

MASTER UNIVERSITARIO EN GESTIÓN Y VALORACIÓN URBANA

**RESUMEN PROYECTO DE TESIS**

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Título del Proyecto de tesis:

**The Effects of Political Changes to the Urban Transformation Processes: Belgrade Case  
*Socialism, transition and democracy***

This study should focus on the consequences of strong political ideologies and political changes, regression or progress, on plans, transformation, expansion and development of the city.

Continuously inhabited since the Neolithic age, Belgrade is one of the oldest cities in Europe but with discontinuity in urban growth. The City identity is historically linked to the Orient and the Occident according to the fact that it was under Byzantium, Ottoman Empire and Austro-Hungarian Empire, but the physical traces of their presence in the city are not that visible nowadays. Belgrade today consists of two cities, Old Belgrade and Zemun, developed independently on different sides of historical borders and joined together only after World War I with the subsequent construction of New Belgrade, a large-scale modern project realized in the heart of the city, which today houses a quarter of a million people. In the period after World War II until the 1980s, Yugoslavia and Belgrade as its capital city experienced a different kind of Socialist modernity than the rest of Eastern Europe, with an international orientation and a lower gravity point of political power.

Belgrade's history was turbulent. During the past it has been the site of wars, conquests and rapidly changing fortunes during its thousands-years long history. Belgrade suffered heavy destruction under both World Wars, and it has the unfortunate distinction of being the only European capital to be bombed at the end of the 20th century. Its modern history is marked by abrupt shifts in political status: from a capital of a relatively small nation-state, to a center of a larger and prosperous multi-national federation, to a capital of a nation-state once again. Over the last two decades, the only constant factor in the city has been the speed of change. Again, Belgrade is anticipating a border shift: The country's future accession to the EU.

Today, Belgrade counts 1,650,000 inhabitants, and the average GDP per capita remains at some US\$1,500. Still, the uncontrolled construction of hundreds of thousands of square meters as part of neo-liberal investment projects has mutated the city. In a socio-political paradigmatic shift, Socialist modernity has quickly turned into its opposite: a wild, anarchistic mode of urban production with corresponding "turbo" aesthetics.

This condition manifests itself in a lack of long-term positioning of the role of the city and an absence of clear strategies for its future. But this is nothing new: In the absence of historical stability and of long-term successes, a logic or mentality of short-term urban tactics has developed that constitutes the city's most vital skill.

Starting from the hypotheses that political changes have a grand influences on the urban planning processes I would try to discover the followed: who initiated and who powered planning processes in different decades; differences between urban planning in social and free-market, liberal-democratic state; influences of the planned economy to the creativity in architecture and urban planning; consequences of the transition after the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989; how the new democratic regimes after 2000 deals with the burden of the past; what change of the land use to the land property, market economy and foreign capital investments brought to Belgrade. Answering these and many more questions the study should discover the mechanisms that provide the City with a specific character over time, enabling it to maintain, enhance, or change it with future interventions.

The paper will study and compare the changes in the urban face of Belgrade that were influenced by the change of the political regime (socialism-transition-democracy) through the analysis of the planned and implemented Master plan in 1950, 1972, 2003.