

**POWER OF URBAN PLANNING:  
SOCIO-HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF HOUSING  
DEVELOPMENT CONSTRUCTION NOVI JELKOVEC  
IN ZAGREB**

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## Introduction

This thesis focuses on planned neighborhood Novi Jelkovec in Zagreb, capital of Croatia. It is one of the first planned state-funded, later city-funded housing development since large housing projects of New Zagreb built by socialist government between 1960s and 1970s. Novi Jelkovec's large scale and its promoted socially oriented policy along with the facts that it was completely developed and constructed through public funding and that institutions in front of state, later city, adopted urban policies for its for determining conditions under which apartments could be purchased, I find that it resembles massive housing projects of the previous regime. I find similarities on the level of its modernist design and program that puts CIAM principles in use and on the concept of neighborhood as city elementary unit. On policy level, similarities are in development of socially oriented policy that aims towards young middle class members and evening out spatial and social inequalities through creation of socially mixed community.

However, rescaling what it seems to resemble the 1970s neighborhood unit and contextualizing it in fragmented and diverse vision of the city along with the land and home ownership are the main elements where this plan evidently refuses to be read in socialist modernist logic. This problem has not been addressed by literature neither in social sciences nor in architecture.

In case of Novi Jelkovec imposing urban policies and planning vision from above reveals that processes that created neighborhood were accidental and highly dependent on economical and political circumstances such as change of party in power, international market collapse and changes in the social structure of the neighborhood.

By conceptualizing urban planning practices as governmental acts that imprint vision of

spatial forms as mode of ordering society according to their expert knowledge and reasoning, I argue that analysis of its spatial imprint can be read as a statement that reveals governmental rationality behind it.

My research question is what were the specific processes and circumstances and factors that contributed to development of this neighborhood.

In part one of my thesis I present characteristics of Zagreb urban planning in the period of 1945 until 2013. The major changes in this period were transformation on urban planners perception of the spatial image of the city from seeing it in a holistic way of promotion of spatial equalities to seeing it as fragmented and prone to uneven development. I follow with presentation of spatial organization of the case of Novi Jelkovec and then I compare it to concepts of neighborhoods as elementary units of city planning in Yugoslav socialism and capitalist rescaling. Although the neighborhoods are subjects of welfarist policies in both systems, in capitalism this policy results from increasing urban competitiveness while in socialism they were intended equal to the rest of the city.

In part two of my thesis I concentrate on urban policies and documents developed for Novi Jelkovec. In this way I show the relation between the physical environment of the neighborhood and its form created by urban policies in constant flux.

In the final part of my thesis, I depart from top down analysis and focus on the responses from below. The process that actually was irrational resulted in subjugation of the neighborhood.

## Methodology

To research the relation between modernity and socialism on the levels of planning practice in Yugoslavia I outlined the elements of high modernity in plans made for New Zagreb. I consulted Athens Charter and journals on planning literature to see the debates on urban planning and to reveal how these elements were adopted in creation of New Zagreb. Then I made the same for Novi Jelkovec: I used the writings of urban planners on the project to see how they conceptualized it and to see their justification of usage of the modern elements in its creation. I also consult documents on urban planning decisions such as Master plan and smaller scale plans to see how the Novi Jelkovec neighbourhood fits into wider area. I find this to be important because the idea behind the development of New Zagreb was to create a city as whole. My aim here is to find how this new neighbourhood unit relates to that whole, if any. For this purpose I also used several maps to outline the similarities and the differences between the conceptions of New Zagreb and post-socialist Zagreb. More specifically, I used maps produced by Platform 9,81 on which I worked in 2009. These maps compare development of Zagreb in late socialism and post-socialism through highlighting private and public investments. I used map of Novi Jelkovec and to analysed it according to principles of Athens Charter. I conducted interview with one of designers of Novi Jelkovec project, Mr Ivan Mlinar from Faculty of Architecture.

On the level of public policy, I analysed documents that made the construction of state housing projects possible. On state level it is the legal framework of SRC while on the city level it is proposed city SRC model. I analysed strategic document on future development of Zagreb published by city to show how the planning of housing estates has been conceptualized and justified. I also analysed their documentation of creating urban policy for checking the list of

criteria that future citizens have to reach in order to be entitled to buy or rent an apartment in the neighbourhood. More documents I looked were the decisions on selling or renting the apartments to citizens. I also plan conducted semi-structured interviews with Gojko Bežovan, one of creators of social policy of Zagreb housing model. I tried to interview members of Major's office, but they stated that they can just help me with getting to documentation which I already had. I also wanted to interview representatives of the APN with questions regarding original plan and structure of apartments but the secretary told me that they don't have anything to do with Novi Jelkovec anymore. This at the end showed not to be true, because the not only that they own 150 apartments but also set them for rent recently. I didn't refer to that in my paper because the conditions are almost the same as city ones, and I didn't have any data apart from local news.

At last, I went to my field-site Novi Jelkovec and spatially analysed the neighborhood and conducted several interviews with the residents. Some of them I met at situ, and the others I found through local internet forum.

My fieldwork lasted 20 days and it was partially compromised due to the fact that it fell around May 1 which was Wednesday, and employees of the institutions in Croatia are famous for merging holidays with weekend. This means that for a whole week I couldn't find any representative to talk to. The other problem I encountered was that my fieldwork fell in the middle of electoral campaign and my field site was quite politicized as “socially problematic” neighbourhood.

## Chapter 1

### Planning as governmental rationality

Following my research question on how modernist orientated housing projects based on CIAM principles got to be revived in post-socialist context, I will attempt to answer it through the framework of governmentality. Following description of planning as “rational-decision making in space” (Taylor 1998; cf Čaldarović 1987; Holston 1989; Scott 1998), I see planning to be governmental practice. It follows from critical reading of Scott's (1998) definition of high modernism as “faith” in rational organization of the space based on scientific and technical principles and on Holston's (1989) premises that utopian blueprint of Brasilia served to imprint new vision of social order upon Brazilian society. I read the intentions of modern planners through attempts to create a different social order came from Foucauldian question of governing the population on the territory. Foucault (1991) conceptualized governmentality as combination of words government and rationality to show that the “will to govern” (ibid.) gets its legitimization through rational justification of decisions and interventions made by the sovereign. Situating the beginning of modernity in mid-18 century, he showed how the population living on territory of the state became a subject to be governed through the development of rational techniques, technologies, scientific inquires and institutions used for the governmental purposes of the states (ibid.). Paul Rabinow (2003) writes about urban planning as a scientific practice that developed in 19 century as form of political control based on anticipation of needs calculated through statistics and sociology. Similarly, Stanek's sees urbanism as an instrument of governing bodies in space and state as an “operative framework for spatial planning”(2103.:106). Following them,

I argue that the urban planning is a technique of imposing policies of control and regulation through their materialization in the space.

Architectural high-modernity got to its peak in the first half of 20 century along with the rise of welfare and socialist regimes. Modified principles of Athens Charter were used by these regimes under the logic that physical design can affect the behaviour of the population inhabiting in and thus these principles served the purposes of governing the populations through the space.

Second half of the century witnessed targeting both the welfare state regimes and architectural modernism with the same critique that could be summarized as too much interventionism (Rose 1996; Taylor 1998). They were accused of not delivering the prosperity, equality and better life quality they promised and the main culprit was their allegedly imposition of surreal vision of a society that created a constraint for the individuals that “society” was formed of. As Rose (1996) noticed, these critiques did were not dismissal of the will to govern, they just introduced new conceptions of governmental subjects. New subjects were self-governed individual men, free to compete with the others for their own benefit and to rationally decide on their actions. This would in turn create what the interventionist state failed to deliver: prosperity. This shift on individualism had implications on the ethical reasoning insofar as the individual was responsible for his own luck, and economical reasoning as the individuals duty was to take care of his well-being (Foucault 1991; Ong 2006; Rose 1996). In architectural design, this rational self-governmental logic reflected in paradigm shift (Taylor 1998) towards planning activities that were less large scale oriented, that promoted the interests of real communities in constant flux rather than overarching and constraining term of society in future, and the planning was approached rather than a process which consists of multiplicity of actors than a fixed functional zoning blueprints.

Under these shifts, state institutions transformed into variety of state, international, private and public institutions that started to shape economic politics of the countries, from 1960 Chicago economists and their measures to save the economy of Chile to the export of Washington consensus to Eastern bloc during its fall in late 1980s and early 1990s (Bockman 2011; Ong 2006, Rose 1996). Under new political-economical doctrines, reorganization of the state gave new inputs for governing the cities. This shift from managerial to entrepreneurial governing logic was described in detail by David Harvey (1989). He showed how neoliberal thought gave rise to promotion of individuality, competitiveness and promotion of locality that acted upon fragmented spatial domain. These intentions materialized in urban development through mega developmental projects, speculative construction of the space and political economy of place rather than a territory.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Planners city visions: Urban history of contemporary Zagreb**

In this chapter, I will compare urban planning's vision of Zagreb under socialist Yugoslavia and under modern-day Croatia. The purpose of this comparison is to show different planners' logic in conceptualizing the city as a whole. Having in mind that neighborhood is my unit of analysis, I will also dedicate part of this chapter to different spatial conceptions of neighborhoods to show how its position in relation to the city changed over time.

#### ***New Zagreb***

After World War II, one of the goals of the newly elected communist party was renewal of the country through excessive industrialization and agrarian reform. Large migration of industrial workers from rural to urban areas quickly created the shortage of dwelling places (Gulin-Zrnić 2009:40-44; Kirn and Rakita 2010). Immediate measures to solve this problem were undertaken through governmental redistribution of previously nationalized housing units and renting city land to meritorious citizens with the housing construction permits (Čaldarović 1992). These measures turned out not to be sufficient enough because they could not meet the deficit of housing units in growing cities. The need for the new regulative principles arose not only from the lack of housing but also from the aspirations of the communist government to build for the new, socialist man (Gulin-Zrnić 2009:58-65).

First attempts to bring the regulative principles turned out to be a problem for urban planners because of the imperative to coordinate the urban plans to the five-year economic plans and, respectfully, the lack of funding for the projects (Kirn and Rakita 2010). After 1948 and

Yugoslav expulsion Cominform that led Tito and the Communist party after a search for a distinct model of socialism in order to gain legitimation for their rule (Bockman 2011), they created model of self-management. This model promoted decentralization and allegedly empowered people through governing from below. Through promotion of self-governing, the system had more to do with the neoclassical economics than with the centralized state planning models developed in Soviet Union (Bockman 2011:76-80; Kirn 2010:270). On the level of urban planning, this organizational and economic turn had several consequences. First, five-year central planning logic was replaced with more flexible, decentralized and professional based organizational logic that freed the urban planning departments from previous political and the economic constraints (Sančanin 2011; Kirn and Rakita 2010; cf. Le Normand ???). Second, it allowed the urban planners to search for an ideal planning approach in both the socialist and capitalist models without the fear of being rejected on its ideological basis. Finally, according to Kirn, self-managing hypostasised a new ideal of a socialist man who was at the same time capitalist manager and a socialist bureaucrat (cf Kirn 2010). This apparent discrepancy reflected on the notion of an ideal city that was based on socialist principles of justice, humanity and the equality but was also market-oriented (Gulin-Zrnić 2009:58). This market-orientation was visible through the large housing planning projects insofar as it promoted market competition for self-managing construction organizations and also increased inequalities in housing because the policy of assigning the housing rights depended on worker's company position on intra-national market (Bežovan 2004:93-94; Čaldarović, 1992; Kirn and Rakita 2010). However, despite these internal inequalities of accessibility, constant deficit of housing units and periodically disadvantaged economic circumstances, in the period less than 30 years, national and local oriented policies promoted large housing constructions and a complete project for the new city of

quarter of million inhabitants was designed and constructed. That city was New Zagreb, a greenfield development on south bank of Sava river, conceptualized through housing projects. Its developmental principles followed an Athens Charter from 1933 (Gulin-Zrnić 2009:65). The Charter set up foundations for modern planning worldwide emphasizing the idea of a city as whole, promoting functional-zoning planning and contemporary detached architecture set in green spaces (Conrads 1997:244-252). Based on the ideal division of time on work, leisure and rest, it defined four key zones in the cities: housing, work, leisure and traffic. Concepts of development, property relations and city land ownership, egalitarianism, and new concept of class relations declared as planning ideals of Athens Charter were fully compatible with the socialist system of former Yugoslavia (cf. Gulin-Zrnić 2009; Čaldarović 1987). Although first housing neighborhood was built in mid-1950s, its definite vision was framed after Master plan of 1971 (Gulin-Zrnić 2009:44).

### ***Criticisms of modern planning and post-modern shift***

Athens Charter was a grand theory for urban planners and was adopted as official planning doctrine of planning institutions worldwide. The critiques of its principles overlapped with the critiques of modernism and welfare states in 1960s on the similar basis: too much interventionism. (Rose 1996; Taylor 1998) Both the welfare states and the modernist planning doctrines were accused of not delivering the prosperity, equality and better life quality they promised and the main culprit was their allegedly imposition of surreal vision of a society that created a constraint for the individuals that “society” was formed of. The rejection of modern planning hit its peak after economic crisis in 1970s. Its trigger was a reaction on their promised creation of spaces that sought for more egalitarian society but in turned dehumanized people and

degraded the sole idea of human settlements (Ellin 2004; Holston 1989; Scott 1989; Taylor 1998). Ruth Glass in Great Britain and her counterpart Jane Jacobs in US were accusing planners that their actions and decisions ignore the way city actually functions. Henri Lefebvre and Richards Sennet targeted the planners on the basis of imposing a vision of fixed and planned spaces over flux and diverse life made by people's actions and interactions. These critics emphasized the creation of a community from below rather than top-down and promotion of locality (Ellin 2004; Taylor 1998). On the level of design, they led to dismissal of universalistic principles of zoning-planning developed after Athens charter which gave birth to post-modern planning principles that emphasized differences of urban structures and aimed to promote locality instead of international style (Ellin 2004:27-35).

These critiques were not unknown to Yugoslav planners, and revisions of the 1986 Master plan along with different spatial conceptualizations were undertaken (Dakić 1985). New directives dismissed large housing developmental projects and oriented towards practices of revitalization, completion, renewal, and affirmation of local. (cf. Gulin-Zrnić).

Post-socialist Croatia, or the 1990s, brought numerous significant changes in governing the cities. The most important one was the restoration of private property rights (Cavrić and Nedović-Budić 2007:393; Bežovan 2004). This has several important impacts on the cities. First, residents could repurchase their apartments. This move both restituted the land values and led to the speculations due to the bad legislative framework under repurchase has been performed (Bežovan 2004). Second, the city lost its ownership over the land. Private actors and initiatives that appeared have thus brought into question the primacy and the authority of both the city as an investor and its urban planning department (Sančanin 2011). The city, caught in the lack of funding (Cavrić and Nedović-Budić 2007:389-394), adopted entrepreneurial policies such as

attracting investments and introduction of big developmental projects through the promotion of public-private partnerships, as visible in the numbers of cases. Moreover, the free market economy and sustainable growth have become directly implemented into the guiding principles of the new urban development (*ibid.*). This led to fundamental change in perception of the city as single unit, and urban policies oriented towards investments and large developmental projects resulted in vision of the city as fragmented and consisted of differentiated elements (cf Hackworth 2007; Harvey 1989; Hubbard and Hall 1998). Zagreb's developmental strategy "ZagrebPlan" (2012:150) and major Bandić's program document "Visions of Zagreb in 21. century" (2005) outline the list of past and future strategic investments through private-public partnerships: construction of 4 bridges and tunnel through Medvednica mountain aimed for faster and efficient connection of Zagreb with its north regional area, river Sava regulation, modernization of public transport, mega project of university hospital, museum of contemporary arts, sports Arena and development of infrastructure for international ski cup at Medvednica mountain. Uneven development of modern-day Zagreb in comparison of gradual,

can maybe best be portrayed through comparisons of two maps made by civic association Platform 9,81 (Appendix).

### ***Neighborhood plan***

The winners of design competition were architects and urban planners from Faculty of architecture Department for urban and regional planning. According to one of the planners, Ivan Mlinar (2009), the neighborhood plan followed the principles outlined in Athens charter: outer heavy traffic and inner smaller road, a variety of buildings set freely in the space and service buildings on a pedestrian reach. The neighborhood is divided in 4 subunits (picture 1.0). Subunit

A is a large 300x100 m superblock building that was inspired by Zagreb's 19 century downtown architecture. Subunit B consists of parallel “lamellas, subunit C has solitary buildings situated in green park and subunit D reverts the “lammelas” from block B. Out of two kindergartens, one is situated in the superblock, and the other in subunit C. On the north side of block D there is an elementary school, a church and a local market. Subunit A also contains two supermarkets, an office building, veterinarian ambulance and medical center. The guiding principles for the design were the same ones that guided construction of New Zagreb: a construction of the bounded ideal-typed community with all the accompanied facilities (Mlinar 2009:158).

Mlinar himself described me the logic behind the design: in environment which consists of voluminous industrial halls and then tiny family houses, they wanted to make a model on making more rules to set the pattern for future development. Superstructure is resembling 19 century downtown blocks, and was an attempt to introduce scale in that space and compete with industrial halls.”Lamellas” are standard model of ZG construction, and spotted buildings in a park that will be forest once when trees grow out are resembling New Zagreb skyscrapers. The decision on breaking up complex in 4 units broke the monotony of complex. Besides that, it offered a model that gave guidelines on future development of the area.

In their article on urban-planning parameters of the Zagreb neighborhoods, Mlinar and Šmit (2008) compared Sopnica-Jelkovec with Zapruđe, one of the first planned neighborhoods in New Zagreb, built in 1963. This comparison has been performed by examining the similarities between the proportions of built environment in relation to empty spaces and the proportions and contents of public services and accompanied facilities. According to their evaluation based on architectural expertise, the two neighborhoods are similar, although Sopnica-Jelkovec has slight advantage over Zapruđe in reaching the housing standard (*ibid.*:122). When I asked him about

the importance of New Zagreb planning in this project, he stated he tried to tie to it as much as possible, but he can't say the same for the other members of his team. However, new comparison with New Zagreb came out. Neighborhood's density is 250 people/ha, while in Zagreb's neighborhoods built under market-driven principles, it goes up to 1000 people/ha. This difference, again, with project's public founding points out to its exceptionality in comparison to other projects built in post-socialist context.

Another distinctive element are plan's services. They proposed 2 kindergartens, elementary and high school, cultural centre, swimming pool, sport fields, infirmary, veterinarian, department store, market hall, office buildings, public garages and church (Mlinar2009:162). When I asked him about the program, he stated it was their idea do add extra value on it. Original program prescribed communal infrastructure, housing and some public services, but they offered good balance of housing and public content.

Mlinar pointed out at some problems that appeared during the planning process. First of them was given apartments structure in square meters. This is very unusual practice for urban planners as they operate on larger scales, not on smaller, and the plan was finally made detailed in 1:200 scale that is usually reserved for smaller urban planning projects withing neighborhoods. Another thing was short time framework under which the design had to be finished. He stated that they managed to finish “the whole complex, complete study, everything, in 4 months time”, while usually it takes 2 years.

When I asked him whether he knows how come the city decided to purchase the documentation, the answer seemed obvious: project was already complete and it's logical that investor will rather invest in that than in something unseen.

During our interview, he gave an interesting account on political speculation with urban planning practices: “Urbanism is by definition care about general interest while not damaging private one, and today it is about local politicians combining their private interests with plans. They invest in protected areas, then change plans, from green to yellow (protected areas to construction sites) and then you have dispersed construction that has no infrastructure around it.”

## ***Neighborhood scale***

### **Spatial perception of neighborhood in New Zagreb**

Basic planning element in Yugoslav socialism was “microregion” (*ibid.*:54), a neighbourhood unit with local networks of services on pedestrian reach. This concept was not new. It was proposed by Clarence Perry's in his studies for development of New York in 1920s and developed further in East after the aggregation of the housing block to superblock in Soviet union in 1950s (*ibid.*:249; French 1995:37-38). In its Soviet form, it was conceptualized as “a neighborhood unit of living spaces in the form of blocks of flats, along with associated services, for perhaps 5,000 to 15,000 people” (Smith 1996:75). This concept obviously served well the promotion of the socialist state as a caring figure that takes care of its population, but also in proclaiming the ideals of a community of equal citizens and exercise of the rule and domination upon them. The evidence for this statement can be found in Smith's description of how carefully planned were the prescriptive norms that defined allocation of square meters per head of the inhabitant for each service up to the seats in restaurants (*ibid.*). In New Zagreb similar regulation based on statistical data was clearly visible. According to Vladimir Antolić (1949), a director of Zagreb's institute for urban planning and creator of regulatory plan, every neighbourhood unit

was designed to form a self-sufficient whole with necessary services: local market, kindergarten, elementary school, playground and local gym. These prescriptions were inscribed in 1971 Master plan: according to it, there were supposed to be one police station, one doctor of medicine and a dentist on every 10000 inhabitants, one public toilet on every 500 people and 20 square meters of post and bank offices on every 10000 people (*Gulin-Zrnić 2009:50-51*).

Although I didn't find any evidence in the literature, it seems to me that this concept was adopted in early plans for New Zagreb as well. Microregion in developmental plans for New Zagreb was conceptualized as a neighbourhood of 2500-3000 inhabitants with supply centres, education, commerce, food related services, culture, sports and accompanied facilities. (*Gulin Zrnić 2009:49-50*). Similar to Soviet concept where microregion was just a building unit that formed hierarchical districts by its multiplication and aggregation up to 300.000 inhabitants (*Smith 1996:75*). In New Zagreb, four of five those microregions together had one sub-centre and a school (*Gulin Zrnić 2009:49-50*). All of them were carefully connected via systems of public transport and fast traffic lanes to each other and to the centre of the city. However, major difference between Soviet and Yugoslav concept of microregion was its physical form. As I stated above, Soviet concept was superblock, while in early Yugoslav concept, its appearance was rather shaped by following CIAM's principles of spatially isolated buildings surrounded by green zones. Another great difference is the position of microregion in relations to each other. While in Soviet concept they are connected with factories, in Zagreb model they were distanced from them (cf *French 1995; Gulin-Zrnić 2009*). To conclude, in the city conception, New Zagreb was planned as a large microregion assemblage, away from the large industry and agriculture that was situated on city outskirts, and connected to it via traffic system.

## Concept of neighborhood under neoliberalism

Brenner (1999), following Harvey, sees post-1970s territorial reorganization of states under influence of capital as global, national and urban-local. The cities under such reorganization became rearticulated on supranational as well as regional level, as network nodes of international capital circulation. He notes that under such reorganization, state institutions construct “place-specific” local policies in order to attract investments and improve competitiveness. This kind of politics creates uneven development of intra-urban spaces, especially on the levels of neighborhoods that are being articulated as places of new social and physical inequalities (Brenner 2004; cf Harvey 1989; Hubbard and Hall 1998). Apparently paradoxical, Brenner sees appearance of neighborhood policies set to reduce poverty and social exclusion by improving life conditions of the citizens through investments in infrastructural networks, environment and social networks. This apparent welfarist policy, argues Brenner, can be explained as strategy of preventing the threat of lowering down urban competitiveness: “the new urban social policies are thus promoted less as an alternative to urban locational policies than as a stabilizing complement to the latter” (2004:269). What I also find important here is that Brenner sees neighborhoods as bounded delineated spatial units for urban policy implementation, thus, conception of city remains rather fragmented than unique (ibid.)

## **Chapter 3**

### **Policy: from state to the city (how the policies have been made)**

Programs of Subsidized residential construction were first programs of state-sponsored housing in Croatia after 1970s. They were proposed on national level, by liberal party (HNS) that formed coalition in power. As politics in Croatia often gets equated with people that promote it, buildings constructed via these programs were named “Čačić’s apartments” after its creator, Minister of Public Works, Reconstruction and Building. The Law on Subsidized Residential Construction (People's Gazette 109/01) (11.12.2001) passed in Parliament in 2001. that defined goals of the program and its main agencies. Proclaimed goal was to compensate for housing deficiency and oriented towards citizens with average earnings. Main agencies were newly formed Agency for Transactions and Mediation in Real Estates (further: APN) in front of the state, units of local administration (cities), financial banks, construction companies and, finally, citizens. The role of local administrative units was subordinated to the states insofar as the APN had to verify every decision cities have passed. Cities had to secure the land for the construction site, provide the necessary infrastructure such as water and gas supply, sewerage system, roads and telecommunications. Finally, the cities had to organize a collecting of data on the potential residents and create urban policy for eligibility.

Basic conditions for acquisition of the real-estate were defined by the Law as it follows. Croatian citizenship was fundamental requirement. Priority was given to citizens who didn't own any real estate in Croatia and who didn't have adequate housing solution. The Law defined adequate housing as having the basic infrastructure and minimum of 35(+10) square meters of living space per head. Citizens had to be financially solvent, and that was about to be determined

by the HVB bank that had contract with the APN. The requirement was to have minimum 15% value of the real estate as deposit. (People's Gazette 109/01) One of my informants, Gojko Bežovan who was one of creators of Zagreb housing model, stated out that it was hierarchical program imposed from above where the local administrations were been left out of decision process. He said that “was pretty much absurd” and “business for politicians” and underlined it speculative character saying that because it was presented as part of political party (HNS) election program, it never underwent any evaluation or public quarrel.

Still, because the program offered completely state-funded housing construction, many Croatian cities decided to embark it. Zagreb was one of them. First construction works made under this program were detached multistory buildings at vacant areas in various city neighborhoods. The documentation on this has been carefully prepared, and it detailed number of apartments, their size and their spatial organization<sup>1</sup>. After these test buildings, the city made a contract for two first SRC neighborhoods, Špansko-Oranice and Novi Jelkovec (Nadilo 2009).

Plan for Sopnica-Jelkovec, at the time working title for new neighborhood, was adopted at the public competition in December 2003. (Zagreb Gazette 22/03) (10. prosinca 2003) The size of program was rather impressive: 2731 apartments in 57 buildings on 33 hectares.

At that time, parliamentary elections were approaching, and the government decided to organize a competition as quickly as possible. One of designers of the winning project, Ivan Mlinar, told me that his team had only four months to elaborate it, while the same process under normal circumstances lasts for two years. Bežovan stated that whole initiative to force a program was an act of criminal that served members of the government and construction companies for speculative activities. By the time of signing the contracts, the elections have were already won

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<sup>1</sup> Generations of architecture students at Faculty of Architecture in Zagreb were obliged to design multistory buildings following prescriptive norms from SRC programs as part of their courses.

by party in opposition, Croatian Democratic Union. That means that technical government was signing the contracts with developers. Bežovan pointed out that the APN director didn't want to sign them, but Minister authorized his assistant to do it, and Zagreb had later to contest them.

With the change of political party in power, the Law was modified to allow for the subsidies of family houses (People's Gazette 82/04) and the state didn't invest any more in large SRC constructions. (17.06.2004)

After it became clear that Novi Jelkovec will not be constructed, the city decided to purchase its program from the state. The contract was terminated on 13 July 2006 and few months later, on 7 September, new department Stanogradnja (Housing construction) was formed as part of Zagreb Holding, private company in front of the city (Zagreb Gazette 12/06). That was a birth of Zagreb housing model proposed and designed by its city major, Milan Bandić. The program was modified, and its biggest change was that Holding was a new investor instead of the APN. The Agency retained 150 apartments in exchange. Another important change was apartments price increase. Bežovan explained the logic behind it by stating that it was absurd to have same apartment prices in smaller cities and in capital. New price was 1400 Eur in contrast to 900 offered by APN. However, he pointed out that even with the new price, the apartments were even more affordable because the city didn't require any deposit, and the flats were offered as mortgage under 1:1. He also added that they aimed to reduce market prices that were up on average 1600 Eur at the time, and, to his opinion, they succeeded. Here I would like to make a little remark: an architect whose company was accredited to issue building usage permits told me that construction costs of Novi Jelkovec buildings were 700 Eur per square meter (Rajčić 2002), and that some construction companies even made it for less than 400, allegedly stealing on construction materials. This brings me to the conclusion that price offered was unjustified and to

propose that city logic behind setting up the price on 1400 was pure speculative technique aimed for profit. This can be backed-up by tenants who were complaining about low quality of construction.

On the levels of urban policy, eligibility lists were created, similar to those when project was under state regulation, with the difference of giving priorities to young families. Minimum requirement was that future resident is Croatian citizen with residence in Zagreb without adequate housing solution and without ownership of a real-estate anywhere in Croatia. Non-adequate housing was determined as subtenancy, protected subtenancy in houses that will be demolished, living with parents or in shared living rooms. In contrast to state SRC where the entitled citizen had to be on national average, requirement here was to have at least 30% higher income per household than Zagreb's average. Priorities were given to younger candidates, up to 40 years old, who live in Zagreb at least ten years plus credits for every year extra, young scientists and workers in culture and public sector. Lists also determined number of rooms by number of household members. For example, a single person can apply only for studio, while 4-room apartments are available for rent only for households with more than 6 members. Other priorities are given to parents with underage children, single parents, invalids, victims of domestic violence and persons who fought in 1991-1995 war. Main target group were young families with children, and as soon as the construction began in 2007, the neighborhood started to be advertized that way (see Appendix). As visible on front web page of Stanogradnja:

*New Jelkovec housing project, popularly known as an oasis for pleasant living, is an example of an efficient and modern solutions of housing, especially for young families.*

(Stanogradnja 2013)

Building process started in 2007, first preliminary contracts with citizens and banks were

signed and the neighborhood had to be finished by the end of 2008. Due to construction delays, it was finally completed in May 2009, at the time when the international economic crisis hit Croatia as well and it affected people's financial solvency. Zdravko Juć, director of Holding's Stanogradnja department told me that in 2007 they had around 800 contracts, but only 600 apartments were sold on the market because people were no longer creditworthy regardless of price decrease on 1290 Eur per square meter.

This condition led the city to develop rental policy. Bežovan stated that the desire to form a rental policy was there from the beginning and that it was one of the reasons to purchase the documentation, but I found first official document of rental policy in February 2009 (Zagreb Gazette 7/09) (26.2), in contrast to sale documents from 2007. The conditions described in the contract were the same as those for purchase. Again, the main target were young people people, in Bežovan's words, “most productive parts of society, most potent” who were in are in status of subtenancy or living with their parents.

I find important to note here that the structure of apartments is not following the estimate needs of Zagreb's population, as large majority of the apartments are more than 100 square meters, and there's notable lack of studios, one and two-bedroom flats. Indeed, that's visible on web page of Stanogradnja, along with the fact that most of these apartments are still empty. When I asked Bežovan about it, he told me that he proposed adjusting the plan in 2006, but it turned out that it would be too expensive and require a new building permit. He added that it is indeed a problem that project failed to recognize single families. He also complained about their designers quality, stating that the architects who have never designed anything prior to this project used it as “playground for their own fantasies”, giving an example of 60 sqm studios with 40 sqm terraces. Apart from the design, some buildings were constructed so badly that people

who bought the apartments decided to terminate a contract and leave.

Another novelty in the city policy followed. Out of 2731 apartments, 1265 were offered on the market and the city remained an owner of other 1448. Out of that, only 548 were designated for public rent, while other 900 belonged to fuzzy category named “city purpose”. It turned out that these 900 apartments were consequently turned into social housing ones. I find it worth to note here that even the Law on SRC offered a condition under which administrative units can buy apartments for their purposes. However, the aim of the Law is was not to provide legal framework of for social housing but rather to enable administrative units to use it for this purposes (People's Gazette 109/01). Socially oriented policy is not new in Zagreb (cf Zagreb Gazette 23/03) 22. prosinca 2003., and there are waiting lists for city apartments of more than 2000 citizen's requests, but the decision to settle them down in the neighborhood constructed for market competition and aimed at young families, seriously jeopardized its possibilities. Bežovan stated that it is indeed great to have mixed populations in one neighborhood to avoid social exclusion, but he disagreed with the major's decision to settle them down exclusively in Novi Jelkovec. According to him, this practice resulted in loosing the credibility and desirability and introduced a threat of social segregation. He gave an example of Roma family with 13 children that Bandić has moved in 4-bedroom apartment, and concluded that by that fact alone, they are already socially excluded. He also pointed out at the lack of instruments to check verifiability of social cases and that reports from the field show that many of them have more than they pretend to, which in turn affects trust among the residents and brings negative cohesion. Zdravko Juć shared his opinion on the practice of distributing apartments to people on welfare lists. He complained that this practice is disturbing the image of the neighborhood and drives away potential buyers. He emphasized the benefits of social inclusion but argued that it's our duty to

appeal against the image that people on welfare are some strange people and then the complex could be sold out completely.

I see socially oriented policy in this case not only as the city policy but also a populist strategy deployed by mayor Bandić as part of his electoral campaign that was going on at the time when Novi Jelkovec project was finished. As I stated at the beginning of the chapter, in Croatia people are often equated to politics, and in Bandić's case, there's wide spread public opinion of him as local sheriff. Apart from serious charges for criminal activities that include speculation with land (cf. Mutna 2013) [www.mutna.com](http://www.mutna.com), his way of governing the city has been often described as autocratic and his word on decisions final. In words of Ivan Mlinar who collaborated with him on Novi Jelkovec: "I can tell everything about him in superlatives, except how the system works. He can't decide about everything. He needs competent people, professionals, not some 'aparatchiks' who just stamp. He uses the experts only to justify his decisions." Similar opinions I got from his other associates at Mayors office. When I asked about the adjustments to the plan, the most frequent answer I got was that they were just employees that obey the orders.

Documentation that accompanied the construction and settling of a new neighborhood presented here in its sequential manner reveals that they strategies were readjusted and adapted to changed circumstances in politics and on housing market. To summarize in short, project was first state-funded, then city-funded, created with a desire to attract young families that would buy off the project. Documentation published later showed how the adjustments to urban policy have been made. After it became certain that that due to the crisis, affordability is in question, the city administration passed documents allowing for the citizens to rent the flats. Also, one third of the neighborhood was appointed to welfare purposes. The outcome was creation of heterogeneous

population that I see as a random result of failed investments and spontaneously created urban policies. Despite the efforts to create neighborhood as a site of social inclusion, these decisions passed without any consultations with all potential residents created social exclusion and undervalued neighborhood as desirable place to live. Departing from this, next chapter will focus on neighborhood perception from the perspective of its inhabitants.

## Chapter 4

### Going behind the plan

#### *Road to Novi Jelkovec*

My first encounter with Sopnica Jelkovec was on Sunday morning in late April. There are only two public transport lines to get there. Bus 281 departs from Žitnjak, former industrial and now commercial zone that is planned to be a new “city” with office buildings. That line was introduced only as late as 2011 after the city administration decided that only one public transport line was insufficient for a neighborhood of that size<sup>2</sup>. The other line, bus 279, was operating on route Sesvete – Jelkovec and was extended to Dubec, Zagreb's eastern tram terminal, only in April this year, after several complaints and petitions of Novi Jelkovec inhabitants<sup>3</sup>. To my surprise, Sunday buses depart only every hour and in the meantime it is impossible to get to the Novi Jelkovec by any other means of transport but a car or a taxi. Apparently, city administration accepted citizens' appeals for the necessity of connecting their neighborhood with the rest of the city, but it did it at the expense of having a fast and more frequent line to the center of Sesvete from where they could travel either by suburban train or by buses that depart for Dubec every 5 to 10 minutes.

When I arrived to Dubec, I found out I have to wait 40 minutes to get to the next bus. The station looked pretty poor itself. Unlike the west tram terminal, at this one there were no people, no small shops or newspaper stands, nothing around but a one improvised wooden stall and large supermarket somewhere in the distance. Benches at the station were demolished and there was

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<sup>2</sup>[http://www.zagrebancija.com/hr-aktualnosti/zet-uvodi-novu-liniju-za-naselje-novi-jelkovec\\_311765](http://www.zagrebancija.com/hr-aktualnosti/zet-uvodi-novu-liniju-za-naselje-novi-jelkovec_311765)

<sup>3</sup><http://www.zet.hr/vijesti/novosti/linija-279-produzuje-se-do-dupca.aspx>

no shed or any other kind of shelter. Luckily, it was sunny day so I decided to sit on the meadow and wait. Passengers started to arrive at the station and I overheard part of their conversation:

*- I was robbed in front of the entrance and they tore the golden chain from my neck.*

*- I remember when that happened... and I tell you, that wasn't a Gipsy.*

*- And I wasn't even by myself there, there was another lady with me. It's not his fault, it's the society, people are outta work.*

It soon converted to heated debate on politics, welfare and jobs, favorite conversation topics of Croatia's citizens. As the bus continued to its designated stop, I started to imagine of all the things I'm going to find there. During my travel, I took notes of the area we were passing through. After we reached center of Sesvete and the train station, housing grid decreased and I started to see small family houses along with abandoned and ruined factory halls, construction sites, car lots, shopping malls... perfect picture of suburbia. As we were approaching Novi Jelkovec, I saw this huge whole city raising from this environment. It looked rather surreal.

I took off the bus at one of the two built out of 6 planned bus stations in Novi Jelkovec, just in front of the subunit A. What immediately stroke me was the impression of the whole city somewhere in the middle of nowhere. Neighborhood was surrounded with small improvised buildings, empty areas, hangars and there somewhere at the background, a plant chimney. I decided to take a walk. Despite the beautiful weather and neighborhood was empty. Almost like ghost-town. I decided to enter the superbloc only to find several pathetic bars with summer terraces on, but with almost no people. At the middle of the block at the only green zone there were some children that gathered around apparently lost dog. I concluded that after an older lady

came see what was happening and she proposed them to leave the dog alone. I felt uncomfortable there. The superb block suffocated me despite its bright colors. Although the inner area was really wide and the building height was not more than 7 floors, I felt like the sun never gets there. I walked towards the south and back on north, but the only change were the couple kissing and playing on children playground. Next to it, I noticed some drawings made by waterproof paint on the floor. Suddenly I realized that these drawings represented a road and a scheme for an old jumping game. Lara told me that her colleague draw them because he felt sorry for the kids that had to play in the block. I also noticed three pine cones hanging from on of the fences surrounding the kindergarten yard. The children left it there, but in that atmosphere, they looked rather pathetic. Everything concrete, stylized and over-designed, and then these little gestures of organic life, small deviations from the plan.

As I moved between “lamellas” in the block B, I noticed that people used their balconies and terraces rather than open spaces of the neighborhood. They were barbecuing or having lazy afternoons, just enjoying the beautiful day. I felt that my pedestrian perspective is dividing me from the life that appeared to be somewhere up there, at terraces and balconies that obviously served them well as an external extension of their apartments.

At one of the streets in block B, I found a man decorating a small garden on the public green area in front of the house. Unlike the example with the swan, I find this to be perfectly fitted in the site although it was clear that it was also a bit of diversion. He explained to me that the building he and his wife live in was planned to have terraces, but for some reason, the construction company never built them. In front of their window on the first floor there was a field of pebbles and dirt. He decided to take care of it and organized a little garden. His wife proudly showed me all kinds of flowers they had and complained about the kids that devastate it.

I proceeded to bloc D. I found myself surprised to hear the music and the noise from that area. I went to see what was it about and as I was approaching the school, I figured out it was some kind of tournament in school's sport field. For a moment, I felt like I was in the game episode of TV series *The Wire*, when the two police officers incharged for the problematic neighborhood find themselves surprised with empty streets until they realize that every inhabitant went to see the basketball game between East and West Baltimore. How appropriate, I thought for myself, Novi Jelkovec has been portrayed in newspapers and discussed among the other inhabitants of Zagreb as a ghetto full of poverty and crime. Only, this was not a basketball but a football match and the purpose of it was not to compete with narco-bosses of competing neighborhood but to collect money for the construction of the church that was planned to be just behind the school. I went against my principles and donated some money to the church (and though to myself that my friends will make fun of me for the rest of my life if I ever tell them this) in order to gain sympathies of the ladies that were incharged for fund raising. They explained to me that this is the second tournament they organized in a year period and complained that the Church builds huge buildings for their services elsewhere but not in their neighborhood. I remembered that the last initiative was to built a church in one of the parks in New Zagreb contrary to the will of the most inhabitants of that neighborhood who organized a series of RTC protests.

### ***Completion of construction level***

As I described in chapter on the plan, Novi Jelkovec is spatially divided in 4 subunits. In it's middle, there's a large construction site, all the way through the neighborhood. Apparently,

this site that was full of garbage and rats is future high school with swimming pool and sport terrains. Zdravko Juć, director of Stanogradnja told me that everything apart from the high school building was finished and set in function. He explained to me that problem occurred when contractor bankrupted, and Holding is currently in process of searching for another one. I found out that he was lying, there were more buildings that had to be finished. Notably, the church and the market, and many buildings had low quality and they needed to go under maintainance. I remembered Bežovan telling me that open market has been planned, but in the meantime, several large supermarkets have been built near, and that this situation made them aware that nobody is interested in building the market there.

The library was finished just a couple of months ago. It was a large glass cube and in front of that there were more children playing with dolls. I noticed that the library serves as a central point for cultural life in the neighborhood. It offered a variety of workshops and meetings. It was also one of the designated places for voting on next local elections, and I noticed people coming to read the lists with electoral candidates.

Lara, kindergarten teacher said she's dissatisfied with it because it finally opened this winter after 4 years in construction, but it is bare “concrete walls”. She addressed the overall level of construction quality in the kindergarten she works in. She stated that it has been opened in September 2009, and only four years later it looks like it was built 15 years ago.

According to her, walls were falling apart, the flooring is not hardwood but something that looks like linoleum, bad isolated because of the concrete underneath and stated that they're they're freezing in winter times. On rainy days, the basement is flooded, and so on. She concluded by stating that neighborhood never came to life, because there are lots of planned and promised things to the tenants were not fulfilled, like the ambulance, police station, entanglement of

Vukovar street that would connect them to city center. She added that lot of young families are disappointed and think about leaving the neighborhood. Some parents from her group have been discussing it with them openly. She said that reasons are unrealized promises from the city and large number of welfare dependent people that moved there, and that citizens just don't want for their kids to grow up in that kind of an environment. A friend of her who works in veterinarian clinic said that he already lost some clients because people decided to leave.

Contrary to her, Drago, flat owner at the subunit A, pointed out that the infrastructure is great, close to main road, and that he's really happy that they have separated bills for heating, water and electricity unlike in New Zagreb where they had to share. His wife and kids were complaining when they moved from New Zagreb, but he stated that apart from the school, he likes the neighborhood very much, and thinks that is well constructed. He added that he know of some people complaining, but because neighborhood was constructed by several different housing companies, building quality is not even.

Ana, tenant at subunit D, also complained over bad construction. She said that in her apartment, windows leak and parquet is not well fixed to the floor. She added that her walls are already cracked and that sound isolation is almost non-existent.

### ***Private initiatives***

Apart from the initiative to fund a church that was, as I later found out on Novi Jelkovec official web site, there are numbers of other initiatives as well. There's a group of tenants organized in Novi Jelkovec Team, and they met city major on 8. May to discuss the renewals and

investments in following: security cameras, street speed bumps, trash containers, repair of pavements and squares, children playground in A subunit and green areas.

Drago was one of the residents that organized a petition for better public transport. The petition demanded quick line to one of important traffic nodes at the city and Drago told me that they will organize another one after local elections are over.

That was not the only action he did. He sent memorandums to five banks to open an office. He followed by outlining unfinished projects at the neighborhood, medical center and high school that has been a construction site for more than 3 years. Still, this is much better than it used to be in 2009 when they had to go to center of Sesvete to buy groceries, he concludes. He added that every business initiative that opens in the neighborhood functions, from shopping malls to hairdressers, and that 4000 inhabitants is significant amount of potential customers.

He added that he saw that some kind of city initiative has appeared recently, referring to Novi Jelkovec Team, but he stated that they're tenants representatives that are payed by Holding. He added that he will not stand up against them, but he's surprised that they didn't try to include flat owners as well.

## ***Social problems***

Lara told me her job there is a nightmare. She said she's been so frustrated about it that she asked her husband to have a child just to go on leave. Her frustration is a result of bad relations between people in the neighborhood that bother them over things they don't have control of. She added before I even asked her, as like she was apologizing, that there are no more problematic kids among welfare people, quite the contrary: their biggest problem is mum “who

literally swims in cash” and that could have just bought the apartment in luxury area instead of Novi Jelkovec. I saw from here answers how Novi Jelkovec got to be understood as form of a ghetto. She continued explaining that is school is really bad and her colleagues there deal with “ghettoization and problems coming from socially unadapted” families, but recognized the possibility of exaggeration and gossip and added “you know there are all kinds of stories so you never know”.

She pointed out at illegal squatting, especially in B bloc. She told me a story of Roma who broke in one night in apartment on ground floor and she said that nobody can do anything because they have kids and it's enough for someone when he comes to evict them from there that they say 'we cant today we have sick kid' and cops just turn around and leave. She added “Fuck it, I could move in in the same way for free.” Another friend of her works at police station Sesevete, and she stated that “it's true that every, I mean every single day they have calls here”.

Mila, welfare resident, stated that social cohesion in the neighborhood is disastrous. She doesn't have nice words for her neighbors, and she specifically complained for being mobbed by tenants representative who picks up on her and her family members for alleged misbehavior. She told me how she's been cleaning the building for a year and a half, and numerous situations appeared when she find garbage or feces on walls and in elevator just half an hour after she finished cleaning. At the end, she quit, and now her building is hiring cleaning lady from Holding. She thinks it's pure malice and a strategy to get welfare people out. At the end, she stated that Trnje, a place where she lived before coming to Sesevete was a heaven, but her family got kicked out of the apartment and they had to leave.

## Conclusion

Zagreb's neighborhood Novi Jelkovec is a city-funded housing project that by its architectural style, its large scale and its apparent social inclusiveness reminds on large housing projects from socialist era. So far, nothing has been written on this problem. With the use of Foucault's concept of governmentality, I analyze this problem in three dimensions. One is transformation of planning conceptions from socialism to capitalism. Second is its creation through different urban policies and documents. The third is the response of the citizens towards the process of creation of this neighborhood.

The major differences between socialism and capitalism is the way that territory of city is conceived as whole as opposed to fragmented. The position in the neighborhood although physically similar changes under these circumstances.

The analysis of urban planning policies revealed its ad hoc and dependent nature.

My interviews with citizens and my observation proved the governmental nature of neighborhood. They were subjected to these policies.

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