emergence of gated communities in post-communist urban context: and the reasons for their increasing popularity", *Journal of Housing and the Built Environ*, vol.25, pp.295–312, 2010.
28. H. Priemus, and S. Mandič, "Rental housing in Central and Eastern Europe as no man's land", *Journal of Housing and Built Environment*, vol.15, pp.205-215, 2000.
29. R. Rudolph, and I. Brade, "Moscow: Processes of restructuring in the post-Soviet metropolitan periphery", *J. Cities*, vol. 22, pp.135–150, 2005.
30. S. Ruoppila, and A. Kährik, "Socio-economic residential differentiation in post-socialist Tallinn", *Journal of Housing and Built Environment*, vol.18, pp.49-73, 2003.
31. R. Sampson, and S. Raudenbush, "Systematic Social Observation of Public Spaces: A New Look at Disorder in Urban Neighborhoods", *American Journal of Sociology*, vol.10, pp.603–651, 1999.
32. K. Stanilov, "Housing trends in Central and Eastern European cities during and after period of transition", in *The Post-Socialist city: Urban Form and Space Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe after Socialism*, K. Stanilov, Eds., London: Springer, 2007, pp. 173-190.
33. V. Stankovic, (Eds.) "Census of population, households and dwellings, 2002 10, Comparative Survey: households 1948, 1953, 1961, 1971, 1991 and 2002: dwellings, 1971, 1991 and 2002 : data by localities", Belgrade: Republic Statistical Office of Serbia, 2004.
34. L. Sýkora, and M. Ouredníček, "Sprawling post-communist metropolis: commercial and residential suburbanization in Prague and Brno, the Czech Republic", in *Employment Deconcentration in European*

- Metropolitan Areas: Market Forces versus Planning Regulations, Dijst, M. Razin, E. & Vazquez, C. (Eds.), Dordrecht: Springer, 2007, pp. 209–233.
35. L. Sykora, “Processes of socio-spatial differentiation in post-communist Prague”, *Housing Studies*, vol.14, pp. 679–701, 1999.
  36. L. Sýkora, (1998). “Commercial Property Development in Budapest, Prague and Warsaw”, in *Social change and urban restructuring in Central Europe*, G. Eds. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1998, pp.109-136.
  37. T. Tammaru, “Suburban growth and suburbanization under central planning: The case of Soviet Estonia”, *Urban Studies*, vol.38, pp.1341–1357. 2001.
  38. M. Temelová, “Flagship Developments and The Physical Upgrading of The Post-Socialist Inner City: The Golden Angel Project in Prague”, *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, vol. 89, 169–181, 2007.
  39. I. Tosics, “Determinants and consequences of spatial change in post-socialist cities”, Paper presented at the conference “Winds of societal change: Remaking post-communist cities” at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, June, 2004.
  40. I. Tosics, and J. Hegedüs, “Housing in South-Eastern Europe”, in *Housing Change in East and Central Europe Integration or Fragmentation?*, S. Lowe, and S. Tsenkova, Eds., Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003, pp.21-44.
  41. S. Tsenkova, “Housing in Transition and Transition in Housing: The Experience of Central and Eastern Europe”, Sofia: Kapital Reclama, 2000.
  42. S. Tsenkova, “Bulgarian housing reform and forms of housing provision”, *Urban Studies* vol.33, pp. 1205–1219, 1996.
  43. Lj. Vasilevska, P. Vranic, and A. Marinkovic. “The effects of changes to the post-socialist urban planning framework on public open spaces in multistory housing areas: A view from Nis, Serbia”, *J. Cities*, vol.36, pp. 83-92, 2014.
  44. S. Vujovic, and M. Petrovic, “Belgrade’s post-socialist urban evolution: Reflections by the actors in the development process, *The Post-Socialist city: Urban Form and Space Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe after Socialism*, K. Stanilov, Eds., London: Springer, 2007. pp. 363.
  45. M. Vujošević, and Z. Nedovic-Budic, “Planning and societal context – The case of Belgrade”, Serbia”, in *The Urban Mosaic of Post-Socialist Europe: Space, Institutions and Policy*, S. Tsenkova, and Z. Nedovic-Budic, Eds., Heidelberg: Springer, 2007, pp. 275–294.
  46. J.Q. Wilson, and G. Kelling, “The Police and Neighborhood Safety: Broken Windows”, *Atlantic*, vol. 127, pp.29–38, 1982.
  47. KLER, “Profil zajednice - Grad Nis, 2009, Retrieved May 6, 2012, from: [www.kler.ni.rs](http://www.kler.ni.rs)

## **INTENZIVNA NADGRADNJA VIŠESPRATNIH STAMBENIH OBJEKATA KAO DOMINANTAN IZRAZ POST- SOCIJALISTIČKIH URBANIH TRANSFORMACIJA. STUDIJA SLUČAJA STARE ŽELEZNIČKE KOLONIJE, NIŠ.**

*Ova studija razmatra uticaj intenzivne nadgradnje, kao jednog od dominantnih izraza post-socijalističkih urbanih transformacija, na fizičke i socijalne karakteristike nasleđenih višespratnih stambenih područja u Nišu. Istraživanje obuhvata analizu institucionalnog i zakonodavnog okvira koji determiniše proces nadgradnje, kao i analizu uticaja fizičkih promena na društveni kontekst i karakter socijalnih odnosa u stambenim područjima u kojima je došlo do intenzivne nadgradnje. Istraživanje je bazirano na triangulatornom pristupu: 1) analizi zakonskih i planskih dokumenata, 2) intervjuima, i 3) observaciji. Institucionalni i regulatorni okvir procesa nadgradnje je analiziran. Istraživanje sugerise regresivni planski pristup procesu nadgradnje, posledicama kako po kvalitet izgrađenog okruženja tako i po kvalitet socijalnih odnosa i razvoj lokalne zajednice. Istraživanje takođe sugerise da u nedovoljno definisanom institucionalnom i zakonodavnom okruženju, tržišno orijentisani procesi regeneracije višespratnih stambenih područja mogu za posledicu imati negiranje lokalnih društvenih i prostorno-ambijentalnih specifičnosti.*

**Ključne reči:** *nadgradnja, post-socijalizam, urbane transformacije, Srbija, Niš.*