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# REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, SPATIAL PLANNING AND STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE

Conference Proceedings



Institute of Architecture and Urban & Spatial Planning of Serbia

2<sup>nd</sup> INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, SPATIAL PLANNING AND STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE -RESPAG 2013

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# RENEWAL OF STRATEGIC RESEARCH, THINKING AND GOVERNANCE IN SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF SERBIA: MID-TERM PRIORITIES

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#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The score of the first 20 or so years of 'post-socialist capitalism' (also: 'casino-capitalism', 'brutal capitalism', and similar, in the comments pointing to its more perverted manifestations) in Serbia is almost disastrous. The country has seen very little of better strands of the capitalism from some advanced (modern) capitalist societies, e.g.: socioeconomic and cultural development progress, developed democracy, protected labour rights, equalized changes and rising development prospects for the majority of population, relative egalitarianism, and similar. Instead, 'ugly face' of the new system has come to the fore, viz.: suspended modernization of society, ever prolonging economic crisis, exploitation of the overwhelming majority of people, extreme social differentiation and polarization, collapse of public finances, widespread corruption in all segments of society, bleak development prospects for the majority of population, slowly reformed political system of authoritarian hierarchy, and so forth. In sum, the country has ever deeper moored in the so-called 'inner peripheries of Europe', as one of the most undeveloped European countries. At least partly, this has resulted from the collapse of strategic thinking, research and governance (hereinafter: STRG) over a longer period, and negative role that planning cluster has played in it. Planning proved ineffective in resolving key development problems of society, as it has been revealed via improper institutional and organizational forms, as well as via planning approaches and methodologies, which have been inferior and substandard vis-à-vis development challenges of the new era. Instead of directing planning system and practice to address key development problems, in the past 10 years or

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> To note, more than 13 years after October 2000, Serbia is far from becoming a member state of the European Union (in fact, no 'D-date' has been approved so far by the Brussels), and estimates of its joining vary, from at least 10 years, on the one hand, to 'never', on the other. Serbia, similar to the majority of other Balkan countries, has not yet become an integral and active part of Europe. This part of Europe has been further destabilized and fragmented by few most influential actors of the so-called 'international community', which makes the acceptance of the EU *acquis communautaire* ever more complicated. This has been a distinct difference between Serbia and other countries of the 'European South' which are already members of the Union. To note, what is similar to all European countries, however, is that both the project of integral European Union and individual membership have mostly been the 'projects' of national and supranational elites (cf. Greve, 2011).

so the planning system has been geared and miss-directed towards purposes which have been both conceptually dubious and poorly substantiated in terms of statistical evidence of the addressed development phenomena, as well as in terms of other support. (For example, in the sphere of spatial and urban planning, this pertains to the legalization of illegal construction.) Consequently, a major remodelling of the system and practice is needed.

Over the period of more than twenty years we have been addressing a number of general and specific issues pertaining the STRG and related issues – see more in Vujošević (2003), Vujošević (2005a), Vujošević (2005b), Vujošević (2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b), Vujošević, Petovar (2010), Vujošević, Spasić (2007), Vujošević et al (2009), Vujošević et al (2010), Vujošević et al (2012), Vujošević (2012), Vujošević (2010), Zeković and Hadžić (2012), Vujošević et al (2004), Vujošević and Petrić (2006). A lack of proper expertise in STRG, especially in the planning domain, has been addressed on several occasions (cf. Vujošević, 2004a; Vujošević, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c), pointing to negative impact of this factor on the general developments in this sphere.

In this contribution, firstly we have systematized and presented a number of earlier findings on the key issues in a condensed form. Then, we have discussed some more recent trends in the European practice, all pointing to a necessity to elaborate new approaches to resolving the key issues of the STRG, also commenting on their relevance for the renewal of the STRG in Serbia. In the concluding remarks, we have outlined a preferable direction of legislative and institutional adjustments which, to our opinion, could help improve the existing situation. In that respect, we have kept to Harvey's notion on the necessity of the 'planning of the new ideology of planning', now especially during the period of crisis. Additional arguments urge a search for new planning: austerity and deprivation for wide brackets of population under the conditions of predictably prolonged crisis; at least selective renewal of now almost defunct welfare state, for example, in a form of some 'post-socialist/proto-capitalist welfare state'; and predictably 'Europeanization of Serbia outside the European Union and with its limited support'.

Why have we chosen and applied such an approach here? This is not another 'down the memory line' exercise. Instead, it is an attempt to give crude and simplified evidence (a 'collage' of accounts on the main theme and some related issues from earlier papers, presented as a reminder) on the conundrums that followed the post-socialist transition reforms (1), provide key findings and preliminary conclusions on this (2), and draw lessons that could be of some use for the institutional and organizational adjustment to follow in the imminent future of five or so years (3). We have thus found that the impact of contextual factors, both exogenous and endogenous, has not basically changed in the past ten or so years. What changed were the direction of their individual and synoptic influences, as well as the intensity of the influences, indeed, which has become apparent especially after the crisis of 2008. After all that experimenting with neo-liberal ideological and political patterns, Serbia has been left close to the very bottom of the development conditions among all European countries, and only with a weak hope that 'resilient

dynamism' (the motto of the Davos Economic Forum 2012) of the coming years might provide for some help. Following an extensive argumentation displayed in other parallel texts, we are here ascertaining that a thorough reworking of the planning system and practice is needed, to play a more relevant role in the renewal of the now collapsed SRTG in Serbia.

#### 2. AN ACCOUNT OF KEY PREVIOUS FINDINGS

We will not be presenting here an exhaustive list of indicators and indices to illustrate how Serbia has firmly and steadily kept to the very bottom of almost all the relevant lists and rankings of development for European countries, but will instead point to few indicators which may be strongly indicative of the bleak future of the country, in that they relate to some of the most precious segments of the human capital<sup>2</sup> of the country, and they warn to some very ominous signs of predictable futures of Serbia, viz.:

- Very old population, belonging to the group of ten fastest-ageing in the world.<sup>3</sup>
- Poverty: some 9.2% of total population, i.e., some 700.000 people, are below the poverty line, pitched at 8,000 dinars per household member per month ("Један богаташ на 41.000 сиромаха", 2013).
- Extremely high brain-drain (among the few poorest ranking countries in the world).
- Largest regional development differences in Europe (at local and at the majority of various regional levels).
- With the exception of Kosovo and Metohija, the largest unemployment rate in Europe hes been recorded in Serbia (officially, 25%), paralleled by the lowest activity rate of labour force, and an extremely large share of the retired, administrative staff and politicians ('bureaucracy') in the total number of employed persons; in parallel, many hundred thousands of labour force who have been de-qualified for long term unemployment, and for whose qualifications there has been and will be no demand in the labour market; out of total number of unemployed, some 650,000 people are not paid regularly, more than 1 million are unemployed, while after the outburst of the crisis in 2008 another 400.000 people lost their job; some 150,000 of employed are paid less than the guaranteed minimal income of 20.000 dinars ("Један богаташ на 41.000 сиромаха", 2013.).
- Serbia is a country with the largest number of refugees in Europe.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> When we refer to the notion 'human capital', we understand it in its broader connotation and denotation, that is, comprising three distinct groups of qualities (and further subdivided into particular characteristics): organisational capital; cultural capital; and economic capital, relating either to an individual, or to a social group, or to territorial regions of various sizes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> In recent years the number of dead persons has been exceeding the number of born persons for some 30,000 per year on average. While Serbia had the youngest population in Europe at the turn of XIX and XX century, now it keeps the 209<sup>th</sup> place (among 257 observed countries) with regard to the share of population younger than 14 years, and the 62<sup>nd</sup> place with regard to the share of the population of 65 years and more in total population. The mortality rate in Serbia is 13<sup>th</sup> in the world.

- The country has a very poor health and medical profile of population.
- Very low educational level of population, e.g., less than 14% of total population did not complete primary school, in parallel with less than 21% that acquired only primary education level; in total, these two groups form the majority of the education bracket labelled as 'functionally illiterate'.
- An overall employment landscape looks as follows: ever smaller number of productively employed persons (especially in the real sector of economy) plays the key role in providing income for ever larger number of non-employed and administrative staff (including politicians elected to official posts at various number of territorial governance). According to the most recent data, out of total number of 1,500,000 of employed, some 600,000 are employed in the public sector, which is disproportionally more than in any other European country.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from the above mentioned, there has been another factor which has been tremendously limiting the development future of the country. The public finances, being for years on the verge of collapse, alongside with enlarging foreign debt, have been steadily narrowing the manoeuvring space for public authorities to intervene in strategic development, and for that matter, in any other sphere where the redistribution of resources is pertinent.<sup>5</sup> This is effectively the *Procrustean bed* posed to the government: it has been expected at the same time to satisfy the needs of two most vulnerable and needy age brackets, i.e., the youngest and the oldest in the society.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> At the end of 2000, Serbia had some 8,000 clerks, while their number exceeds 30,000 now, reflecting and enormous increase of the number of various agencies. This has been paralleled by enormous increase of foreign debt: while foreign debt of Serbia during the rule of Tito had never surpassed some 10 billion US\$, in the last 12 years or so it reached the mark of 37 billion US\$! Practically the entire profit that was realised by the banking sector in the last 10 years or so, that is, some 24 billion € – was exported (removed) from Serbia. To note, now (in the first quarter of 2013) the level of GDP is some 60% of that in 1989 (also paralleled by the worsening of its structure in terms of the share of the real economy in total national product), and the level of the industrial product only 40% of that in 1989. With this new regulatory framework applied, the average overdraft bank interest rate in Serbia has been on average 33.78% annually in the recent years, while that in the Euro-zone has been around 7.92%. (To note, the overwhelming majority of banks are foreign.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Another moment is also of relevance here, which pertains to the transfer of financial resources from the country. According to "Godišnje se iz zemlje iznese četiri milijarde dolara. Srbija na 16. mestu zemalja sa najvećim nelegalnim tokovima novca" (*Danas*, 19. mart 2013), in the period 2001-2010 more than 50 billion € were illegally transferred from the financial sector of Serbia to various destinations abroad, annually 5.144 billion € on average per year. In that respect, Serbia ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in the world, among 143 observed countries. The information in the article has been cited after the report published by a Washington based research and advocacy organization *Global Financial Integrity*.

Inadequate planning system and practice have been among the key factors influencing the poor development performance of the country. This has been but a segment of overall collapse of system of STRG of Serbia. Especially in the period 2000-2012, more strategic contemplation and deliberation has been almost abandoned, in favour of few political and ideological mantras of post-socialist transition reforms, all imbued with strong neo-liberal flavour, e.g., liberalization, deregulation, marketization, etc. The application of these mantras has had disastrous results. In effect, when referring to the periods of peace, there has hardly been a single decade in the entire modern political history of Serbia during which such dramatic regression was recorded as that during the last dozen of years. Although economic growth in the period 2001-2007 was dynamic in nominal (numerical) terms, on average of some 5% annually, primarily based on the rise of service sector, imports and sectors supporting these activities, it was paralleled by disastrous devastation of the real (productive) sector of economy, and the biggest rate of de-industrialization in Serbia among all former socialist/communist countries. Now (2013), the GDP per capita does not exceed 50% of that in 1990. After another economic slow-down as from 2008 onwards, the recovery of the GDP per capita recorded in 2007 may be expected not before 2017, and only so the provided average annual growth rate exceeds the 3% mark.

## 3. KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOSS OF STRATEGIC THINKING, RESEARCH AND GOVERNANCE IN SERBIA

#### 3.1 Definition of key categories

Among many definitions of the notion of 'strategic governance' and related categories, we will here refer to the most-encompassing notion of 'strategic governance' (also 'strategic management', 'strategic steering', etc.), which consists of a number of 'sub-disciplines' (viz., thinking, research, innovation, planning, etc.). According to Kuklinski (2007), strategic thinking provides for the integration of scientific knowledge and imagination (the so-called 'creative versus logical thinking'); strategic thinking may nest an extremely various range of development concepts within a holistic and integrative approach; strategic thinking provides for a long-term framework which can also handle turning points in development, rapid structural changes; basically strategic thinking has to do with various classes of long-term, mid-term and short-term goals, for various territorial scales, whereby the theoretical, methodological and practical knowledge is accumulated for the preparation, adoption and implementation of decisions on future development etc. Some authors (e.g., Graetz, 2002) also explicate that strategic thinking and planning are "distinct, but interrelated and complementary thought processes" that must sustain and support one another for effective strategic management. In that, the role of strategic thinking is "to seek innovation and imagine new and very different futures that may lead the company to redefine its core strategies and even its industry". The role of strategic planning is "to realise and to support strategies developed through the strategic thinking process and to integrate these back into the business". Similarly, for Liedtka (1998), strategic thinking differs from strategic planning based upon the following criteria: vision of the future; strategic formulation and implementation; managerial role in strategy making; control; and managerial role in implementation. This author also insists that these distinctive roles should preferably be performed for mutual support.

## 3.2. Main direction of post-socialist reforms as a key factor of the misfortunes of planning and its poor performance in resolving key development problems of Serbia

We are beginning with a statement from Vujošević (2007b: 148), which we find paradigmatic and still relevant, especially with regard to the situation which has even worsened with the outburst of the financial and economic crisis in 2008, viz.: "As early as the second half of the 1980s, the system and practice of planning in the former Yugoslavia...were both in a deep crisis and grossly hypertrophied. A new system was sought for, based on appropriate market-cum-planning/planning-cum-market approaches. The claims were then still formulated within the socialist ideological 'narrative', with the over-regulated introducing more rigour into the 'p(l)andemonium'. At that time, Yugoslavia was still ranked among the most highly planned, the most participative, and the most decentralized countries in the world... Relatively unhappy experience with the former planning fuelled a wide-spread rejection of planning. Such an attitude is especially manifested among the architects of transition reforms, mostly the so-called 'econocrats' of the neo-liberal ideological provenance. In general, the majority of them tend to completely discard any ambitious notion of planning, thereby reducing its role to, at best, the so-called 'project-led cum market-based' planning approaches and concomitant methodologies. As elsewhere in the ex-socialist countries (cf. Nedović-Budić, 2001), the former planning system in Yugoslavia was dismantled from the beginning of the 1990s and from then onwards planning has been steered by "a strange mixture of old habits, few institutional innovations and the social, economic and political turbulence of the transition period."

Over a longer period we have been pointing to the crisis of STRG in Serbia, being a key segment of the governance institutional cluster. As early as in the second half of 1980s, legislative changes in the cluster of planning system and practice were urged for, to accommodate for at least four criteria: first, planning should play a mediating role between partial and common public interests, in developing, the so-called 'market economy'; second, post-socialist state should, through proper legislation, facilitate capital investment which also satisfy the interests of general population (public); third, entrepreneurial strategies and policies should fit into the development planning schemes of local (regional) territorial entities; and fourth, legislation should provide for democratic and participative practices, with a view to keeping at the same time some good characteristics of the socialist self-management system and introducing democratic forms of civil decision-making, characteristic of systems of political pluralism, democracy and pluralism of

ownership. Also, we insisted that the sphere of planning interventions should be delimited from other spheres of governance and societal management, with a view to prevent planning to encroach on the segments of societal life which are not 'plannable', i.e., which could not be steered by planning and similar mechanisms and instruments, that is, the planning cluster proper should be discerned with proper scrutiny from the non-planning strands of the governance system. A new political and professional deliberation would be needed for that, to focus on various possible forms of institutional and organizational adjustments, and *ex ante* assessment of their respective pros and cons, prior to already heralded legislative changes of planning and related acts.

Inadequate planning system, being a key segment of the so-called strategic governance cluster, as well as its poor performance in practice, played a crucial role in the crisis of STRG, which ultimately resulted in its collapse. Only after the outbreak of the global and national crisis, the structural flaws in the grand neo-liberal construction were seen and admitted by broader political and professional public. As we put it forth in Vujošević and Spasić (2007: 18), "...all reform steps that have been attempted from the beginning of 1990s suffered from a lack of legitimacy. Instead of being discussed in the public at large, and agreed upon by all key societal actors, the reform projects have been imposed by the majority of political and economic elites, and basically supported by the key international factors". It became obvious to the broader audience only in 2008 that 'economic successes' in the period 2000-2007 ('growth without development') had been fictitious. In Serbia, no attempt had been made to render this 'European capitalist model' less frustrating and more effective. All of a sudden, after a period of almost ten years during which there had been a 'deafening crescendo' in favour of the 'shock-therapy', this previous 'boosterism' disappeared as from 2008, giving way to, firstly, government's temporary retreat from dealing with development and related matters, and, secondly, immediate turn to envisaging a 'new economic model'. In sum, as planning was becoming increasingly entrepreneurial over the last two decades or more, the score of this trend, to emphasize here once more, which was only accounted for as from 2008, seems to have resulted as a 'natural consequence' of such ideological and political choice.

Vujošević (2007b: 149) indicated that both the system and practice seem not to have developed into a *genuine planning mode*. Instead, they resemble more the so-called *quasi/pseudo planning*. Three *heuristic modes* dominate the planning landscape of Serbia and another one has emerged only recently:

- Planning as crisis management.
- Planning as supporting and enabling 'wild' privatization and marketization of public goods.
- Planning as a means of political pluralisation and democratization.
- Planning as supporting complex societal transformation and modernisation.

In terms of their respective *political functions*, the majority of spatial, urban and other development plans that have been prepared over the recent decade or so seem to have been following other purposes than those conventionally attached to the 'true' plans.

#### 3.3. The issue of sustainable development

Serbia belongs to the group of European countries with the poorest record in the sphere of sustainable development. In Vujošević and Spasić (2007: 1-45) we give a systematic overview of various sustainable development indicators. Many of such findings were repeated in the Serbian National Strategy of Sustainable Development (Национална стратегија одрживог развоја, 2008), which was set forth as a strategic document to deal ambitiously with the key problems of sustainable development. With the outburst of the crisis in 2008, the implementation of this document was effectively abandoned, followed later by its institutional repositioning to another government department. Prior to that, a new document was launched, resembling the former only in a very remote way (Путоказ ка одрживом развоју. Национална стратегија одрживог развоја, 2011), in which no critical reference on the poor implementation of the Strategy from 2008 was given. Instead, the new document offered a plethora of standard preaching statements on the virtues of the concept of sustainable development, extended by a number of international and national gurus/priests of this more recent confession ('The Temple of Sustainable World'), through an almost standard 'Baedeker/Travel Guide through the Lands of Sustainable Serbia'. In Vujošević (2009a: 154) we formulated the following statement: "An ever growing number of local development documents fairly well observe sustainability principles and criteria, but information to support the implementation of the documents in question is still insufficient, especially with regard to pertinent systems of indicators for monitoring and ex post and ex continuo evaluation of implementing decisions. In sum, the sustainability paradigm has been utilized more as a "political and professional mantra", than as an effective instrument for guiding strategic development." Typically, general concept and criteria of sustainability are being used in the new generation of strategic documents, to the neglect of more operative/analytical concepts. Now, Serbia has no document which would serve as a strategic framework to deal in a holistic way with various sector problems of sustainability.6

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Stojković (2013), apart from pointing to a number of missing important elements in the *Strategy* (e.g., the issues of: national security, protecting peace, solving the problems of refugees, protection of human and property rights, fighting corruption and organised crime, etc.), reminded that the realised economic growth rate of the GDP per capita in the first three years of its implementation was considerably smaller than predicted, that is, 0.9% per year on average (industry recorded the decrease of -0.7% per year on average), as compared to the predicted 4.0% per year on average. In the same period, that is, 2009-2011, this was followed by a decrease of the effective purchasing power of the majority of population.

#### 3.4. The utilization of territorial capital of Serbia

As a result of a number of miss-events the country has been experiencing as from the end of 1980s, the territorial capital of Serbia has significantly deteriorated over this period, in parallel with its under-utilization (Vujošević, Zeković, Maričić, 2010). At least partly, the improper direction of post-socialist transition reforms, which were chosen after 2000, negatively influenced this utilization. As it was put forth in Vujošević (2009a: 152): "The key features of this early phase of a post-socialist proto-democracy ('post-socialist protocapitalist laissez-faire', with only rudimentarily developed institutions of representative democracy, civil society and market economy), are: the prevalence of transition neo-liberal (privatization, liberalization, dictation, macro-economic marketization, etc.); the poor development of mechanisms of societal constructivism (other than F.A. Hayek's katalaxia; and the prevalence of mostly 'decreed reforms'." As a result (op. cit.: 150): "Thus, Serbia 'moored' even deeper in the periphery of Europe, that is, it became a part of new 'inner peripheries' of Europe, namely, the regions that are characterized by enormous rising disparities in terms of economic and living standards between the metropolitan and their respective peripheries, as well as by regional fragmentation, as major elements of spatial development (Göler, 2005: 205-211)."

In Vujošević, Zeković, Maričić (2009: 25), we presented that Serbia is in a deep and comprehensive crisis, whose dimensions have been potentiated by the global crisis. In Serbia, there is not enough concrete and wide social dialogue about the way to get out of the crisis. Also, there is none of the kind of public mobilisation which is needed to overcome the difficult circumstances. The main question remains, whether the Serbian elites can meet the complexities both of the current situation and of future prospects, when over the long-term they have been demonstrating inferiority and incompetence in STRG. The so-called 'endogenous' or 'territorial capital' of Serbia has significantly decreased, as have also its comparative advantages and competitive ability, placing the country into the so-called 'inner European periphery' in the circle of countries that possess significant differences between developed and undeveloped areas, especially between the metropolitan area and other regions, as well as significant regional fragmentation, as key attributes of their spatial structure. This was repeated in Vujošević, Zeković, Maričić (2010), within a comprehensive and detailed analysis.

## 3.5. 'Development schizophrenia' and the role of national strategic documents for spatial and urban development

Serbia is a country characterized by 'development schizophrenia': after the years during which the neo-liberal political and economic agenda dominated the public scene, paralleled with a prevalent anti-planning and anti-development stance among the elites and in the legislative and economic practice, recently a flux (that is, many hundreds) of development strategies and similar documents at various governance levels have been produced and

adopted. Still Serbia, a country in 'development impasse', does not have an effective and implementable 'exit strategy' to cope with the predictably prolonged crisis and bleak development prospects in the foreseeable future (cf. Vujošević, 2010a; and Vujošević, 2010b). Namely, the overwhelming majority of existing long-term, mid-term and short-term development documents (strategies, plans, programs, policies, strategic projects and similar) have proved to exist only as futile efforts, as they have typically not been realized, primarily for the lack of effective implementation devices.

A lack of proper national documents of strategic spatial development and/or poor implementation of the existing documents was another factor that was negatively influencing the utilization of territorial capital of Serbia. In 1996 The Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia (Просторни план Републике Србије) was adopted, then fully in accord with the European professional planning standards. Its implementation had been insufficient till the end of 1990s, and later additionally complicated by the initial antiplanning and anti-development stance of the planning authorities that came to power after October 2000. It was only in 2010 that a new strategic document of the kind was adopted (Просторни план Републике Србије 2010-2014-2020), preceded by a semi-formal national spatial development strategy (Стратегија просторног развоја Републике Србије 2009-2013-2020, 2009); both very ambitious, with properly worked out implementation policies and supports, and also comprising a number of categories from the more recent European planning vocabulary (e.g., 'territorial cohesion', 'social cohesion', 'polycentric development', 'rural-urban partnership', and so on). However, first accounts on the implementation of these two documents revealed a number of hindrances: in the first place, some conceptual flaws in the *Plan/Strategy*; second, those having to do with the negative impact of current economic crisis; third, a lack of necessary institutional and organizational adjustments (for the still strong influence of 'institutional sclerosis' in the planning culture of Serbia); and fourth, a lack of follow-up activities on further elaboration of implementation devices and instruments (cf. Zeković and Hadžić, 2012; and Vujošević and Maričić, 2012). One may well expect a piling up of further conundrums in this regard, because in the political and planning culture of Serbia decision-taking dominates over other aspects, especially in respect to the implementation of the decisions taken (cf. Vujošević, 2004c). It may be concluded that regarding the national spatial plan of Serbia from 2010 two kinds of 'enlightened political wills' have indeed been demonstrated, that is, first a will to put some problem on the political agenda, and to undertake broad public discussion on it; and second, a will to pass decision on it. Contrary to this, the third kind of political will, that is, to devise and apply proper implementation policies and instruments, is still lacking.

#### 3.6. Regional strategic governance and planning

Serbia is still a centralized country, with the distribution of governance responsibilities poorly suited for development purposes. Few attempts to introduce more decentralization

in the constitutional settings of Serbia in 1990s and from 2000 onwards were more replicating some legal and constitutional ideal-type schemes, powered by interest games, than they were searching for optimal models to generate more development and better positioning of various territorial areas in the international economic, political, cultural and other competition. A number of reform projects in this field have been undertaken in the past 20 years or so, but not a single one was directed to the causes and purposes of development and enhancing comparative advantages and competitiveness of Serbian regions, cities and locales in the global economic, political and cultural competition, contrary to the practices in the new European regionalism which took place in the same period (cf. Vujošević et al., 2012). Vujošević (2012: 509) wrote that there has been no real mobilization of the public at large, and especially so of its competent and critical part, for researching alternative governance models. Instead, such activities have been reduced to political marketing and improvisations, which have been but one manifestation of inferiority, substandard performance and incompetence of political elites for STRG.

In 2009/2010, some improvements were introduced into the legal settings of regional governance and development planning. Apart from the fact that these changes have not so far contributed to lessening regional development divergence (on the contrary, in the recent years this gap has been ever larger), again the stimulus for it did not come from the public at large, but rather from political party affiliations. Only now have these actors recognised an urge to work out an all-encompassing national development strategy of Serbia (*National development plan of Serbia*, according to "Праве план развоја". Верица Калановић предлаже стратегију Влади, *Новости*, 28. фебруар 2013), also taking into account the requests from the EU regarding national development priorities).

## 3.7. Land use management, privatization of urban/construction land and restitution of nationalized land property

Alongside with strategic development governance, land policy represents one of the important segments of post-socialist transition reforms. For a large number of reasons, also including the dominant role of some ideological and political dogmas from the very beginning of the transition period, and the impact of the global and national economic crisis as of recently, in Serbia there has been no major improvement in this sphere for a longer period. Here, we point to the finding accentuated by Nedović-Budić et al. (2012: 313): "There has been a prolonged delay in the adoption of effective reforms in land management, and the system has not radically changed in the post-socialist period. The current Serbian land-management framework does not reflect the requisite political changes, need for market regulation, or enormous increase in urban land prices. In fact, the change in political structures...does not seem to have produced the desired effect of resolving conflicts stemming from the socialist legacies or urban land ownership, not does it seem to have resulted in more stringent mechanisms for managing urban development." Also, the restitution of property to the former owners has not even been launched,

disparately to the practice in almost all other post-socialist countries, where this has been almost completed. Most ominously, instead a conversion of leaseholds of urban land into the property right has been stipulated in the recent (2010) Planning and Construction Act, which however, has not been a sui generis property legal regulation, but a legal act regulating primarily urban construction, spatial planning and related matters. This has had a number of negative, predictably disastrous consequences in the following sense, following the earlier legal stipulations providing for the conversion of some agricultural lands, notably in the outskirts of the largest cities and towns, for non-agricultural purposes, that is, mostly to urban lands, and well below the market prices. For this very reason, the restitution of nationalized land has constantly been postponed for a longer period. In this interim regime, the so-called 'urban mafia' extracts profit from the flaws in the system and uncertainties in managing this problem in the practices. This more recent momentum reflects a longer-lasting inclination of planning authorities in Serbia to introduce legislation that works in favour of private interests - and concomitant social inequality - against public interests. The clause in the *Planning and Construction Act* of 2009, stipulating the conversion of leasehold to property right, has been a mere replication of the Act of 2003, which was later amended by new pieces of legislation, along the same direction and despite the fact that the negative consequences of the initial Act were recognizable almost immediately after its promulgation. The new Act only introduced a new impetus for subsequent increase of social inequality, that is, of the planning 'model' supporting the privatization and primarily facilitating development and other capital over the interests of other social and economic actors. Thus, instead of promoting the role of the state in protecting and promoting public interests, this model assisted the old-new 'post-socialist capitalists' to consolidate their power. Also, instead of helping better regulation of development interests of various actors, this spurred new conflicts regarding the future development chances and expectations, 'ramping up' competition among them. In the sphere of spatial and urban planning, and at least partly in the sphere of environmental policy, planning authorities have demonstrated an extreme stubbornness in defending legal stipulations that were criticised as non-implementable in the profession and in the public at large. This stubbornness represents the skeleton of 'institutional sclerosis' in the field, thus preventing the introduction of 'institutional stamina' which has been so badly needed in facing and addressing the key development problems of the country.

## 3.8. Integration into Balkan and other European strategic development initiatives and documents

Two aspects here are of relevance:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> For example, from the article "Отимање државне земље. На Златибору сматрају да је Закон о катастарској легализацији најгори у нашој историји", (*Hosocmu*, 28. фебруар 2013), we learned that the Planning and Construction act of 2009, stipulating the legalisation of illegal construction and conversion of leasehold to property "has been the worst…in our history".

- Despite the fact that a number of issues urge the development of a common approach and strategic schemes for the Balkan countries, also supported by some more recent suggestions on this, so far no Balkan schemes in strategic spatial development have been worked out, apart from some sector initiatives for some countries of this region. In this respect, as early as in 2000, we were pointing to the need of developing common spatial strategic schemes for Balkan countries (Vujošević, Spasić, Petovar, 2000). Later, analogous proposals were worked out in more details (cf. Vujošević et al., 2004; and Vujošević and Petrić, 2006). More recently, there have been a number of proposals to work out, as well as to adopt an overall strategic development document for Balkan countries (cf. Monastiriotis, Petrakos, 2009a). Albeit not a single document has been realized so far, we strongly believe that particularly the existing - and predictably prolonged - crisis, which is in a specific way characteristic of the 'European South', will put additional pressure and urge the embarkation upon such a strategic project. Here, Monastiriotis and Petrakos (2009b) defined two approaches: first, 'wait and see strategy'; and second, 'as early and as fully strategy' - and two consequent regional development models. The first option, largely consistent with the neoclassical convergence theory, justifies the widening of disparities at present in return of faster growth (and regional convergence) in the future. The second option, more critical to neoclassical assumptions, anticipates a cumulative causation process that has to be tackled as early and as fully as possible. In this case, a new and different development model would more rely on local resources and actors, with the aim to develop local comparative and competitive advantages of Balkan countries, regions and locales. The authors, however, are not optimistic with regard to the latter option, and they continue in this way: "Our analysis proposes a series of problems in the application of the new regionalist strategy in the Balkan context. Problems of economic connectivity and development, local antagonisms, an under-developed civil society, and many more, all make it particularly difficult to envision the deployment of a coherent developmental model across the region or in any single Balkan country, which would be based on the premises of local leadership, participation, openness, and independence", to conclude "...that national development in the Balkans cannot be achieved without a true and well-designed process of regional cooperation that will be based on an explicit development plan for the entire region. The countries in the region are too weak and too much geared towards the objective of EU accession to be able to support by themselves, and in isolation, the objective of regional convergence."
- The utilization of the development categories from the new generation of European strategic documents has been prolific in nominal terms, on the one hand; and relatively poor, on the other, in terms of effectively implementing them in the local (Serbian) context. Apart from that, as we showed in Vujošević (2007a), the application of planning categories created in some of the most developed European countries (e.g., in Germany, Netherlands, France, and so on) is faced with a number of hindrances in a country belonging to the group of the least developed European countries, as is Serbia.

#### 3.9. Problems of expertise in the post-socialist transition

As Vujošević presented in 2007a (151), 'There has been a lack of planners and other experts experienced and knowledgeable in practical planning under the new circumstances of political pluralism and radically changed structure of stakeholders and concomitant institutional arrangements. This also applies to 'educators' in general, since the prolonged international isolation has made the bulk of their knowledge and capabilities almost irrelevant. The planning/policy information, research, institutional and other support provided by the state and other public agencies often does not satisfy even the barest needs, partly because of still poor institutional culture in the public sector. Worst of all, manipulation, paternalism and clientism still represent dominant forms of power, which is a problem in itself, given that the country is one of the most corrupt in the world. What are now missing are non-manipulative persuasion, as well as the authority of rational professional values, as the forms of communication and interaction that seem to provide the only hope of a democratic, emancipative and transformative planning mode." Until recently, planning and scientific authorities, otherwise preoccupied with 'nanotechnologies' and similar issues, were not commissioning enough research projects on strategic governance. Furthermore, even that small portion of available knowledge on the theme has not been recognized by the government, neither utilized for rational causes and purposes. For example, now for more than 15 years, the Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning of Serbia (IAUS) from Belgrade has completed a number of research projects on this and related matters, systematized the pertinent findings in a structured way, and presented them for discussion at broader professional and political forums and in the public at large to the responsible scientific, development and other authorities at national and other levels. However, these findings have been openly ignored, and the authorities have chosen a different direction of legislative change and institutional and organizational adjustments. The 'expert knowledge' of the 'architects of post-socialist transition reforms', mostly domestic epigones of international neo-liberal gurus in effect useless ignorants<sup>8</sup> regarding the strategic aspects of societal transformation, has been used as the key theoretical and practical guide on this. On the other hand, the available knowledge has not been properly utilized by the political establishment in its deliberations of key strategic issues, mostly for improperly developed and operated 'interface' between the political cluster of society and other strands that may influence strategic development agenda and decision making.

## 3.10. Negative role of political and economic elites ('political and economic establishment') in directing development of Serbia

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> We are here referring to Edgar Moren's comment on the 'educated experts and their ignorance' in handling the international economic crisis. In that, Serbian elites very much resemble the behaviour of their international pendants.

Among a number of common things that have played a negative role, particularly negative has been the role of the Serbian elites, which have proved to be grossly inferior and substandard, as measured by the challenges Serbian society has been facing in the past two decades or so. This issue was discussed on a number of occasions, mostly within the theme of the manipulation, 'debilitation of public discourse' and a 'systematic organised mobilization of interests and bias', as the predominant modes of the societal communication and interaction (cf. Vujošević, 2004b). Their answer was mostly improper, and their emancipating and modernizing potential poor, that is, well below the needs of contemporary development (Vujošević, 2009b). A new urge has been put to Serbian political elites, as both the role and future of the European Union in integrating Europe has been thoroughly questioned; thereby, additionally putting pressure on governments, all in futile repetition of the slogan "For Serbia, there is no alternative to the European Union". In Vujošević (2009a: 156-157), we pictured the 'prime theatre of postsocialist transition reforms in Serbia', and the more recent puzzles Serbia's elites have been encountering in that, in the following way: "In its "post-socialist Argonautic", Serbia faces a number of crucial questions - Where is the new Kolchida to be found now and where to search for a new Golden fleece – prospecting for it in the West, or in the East, or somewhere in the ex-Third World, or within the "Club of Porto Allegro" or elsewhere? – still unanswered. The potential of its human capital, with its enormous illiteracy, "poor education for Europe", and "poor education for sustainability", is questionable. The "new Jasons" of the post-socialist Argonautic have been facing a different sort of conundrum, that is, how to "rebuild the ship at sea" while avoiding its sinking? Do they enjoy the ultimate support of the Gods? Do the activities taking place on the "boat" Argo-Serbia work in favour of positive outcomes?" At the same place (157), we also pointed to the necessity for a more constructive role of Brussels in supporting pro-European actors in the country. Particularly, they point out the necessity to consult more actors on the key Serbian issues beyond the political interface between Brussels and Belgrade. Further, "There are, however, a number of imperatives that should be realized on the internal (Serbian) political and planning scene to that end. In the first place, a radical departure is needed from the dominating partisanship and the so-called "systematic and organized mobilization of interests and bias" on the public scene at large in order to better follow contemporary European practices. We still expect that key progress can be expected from engaging more independent and unbiased expertise during the preparation and passing of the key planning decisions. This implies that many new forms of professional and political communication and interaction should be established. Of the utmost importance is the establishment of firm professional rules against widespread intellectual and other corruption in spatial, urban and environmental planning, and the provision of better expertise in this field."

It is, however, disputable whether Serbian *comprador elites* will be able to undertake projects that will in the first place satisfy the needs and aspirations of the society they belong to, regardless of the opinion of the so-called 'international community' on this, and this puzzle will last for some time, being among the small number of still unknown variables in the Serbian post-socialist ideological and political 'equation'. A generally

submissive attitude of the major part of Serbia's political establishment to the pressures of few key international actors has been demonstrated via a number of manifestations, and as of recently in a similar way with regard to the political governance of current crisis. Namely, there has been an inclination among the most powerful countries to use ever stronger authoritarian measures in controlling this crisis. We are afraid that this may be used by domestic elites as a pretext to apply an analogous approach during the period of – predictably – prolonged crisis. Slovenian intellectual Rastko Močnik has paradigmatically formulated the key problem in the following way (cf. Интервју: Растко Мочник, 2013, 23.фебруара 2013): "Now we have a government of commissaries, the government in Brussels is not supervised or controlled democratically. It is a government which produces laws, by the name of directives, and does it openly."

# 4. SOME CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN TRENDS THAT MAY BE OF RELEVANCE FOR REDESIGNING THE SYSTEM OF STRATEGIC THINKING, RESEARCH AND GOVERNANCE IN SERBIA

In this part of our contribution we will list and briefly comment on some new momentums from the European context that we find important for Serbia and the renewal of its STRG in the imminent period. Namely, there have been some new moments in the European discourse and practice that may be of relevance particularly for redesigning the Serbian system of development governance. To our understanding, of particular interest are the following concepts: 'renewal of European strategic thinking', 'territorial capital', alongside with 'territorial cohesion', 'territorial integration of projects and policies', and new role of 'implementation' and 'evaluation'.

#### 4.1. Renewal of European strategic thinking

Sometime around the outburst of global crisis and concomitant national crises, there were thinkers who were pointing to the crisis of strategic thinking in Europe, being its 'Achilles Heel' (Kuklinski, 2007). Kuklinski hoped for a renaissance of European strategic thinking, but at the same time also examining whether this represented 'a feasible reality or a Utopian dream'. Whatever the ultimate outcome, he found that there have been a number of characteristics of this concept which are indispensable in any of the more elaborated approaches to the body of knowledge and practice that we may here denote as 'development governance'. However, there have been a number of additional issues which should be resolved in order to make a clear picture of the capacity of strategic thinking. For example, Niznik et al. (2005) raises three major questions in this context: first, who is to be the subject of strategic thinking?; second, does strategic thinking need an ideological framework?; and third, who is capable of – and interested in – implementing strategic thought in the XXI century? This author, examining the impact of the European integration on the dynamics of Polish strategic thinking and planning, vis-à-vis traditions of strategic thinking in other countries, points to a number of ideological, legislative and institutional

adjustments that have been necessary for the revival of strategic thinking in his country, after a longer period during which this approach was in decline.

## 4.2. Balance between economic cohesion, social cohesion and territorial cohesion: the role of the concept of 'territorial capital'

The concept of 'territorial capital' constitutes one of the three pillars of the EU cohesion policy, i.e., economic cohesion, social cohesion and territorial cohesion, aiming at striking a balance among the three. In parallel to that, it has been tightly connected with the environmental policy, being also among the key policy approaches in the EU. While the concept of social cohesion featured as one of the constitutive elements of the European Union since 1950, the concept of territorial cohesion has been rather new, taking its place in the institutional framework of the EU only after the establishment of the Lisbon Reform Treaty. This notion corresponds to two earlier notions, i.e., 'spatial development' and 'spatial planning', which have been in use more within national spatial development realms of the EU member states. Kafkalas (2009) points to different meanings of this concept, starting from different theoretical explanations, via its various ways of verbalization, to different approaches and methods practiced in its implementation. In that respect, one should understand it as a still open concept, especially because it has to do with controlling and streamlining inequalities among the territorial entities at various governance levels within the Union. Here, of particular relevance is the fact that the variance of different, even disparate interpretations of the concept of 'cohesion', grows with development inequalities among or within territorial areas: striking a balance between economic, social and territorial cohesion within a poor region may appear completely different from that in a mid-development area, and so even more from that in the mostdeveloped European regions.

So far, the rather new approaches, which have been applied to the conundrum of **balance between economic, social and territorial cohesions,** have paralleled new approaches regarding investment policy in the EU. In this respect, of particular relevance is the concept of 'integrated territorial investment, ITI', which was introduced by legislative changes in October 2011, with the aim to play a key role in the EU cohesion policy for the period

(http://ec.europa.eu/regional\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/iti\_en.pdf), and paralleled by the implementation of more recent TIA (Territorial Impact Assessment) tools. This approach should also go in accord with the most recent moves in the environmental policy of the EU, to take care of specificity of particular places when designing, deciding and implementing various development policies and other governance practices. Here, the emphasis has been put on three elements: first, 'integrated', to reflect the most recent efforts to overcome sector division and compartmentalization of earlier approaches, within a particular governance level and among them; second, 'territorial', to reflect the territory as the common denominator for various policies; and third,

'operational programs', to reflect the focus on the community-led local development, CLDD, and concomitant investment, geared by the PPP (according to Article 28-30 of the proposed Common Provisions regulation, and Article 99 of the proposed Common Provisions regulation). These new instruments are vital for the achievement of the smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe envisaged by the Europe 2020 Strategy. To note, within the member states, one or more operational programs may ensure the implementation of an integrated strategy for a specific territory, via a number of territorial strategies, which are necessary to serve integrated and cross-sectoral aims. Also, this may apply to various regional levels and inter-regional groupings, covering a varying number of administrative units. Once well defined, the stipulated development activities can be financed, preferably in an integrated way, by the ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund. What has been particularly new here, however, is an emphasis on the new governance arrangements that should be appropriately designed to support the new ITI approach. Namely, the former administrative-and-governance approaches, basically centred at sector investments, are not expected to satisfy new, multi-sector and cross-sector causes and purposes, especially with regard to a new role that has been stipulated for the public private partnership (PPP).

#### 4.3. The issue of integration and the role of strategic projects

The aforementioned changes went alongside with the changes in handling the old problem of coordination and integration of various general and sector development policies. According to *Planning and Management Processes: Sectoral and Territorial Cooperation* (1999), an imperative is to establish and operate all four key dimensions of coordination and integration of development and other governance policies and strategic projects, viz.:

- Horizontal integration, to denote integration of plans, policies, projects, sectors and actors at the same governance level;
- Vertical integration goes to coordinating activities of numerous actors from various governance levels;
- Territorial integration (which is, according to Vartiainen, 1987, a new term which is
  close to traditional approaches practiced in regional policy, now assuming "neoregional" appearance), to comprise territorial coordination of various sectoral
  initiatives and their consequences; and
- Temporal integration, pertaining to coordination of activities in their respective time dimensions.

Here of particular issue is that of 'territorial integration of projects and policies', paralleling the emergence of new, flexible and effective tools for the 'territorial integration of investments' and their 'implementation via territorial strategies and plans'; all having found their prominent role within the neo-liberal ideological and political turn. In this context, it has been considered that PPP would find its niche in almost all the aforementioned modes, especially when taking into consideration the territorial dimension of integration (Piparo, 2003). However, the traditional approach to the 'project

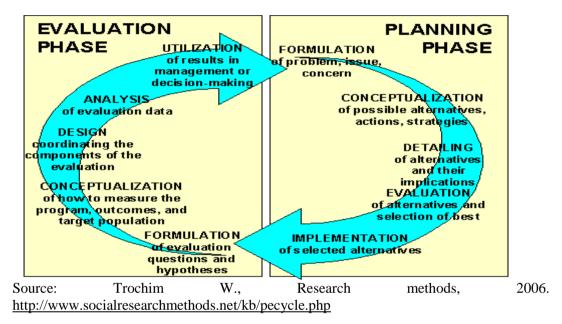
cycle' (EC, 2004), or 'strategic project management', has much changed in the recent period. In the first place, the accents were shifted to the integration of projects and programs, and especially of strategic projects and programs, into a broader administrative and governance structure. Secondly, a relatively new focus was introduced, namely, that of project cycle management at the metropolitan level, this being the fastest growing among all regional governance levels. As Salet et al. (2003: 377-390) clearly demonstrated, there has been a flux of new approaches aiming at the resolution of this problem at various governance scales.

Tosics (2012) puts another dimension in this discussion, by introducing the issue of strategic development documents, which should integrate initiative and efforts of various actors. He insists that all strategic documents should comprise both territorial development and Integrated Territorial Investment/ITI schemes, particularly within integrated strategic documents on sustainable urban development. A number of support schemes have been devised to that end recently. For example, the ERDF stipulated a legally obliged way to direct at least 5% of the ERDF resources for sustainable urban development, to concentrate on priorities of Europe 2020: Smart growth (Research&Innovation, IT, SME), Sustainable growth (Low-carbon economy in all sectors, Resource-efficient, Risk-prevention, Transport), and Inclusive growth (Employment, Social inclusion, Education). Within this, a particular attention should be paid to direct the investments of the kind in the metropolitan areas.

#### 4.4. Planning implementation and planning evaluation

The above-mentioned trends go in parallel to the new attention which has been paid to the issues of 'implementation'. Namely, it is the specificity of planning as a theoretical-andpractical discipline that renders a particular attention that should be paid to the role of implementation in planning. Following standard discussion of this issue (e.g., Lichfield et al, 1975, Bourne, 1976, Masser, 1983, Alexander and Faludi, 1989, etc.), Talen (1999) suggested that a number of various categories should be discerned in this context: 1. Evaluation prior to plan implementation (Evaluation of alternative plans; Analysis of planning documents); 2. Evaluation of planning practice (Studies of planning behaviour; Description of the impacts of planning and plans); 3. Policy implementation analysis; 4. Evaluation of the implementation of plans (non-quantitative, qualitative). As for the 'evaluation', apparently the 'trickiest' segment of planning since its initiation, it has come to the fore of theoretical and methodological enquiry in the recent decade or two, also reflecting a shift of epistemological focus regarding various aspects and types of rationality in planning, following the crisis of the so-called 'rationalistic planning' and search for new planning paradigms (cf. Vujošević, 2004c). It has been only recently that major efforts have been undertaken to integrate all three key aspects of evaluation, that is, ex ante evaluation, ex post evaluation, and ex continuo evaluation (OECD 2010, Trochim, 2006, Basle, 2006, Vujošević, 2004c, EC 2001).

Trochim (2006) accentuates – what is of particular relevance for our discussion – that evaluation often makes a part of the broader managerial or administrative process; or, a part of the entire 'planning-evaluation cycle' (Graph 1). Usually, in the planning process the evaluation (phase) stage is designed with the aim to elaborate a number of potential actions and programmes, and to select the best for the implementation.



From the standpoint of the prevalent practice in Serbia, one may conclude that both evaluation and implementation are the least developed part of planning, and especially the category 'evaluation before the implementation plan'. This has been in blatant contrast to the prevailing practice in Serbia. For example, even the 'flagship' planning projects (e.g., the national spatial plan of Serbia and its implementation program) have not resolved the problem of the implementation of strategic projects and programs, either at the conceptual level or at the level of defining effective implementation policies and resources (cf. Zeković and Hadžić, 2012).

## 4.5. The utilization of more recent strategic development concepts in EU regional policy

All the above discussed issues have a common denominator in various EU policies, especially in the EU regional policy. With this regard, they may be understood as the most recent attempt to introduce new approaches into this policy, which has been found as grossly inefficient. Namely, according to Petrakos (2008), regional development differences have not been lessened in the past decade or so, despite the enormous quantity

of resources that had been put to that end. Contrary to this strategic aim, Europe has been following a path of deepening cleavage between the two 'clubs', the 'convergence club' of the most developed regions (cities, metropolitan areas, locales, etc.), and the 'divergence club' of the least developed places, for which no effective instruments have been construed so far. For that reason, this author in his most recent work (Petrakos, 2013) points to the need to reassess the current approaches and to make departure to the policies which are "more flexible and more adaptive to local and regional needs". He at the same time recognizes the predictable impacts that the current crisis of public finances in the ever larger number of European countries may exert on new options. This is of particular relevance for Serbia, belonging to the group of the economically and structurally weakest European countries.

#### 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In what follows we outline a direction of change in the planning and other parts of strategic development governance, which would preferably and predictably lead to an end of negative trends in STRG, and subsequently introduce betterment. As it has been demonstrated in the main body of the text, these proposals are based both on recent European and national (domestic) experience. Now, these are performed as we have been witnessing the collapse of global neo-liberal political and ideological project.

Some new approaches from the European context, as well as from a broader international context, should also be applied when reforming the planning system and practice in Serbia. Here, of particular interest may be those from the class of 'sure step' approach, with a view to coordinate various sectoral practices and approaches in the respective fields of: global and national social and demographic challenges; economic and technological growth and development; energy efficiency; utilization of national resources; environmental policy; technical infrastructure; R&D; education and innovation policy; multicultural policy; PPP; etc. Of particular relevance are those concepts which have been developed around core EU documents on spatial and territorial policy, e.g., European Spatial Development Perspective (1999), and Territorial Agenda of the European Union. Towards a More Competitive and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions (2007). New moments in this context refer to the necessity to combine national policies, on the one hand, with the steps that are being undertaken in broader geopolitical context, on the other. Among new European approaches, which have been developed within the most recent concepts of 'new Europe', 'EU renaissance', and so forth, of particular interest are those which have been directed to a renewal of experience from the 'golden decade of European planning'. Although these have been somewhat shackled with the outburst of the crisis in 2008, they will nevertheless be of relevance for developing the new generation of strategic governance practices in some time to come. We are especially referring to those from the following documents: Europe 2050; Europe 2020 Strategy (being the modified Lisbon Agenda); EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020; etc. Of significance are also relevant general and sector strategic frameworks and operative programs in various domains (e.g., strategic development, economic development, human resources development, environmental protection, decentralization of governance, 'urban-rural partnership', etc.), as well as scheduled IPA instruments. Of course, the utilization of the aforementioned approaches in Serbia ought to be selective and flexible, that is to say, in accord with the development fixities and prospects of the country, belonging to the group of the least developed European countries. Also, after an extremely rich planning experience which had lasted till the end of 1980s, the subsequent period has witnessed a tremendous regression of planning and other institutional culture, despite a number of bold attempts to produce a new generation of strategic development documents, at first occasion in the mid-1990s, and recently from 2005 onwards.

We are here starting from two broad assumptions: first, that Serbia will be developing along the course of introducing ever more elements of the so-called 'post-socialist democratic polyarchy'9; and second, that, having experienced many unfavourable consequences of the one-sided neo-liberal approach that puts too much emphasis on the role of market and liberalization, renewal of STRG will have to more rest on combined planning-and-market/market-and-planning practices, developed within broader perspectives of strategic development governance.

Within the outlined context, we see two main directions of conceptual, legislative and institutional adjustments in the strategic governance system and practice in Serbia in next two to five years, viz.:

• In the cluster of strategic planning proper (of a narrower scope), already worked out and evaluated research findings have unequivocally pointed to the necessity to leave the current track of adjustments in the planning system and practice, for example, a stubborn insistence on the legalization of illegal buildings which has occupied the dominant position on the planning scene in Serbia for more than a year now, toward more elaborate approaches. Namely, this and similar cases only support two heuristic modes that have dominated the planning landscape of Serbia for more than 20 years,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> We admit that this is a hypothesis which will have yet to be tested in practical (experiential) terms. Namely, there have been a number of authoritative authors who have recognized and pointed to some mostly non-democratic prospects of future development of Serbia. For example, an eminent political sociologist (Podunavac, 2012) ascertained that there have existed almost insurmountable barriers to establish basic political consensus on the political system and its legitimization base. He recognizes three current strategies of key political actors in Serbia, viz.: strategy of political restoration (otherwise carrying no deeper legitimization and democratic base); strategy of political legalism (based on the values and virtues of liberal constitutionalism); and strategy of political radicalism (in the form of a contemporary political *Jacobinism*, basically non-legalistic and non-liberal). Another commentator (Бакић, 2012), a political sociologist, also pictures the imminent future of Serbia in rather bleak tones, and sees almost no chance for the country to be democratized in a shorter period to come, recognizing it the 'theoretical domain only', especially for the international conditions which are unfavourable for Serbia.

which have proved inferior and substandard in resolving the key development problems of the country, that is: planning as crisis management; and planning as supporting and enabling 'wild' privatization and marketization of public (state-owned) goods. A decisive departure would be needed towards more productive and helpful modes, that is: planning as a means of political pluralisation and democratization; and planning as supporting complex societal transformation and modernization. Particular attention should be paid to introduce - in sharp contrast to the existing system and practice - the appropriate element that would trace the key direction of change towards: better legitimization of planning vis-à-vis balancing partial and public interests; redirecting planning from primarily resolving sector and 'quasi-planning' problems to resolving complex development problems; redirecting the key mode of conflict management and resolution from prescriptive, to mostly contextual; shifting the key type of rationality of planning from predominantly 'technocratic' to more 'sociocratic'; introducing multi-dimensional evaluation (ex ante, ex post and ex continuo) in all planning phases, alongside with systematic and continuous monitoring of implementation of strategic decisions; enhancing the role of civil society in the preparation, decision making and implementation of decisions; broadening the knowledge base and information support for strategic planning; etc. However, a departure from existing forms should be performed via research of alternative optional modes and their respective pros and cons, to be examined in full necessary details, properly structured and presented for deliberation and discussion to the public at large.

In the broader context of strategic governance, the most productive potential for a renewal of STRG we see in introducing, in a systematic and organized way, the territorial dimension in strategic decision making. In the first place, in institutional and organizational terms, spatial and urban ('territorial') planning would have to be established as the common institutional framework for 'all' strategic development decisions. Thus, it may serve six key purposes: 1) to play the role of the key instrument for an integral management of territorial capital of Serbia and its regions and locales; 2) to establish a common denominator for the evaluation of general and sector investment policies, with a view to contribute to the betterment of comparative advantages and competitiveness of the country and its regions and locales in the international political, economic, cultural and other competition; 3) to integrate key projects and programs into general strategic framework (for example, within the concept of ITI/Integrated Territorial Investment) and place-based approach; 4) it may provide for a better inclusion of local actors and local communities in strategic decision making (for example, with the concept of Community-led Local Development/CLLD); 5) to provide for a departure from the now prevalent 'development visions', which are characteristic of the existing 'development schizophrenia' in Serbia, to implementable strategic concepts; and 6) to establish the preparation of national and regional strategic documents that have been requested as the precondition for the EU candidate states as the access to EU funds. To note, and mostly contrary to the currently predominant planning approaches and practices, more

- 'abstract and general' concepts such as 'economic adjustments', 'regional adjustments', 'new economic development model', and similar, ought to be discarded, in favour of the approaches and concepts that are more place-based, that is, those that carry the strong 'colourfulness' of concrete places.
- A third lane of action should also be undertaken: all strategic development and related documents that have already been adopted in recent years, especially those before 2008, should be reworked, with the aim to reach out from the existing development impasse and 'development schizophrenia' (1), and to care for a set of effective and implementable 'exit strategies', which now the country is still lacking (2). Priority should go to the strategic documents addressing the issue of the utilization of territorial capital of Serbia, its regional development, re-industrialization of the country and integration into European processes. Here it is of utmost relevance that Serbia is facing 'Europeanization outside the European Union and with its limited support', under the condition of predictable prolonged crises and bleak development prospects, implying that a new set of priorities should be defined in accord with these key factors of influence.

However, the fulfilment of some preconditions is badly needed for both aforementioned directions of changes; namely, the establishment of professional and political arenas for free, open, rigorous and transparent discussion of all key development and development-related problems of Serbia, independent of political party affiliations that dominate the political scene in the country. It is our strong belief that political parties in Serbia cannot generate new ideas for the resolution of key problems of strategic governance in the country, and that, consequently, new ideas and appropriate answers may only be expected from broad strands of independent academics and their expertise, as from the public at large. We strongly believe that the ruling political parties in Serbia carry or generate almost no new ideological and/or political ideas, as they have been mostly preoccupied with the 'purification of political sphere'. Consequently, the action towards a better system of governance and concomitant renewal of STRG in Serbia will rest on independent individuals and groups.

We will repeat a statement of the ultimate relevance for the renewal of STRG in Serbia. As we wrote in Vujošević (2009a: 157), reminding the professional audience: "Following the approach of a critical pragmatism, some members of the planning profession have been insistently demanding from the responsible planning authorities in Serbia a clear and effective demonstration of all three necessary kinds of enlightened political will that are necessary here:

- The will to establish wide societal dialogue and to reach general consensus on the key development problems and prospects.
- The will to provide all necessary preconditions for preparing and passing of both democratic and relevant development decisions.

• The will to make sure that all needed implementation devices, policies and support is also provided. So far, in terms of spatial and urban development planning at the national (state) level, the attempts of the professional planners to that end have grossly failed.

However, we also point to the necessity for a more constructive role of Brussels in supporting pro-European actors in the country. The critics of both the inadequate decisions of Serbian political and economic leaders and those of the EU bureaucrats and political apparatchiki highlight a number of pertinent issues. Particularly, they point out the necessity to consult more actors on the key Serbian issues beyond the political interface between Brussels and Belgrade."

#### 6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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#### **SUMMARY**

There has been a crisis of strategic thinking, research and governance in Serbia for more than two decades, resulting in its more recent development impasse, paralleled by 'institutional sclerosis' with regard to new planning approaches. This process has further funnelled down with the outburst of global crisis in 2008. As the result of interplay of a number of factors, especially those having to do with the inadequate post-socialist transition reforms and negative role in which political and economic elites played a role, Serbia is lagging behind in almost all development characteristics. Major adjustments are needed to that end, particularly vis-à-vis predictable 'Europeanization of Serbia outside the EU and with its limited support, under the conditions of prolonged crisis', in all key strands, that is, in the cluster of strategic planning proper, in the broader context of strategic governance, and with regard to reworking the existing strategic development documents. Some recent European trends may be of help here, especially those pertaining to: a striking balance between economic cohesion, social cohesion and territorial cohesion and the role of the concept of 'territorial capital' within it; integration of strategic projects; planning implementation and planning evaluation; and lessons from recent changes in the EU regional policy. However, Serbia will not be able to make decisive moves to improve

its future development prospects without redefining the role of its political and economic elites, now carrying a poor modernising and transformative potential.