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POSSIBLE IMPACT OF MIGRANT CRISIS ON THE CONCEPT OF URBAN PLANNING

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ABSTRACT

The migrant crisis that hit Europe has been addressed many times by the highest EU bodies, but without coming up with concrete solutions and without offering the uniform measures. The EU member states, as well as other countries on the migrant route to the desired destination, respond in a different way to the inflow of migrants, either by receiving them, sending them to other countries or closing their borders to migrants. The crisis has not yet got its epilogue, i.e. all consequences from the immigrant inflows for the cities on the migrant route cannot be perceived at this moment. It is inevitable to reflect on the reality of the future social integration and inclusion, or segregation, as well as on the cultural differences, xenophobia, fear of terrorism, safety, mutual understanding and ignorance, as wll as the key issues of the economic limit. The research hypothesis is that this problem will also spill over into the field of urban planning, and it should be addressed in a holistic way and from all apsects of integrated urban development to ensure social, economic and environmental urban sustainability. The paper recognizes the following spatial determinants: cities of migrant arrivals (border places, ports, etc.), transit cities on the migrant route, with different period of stay, and the cities of the desired final destination, with their classification based on their size. At the level of the undertaken measures, the paper differentiates between the short- and long-term solutions of different size and coverage. In conclusions, the recognized effects of the migration on the West Europen cities are used in finding an appropriate planning response to a new situation in the region, in aim to avoid segregation, creation of enclaves, and to enable an undisturbed inclusion.

Keywords: migrants, cities, urban plannning, inclusion, multicultural society

Introduction

Human migration is the permanent change of residence by an individual or a group (Lin, Mele,2012), i.e. the voluntary or forced movement of people from the country of their origin or residence for the purpose of temporary or permanent settling in another country (external-migration), as well as for changing the usual place of residence within a country (internal migration). The migrant crisis that escalated in Europe in 2015-2016 with the mass arrival of immigrants from Asia and Africa was caused by war and anarchy in their homelands, but also by general conditions, low standard of living and, certainly, by their desire for a better quality of life. The climate change projections warn that the major population migrations will take place in future due to severe drought and famines in certain areas. The exodus of migrants also

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took place until that time, but mostly on the Mediterranean shores, primarily in Italy, where the refugees reached shores by ships and boats, which often resulted in accidents and mass loss of life (McMahon, 2012, Caponio, etc. al., 2015). Since mid-2015, the migrant route to the EU has changed when the massive inflow of migrants began entering the EU from the Balkan countries. Regardless of whether the refugees have come to EU taking an inland route via Turkey or a sea route to the Greek ports, they have continued to travel overland via Greece, Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia and Serbia to Hungary and Croatia and further to the north and west of Europe. People from higher social classes who can afford, travel by air, while those from the lower social classes move along the well-established migrant routes from southeastern to northwestern Europe or remain stranded in the war-affected territories. Accommodating a rising number of refugees has become a great problem for the transit countries, particularly after certain EU member states changed their attitude towards the migrant crisis.
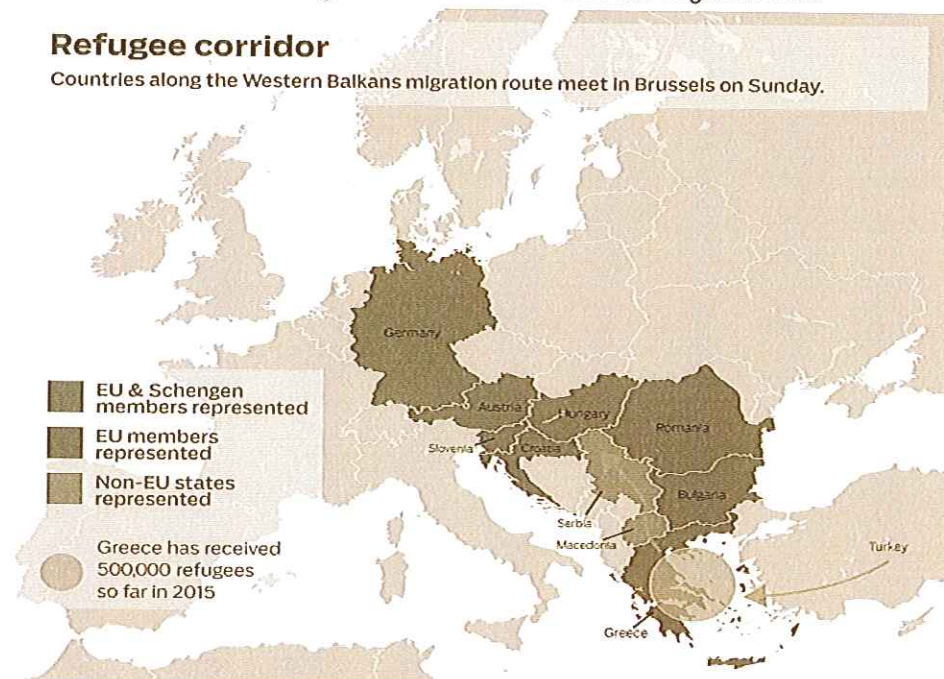

Refugee corridor
Countries along the Western Balkans migration route meet in Brussels on Sunday.

EU & Schengen members represented

EU members represented

Non-EU states represented

Greece has received 500,000 refugees so far in 2015

Figure 1. Balkan Migration Route, from Southern Europe to Germany. Source: https://www.politico.eu/article/commission-migration-proposal-draws-fire-merkel-refugee-merkel-juncker/

Namely, this situation has been understood and interpreted differently by different EU states: some have received migrants as victims and provided all possible assistance, like Germany, while others have opted for the restrictive policies including closing their borders, like Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The concern has been expressed about the additional burden on the social services, economic aspect of providing basic needs to migrants, changes in demographic structure of communities, the endangerment of the traditional Christian values by people of Muslim origins, aggravation of the security situation and disguised members of terrorist organizations. The dispute over the current refugee and migrant crisis has become obvious in the debates in the European Parliament, but an agreement upon the future common strategy has not been reached. In 2015, more than a million refugees arrived in Germany, out of which the City of Hamburg accommodated 35,000, half the number that the whole United States of America accepts annually (Kunzig, 2016).[2] The estimated number of people per hour that entered Germany that summer came to 100. Therefore the paper will address problems associated with the reception, accommodation and inclusion of migrants in Serbia, as the transit country, and

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2   The estimation of the German Government was about 800,000 refugees.

Germany as the final destination country.

The planning context of migrant crisis

The mass transnational migrations are not a rare phenomenon. They take place periodically, in times of war or economic crises. They are most frequently directed towards the countries offering a better chance for living, where the urban communities have borne the greatest pressure for their employment opportunities, accommodation, possibilities for continuing the education, integration into the multicultural and multinational community, as well as other attractions (Petrović, 2009, Paddison, McCann, 2014). Every major human migration and inflow of newcomers causes certain changes in cities organization and function, requiring the setting of new tasks for the city services. The strategic commitments at the state level significantly influence local self-governments' policies, including the urban planning sphere. First among the issues is the matter of accommodation, the reception and distribution of migrants based on the quotas for the larger and smaller cities, concentrated or dispersed, in the special camps or within the social housing programme framework. After carrying out the procedures, primarily related to the registration and exercise of the right to assistance, and the short period of adaptation, the migrants acquire the right to free movement, employment, and the right to choose the place of residence (Valtonen, 2012). Technical standards of accommodation are not commonly addressed in research for their temporary character and often related to the available buildings of other purposes (abandoned factory halls, warehouses, military barracks, sports buildings, etc.). The architectural standards have been defined by the humanitarian organizations and are ranging between 35 and 45 m² per person for refugee camps, or 3.5-5.5 m² of floor area per person (min. 2m high). The hygiene, fire protection, food, health care, solid waste regulations, etc. are also defined (UNHCR, 2006, 2016). From the urban planning point of view, recommended locations should be close to urban centres, on public land, equipped with infrastructure, on safe and stable terrains. The social aspects should be considered with special attention, i.e. the contact of different cultures and time required for achieving a successful cohabitation, with a constant fear of ghettoization. In this context theoreticians advocate for integrated approach in urban planning (Elin, 2006, 2013) and the intense participation of all interested parties (Danilović Hristić, Stefanović, 2013), social cohesion and care about deprived city quarters, in accordance with the international charters.[3] This brings us to the theme of urban recycling of old devastated buildings in the historical districts and redesigning the social housing buildings from the modernist period for the needs of the permanent accommodation and social interaction amongst different types of tenants. Also, the cities are increasingly dealing with the quality of public spaces and their key role, in qualitative and quantitative sense, in providing as the places of encounters and interaction. It seems that larger urban centres are more desirable destinations for migrants because they offer employment chances, they are more resilient to changes and innovations due to their form and contents (Holston, 1999), unlike the smaller urban communities which are more socially compact, thus less adaptable and open to changes.

Temporary accommodation in transit countries – the case of Serbia

The temporary stay in the transit places and cities can be perceived through their role on the route along which the migrants travel to their final destination. These are primarily the places of their arrival, such as ports or border towns, in case of Serbia, where the migrants are registered and provided the first assistance, necessary care, and important information about the legal options and the residence permit in the Schengen countries (APC/CZA, 2015, Krstić, 2012). The other group includes the larger urban communities on the migrants' routes, organizing the reception centres with administrative support for regulating their status and providing transpor-

3   Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities 2007, Nationale Stadt Entwicklungs Politik, 2017

tation options for continuing their journey.

The organized temporary accommodation is most frequently located on the periphery of cities, in the form of prefabricated facilities suited for the needs of migrants (tents, barrack, etc.), or within the reconstructed buildings adapted to this purpose (warehouse halls no longer in use, sports facilities, schools, military barracks, etc.). The length of stay in these facilities varies; priority is given to the families with children and during the cold periods of the year. However, a large number of migrants, mostly men travelling alone or in smaller groups, refuse an organized and institutional accommodation either because they do not want to register themselves or prefer to stay in the central urban areas close to the central bus and railway stations and nearby the border crossings. Their stay in the public spaces, mostly in the surrounding parks or squares, or in the abandoned buildings, causing distrust and discomfort of the local population (Kyriakides, 2017, Mekdjian, 2017), particularly due to the frequent incidents, both internal clashes and the inappropriate behaviour resulting from the cultural differences and psychological trauma brought from the war-affected countries. The cities are coping with the growing security problems both in public spaces and abandoned buildings (Danilović Hristić, 2013) by fencing those public spaces, intensive monitoring by local police, but also with the utilities and sanitation problems.

Facing the refugee waves of Serbian population in the late 20th and early 21st century from former Yugoslavia, Serbia has acquired experience in receiving and quickly accommodating the newcomers, while the society itself has developed a certain degree of understanding and solidarity with people who were forced to flee from their homes. The temporary and often inadequate space for the stay of these people has also been their "official address" for too long, while the collective centres have survived until recently. The local capacities have been raised and the local agencies established for designing, carrying out and following up the pilot housing projects through special programmes (SIRP, 2003-2008)[4] (Damjanović, Gligorijević, 2010). Having in mind the needs and possible solutions for the current migrant wave on urban, public and social space in Serbia, and evaluating results of the temporary and supported housing in the previous period based on the relevant literature of international organizations (UNEP, SUSHI, 2013; UN-Habitat, 2012; UNECE, 2006), it is necessary to ensure housing solutions with three components of sustainability: social, economic and environmental, as well as to anticipate controlled impact and possible benefits for the local population, neighbourhoods and wider community, (Đokić, et.al. 2016).
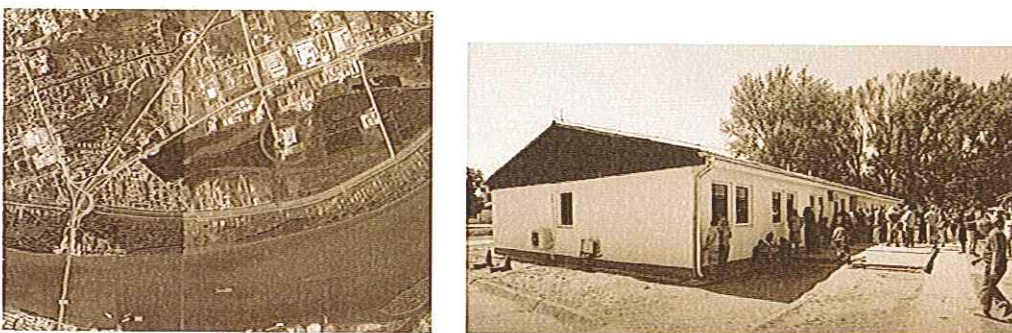

Figure 2. Centre for the temporary accommodation of refugees in Krnjača, Belgrade. Source: www.blic.rs, www.google.rs/maps

The Republic of Serbia has been facing a rising number of persons seeking asylum since 2008 (Knežić, Vidanović, 2011). The migratory trends culminated in 2015 and have undoubtedly pointed out an accelerated arrival of migrants and the need to timely carry out necessary

4   The Strategy for Resolving the Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons from 2002 and particularly in The Settlement and Integration of Refugees Programme (SIRP), from 2003 to 2008 (UN-Habitat, SIRP.

preparations for the humanitarian reception. The number of migrants accommodated in 18 Serbian facilities varied due to the new reception centres opened meanwhile and the change of the migrants 'route.[5] Instead of entering the territory of Serbia through its southern and eastern borders, migrants moved to its northern and western borders. One example of the spontaneously formed refugee centre is the central city of Belgrade Savamala district, the historic but neglected area close to the railway and bus stations. Its transformation, according to some authors, started with the gentrification (Vaništa Lazarević, Antonić, 2016). Different types of institutions, NGOs and citizens participated in forming a temporary assistance centre, with tents set up in parks, during largest wave of migrants in summer 2015. The Balkan migration route is still active, although the number of migrants was stagnating. There have been still between 4,000 and 6,000 people with prolonged stay for up to 4-6 weeks in average in Serbia, mostly because the movement of migrants through Croatia and Hungary became difficult.[6] Although smuggling and illegal movement is still actual these estimates are based on the data about migrants reporting themselves to the centres, and it is difficult to estimate the relationship between citizens and migrants (Bobić, 2013).

Urban centres as final destination – the case of Germany

Germany is the country that grants the right of political asylum (Entzinger, Scholten, 2015), with a strong economy, low unemployment rate and budget surplus of around 19.5 billion euros annually (Societäts-Verlag, 2010). Germany, together with some Scandinavian countries, with the plan for an organized accommodation of newcomers, is the most desirable final destination of the migrants „journey' (Bertolia, et. al. 2016). It hosted about 12 million people, immigrants who were expelled from the Eastern Europe after the Second World War as ethnic Germans, as well as immigrants who came to the West Germany in 1950s and 1960s as a labour force. They came primarily from Turkey and from the south European countries, Greece, Italy, Spain and the former Yugoslavia, the co-called „gastarbeiters" (English: foreign workers). Their temporary stay turned into the permanent stay when their families joined them. The total number has grown to about 50 million immigrants, which makes every eighth citizen a newcomer. The citizenship policy has been considerably eased.

There are quarters in almost all larger German cities in which only migrants have lived for decades, but they have not yet been fully integrated. It seems that the concept of openness and acceptance is not being easily accepted and that the process of their integration into the society, even an assimilation of the second or third generation of newcomers, does not run quickly and smoothly. It is very individual, while it is difficult to estimate from where greater reserves and withdrawals come (Crul, et. al. 2012). These two groups of people lack multi-layered cultural understanding, starting from the language, religion, way of raising children, hygiene habits and way of dressing, so it seems if they lead some parallel lives in the same or even separate spatial entities. The weight of the past events that left an imprint on the German nation affects the relationship of this nation towards xenophobia, so that not everybody dares to condemn the arrival of foreigners. From the intellectual side, the mixing is accepted as a process that can bring benefits to all, but from the emotional side, the relationship often remains cold and restrained, without much comments.

The government made a plan of how many refugees each region should take. The refugees were distributed across urban areas and, when these capacities were filled, the refugees were accommodated in the smaller communities. The temporary accommodation was provided in the military barracks no longer in use. When the major wave of migrants to Berlin occurred, the school gyms were also used during the school holidays for the accommodation of newcomers,

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5   Miratovac, Preševo, Bujanovac, Vranje, Bosilegrad, Dimitrovgrad, Tutin, Sjenica, Bogovađa, Banja Kovilajča, Adaševci, Šid, Beograd – Krnjača, Subotica, Sombor, Kikinda.
6   Just for comparison, about 7,000 migrants crossed the country each day in one moment.

as well as the hangars of the former Tempelhof airport. By observing the standards for their accommodation at the beginning, the officials have finally admitted that they have the desire and wish to accept all migrants, but that, considering such large wave of newcomers, they either no longer have free capacities or time to provide the same accommodation to all. The fear of the local population, regardless the size of towns and proportional number of refugees, was noticeable (Vallaster, et.al., 2017). This fear of local population was rooted in several assumptions: the lifestyle and habits of locals will be endangered (Koopmans, Statham, 1999), the social balance will be changed, the refugees will pose a threat to personal safety of citizens because they carry psychological trauma from their war-affected countries, they have different cultural relationship towards women, they might have some contagious diseases. On the other hand, the financial assistance which migrants receive from the state during their temporary accommodation, aside from the basic accommodation, food, clothes and hygiene allowance, stays with the small local communities as a certain kind of economic gain. Not all parts of the country have responded to this situation equally. The still poorer eastern part of Germany manifested a higher level of intolerance, also less accustomed to immigrants being a part of the society. In the ethnically diverse cities in the western part of Germany (Schmiz, Kitzmann, 2017, Neill, Schwedler, 2001), people were ready to accept more newcomers, especially in the cities and city districts where their decade-long presence has brought positive results.
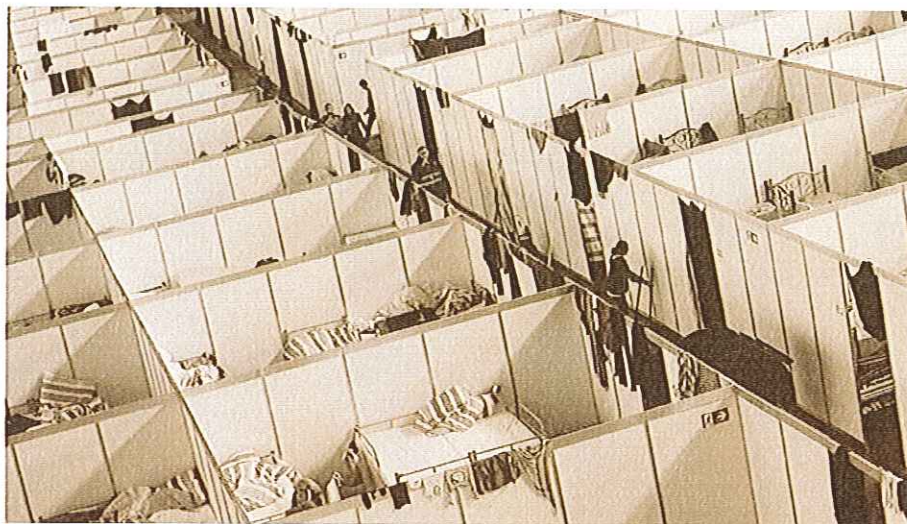

Figure 3. Temporary accommodation in the Tempelhof airport building no longer in use. Source: http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-europe-migrant-benefits-20160202-story.html

Conclusions

Although many cities of the world have been developed into attractive metropolises due to newcomers, introducing new elements of their cultures and heritage, thus having created new identity of these cities, the process of transformation and assimilation in the previous period has been proven to be more difficult and too abrupt. The doubts and fears are often in the background of the openness of the developed societies, as well as in their expressed commitment to accept migrants. The large cities will certainly manage the migrant inflow more easily than the smaller communities. It is also necessary to take into consideration a balanced, well-conceived spatial distribution of migrants to avoid ghettoization and segregation. The current migrant crisis in Europe has been addresses in the academic circles from the aspects of social change and relations within the society, including the aspects of health care and organisation of educa-

tional system, but also including, to a much lesser extent, the spatial aspects, the locations for the permanent or temporary accommodation and technical standards for this type of accommodation that are set up by the specialized international organizations. These processes have an unavoidable impact on spatial planning, primarily on urban planning for the cities that are the most desired destinations of migrants/refugees. It is reasonable to expect that the demographic changes produce the changes in the structure of European cities, particularly in their centres, as well as the changes in their cultural identity and in the economic and social sphere, thus becoming the reason for an appropriate reconstruction and adaptation of housing fund and public spaces in the deprived areas in order to meet the actual needs. The timely planning, including the space and the technical and social infrastructure, as well as the job creation, can be crucial for the temporary and long-term assimilation and for better living conditions for all citizens, both nationals and newcomers.

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