



INTRODUCTION // DANUBIAN CITY IN POST-SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION

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The overall transition of post-socialist countries has been one of major contemporary processes in Europe (Stanilov, 2007). This transition has been comprehensive and multilayer; from planned to market economy; from industrial era to post-industrial era, from one-party to multi-party system, from self-dependence to globalisation (Petrović, 2005). This process has been sudden and loosely controlled in many ways, so it has the elements of a “shock therapy” (Stryjakiewicz at al, 2012).

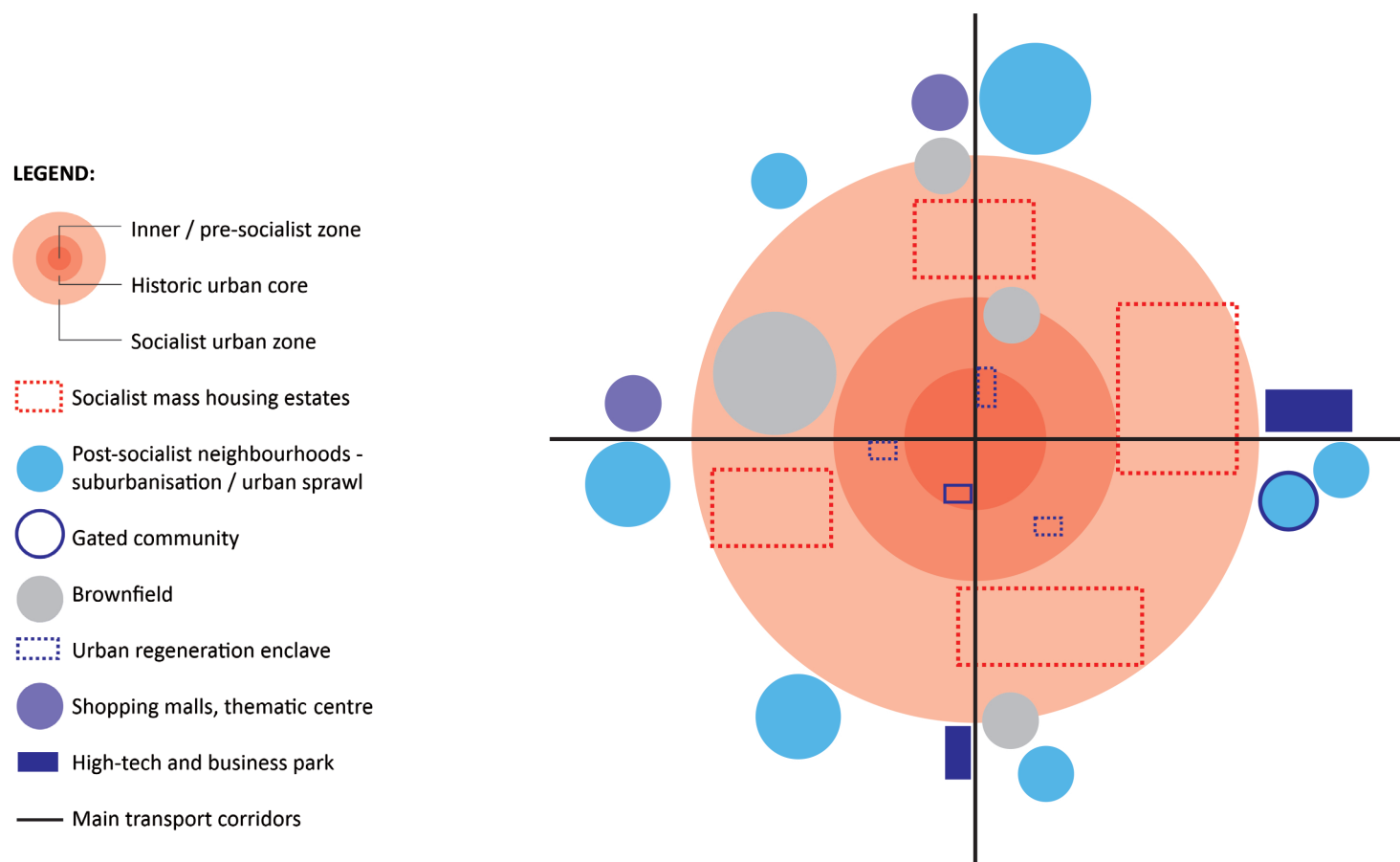


Fig. 30.01 / Model of the structure of post-socialist city (Author: B. Antonić, 2022)

Cities in the post-socialist countries has carried the reflections of these huge changes, with a new order in urban development, characterised by new socio-economic features, such as the rise of service sector, privatisation, deindustrialisation, commercialisation, social and spatial polarisation and fragmen-

tation (Fig. 30.01). These changes strongly affected regional urban development, with the new urban tools and processes: planning deregulation, boom of property market, polycentrism, mixed-use, brownfields and urban regeneration, urban sprawl, suburbanisation, etc (Fig. 30.02-30.03).

Fig. 30.02 / Empty and derelict building in central Kaunas, Lithuania (Author: B. Antonić, 2016)

One of the widespread urban processes in this consideration is urban shrinkage. 82% of bigger post-socialist cities (>200,000 inhabitants) were shrinking in the early post-socialism, during the 1990s (Turok & Mykhnenko, 2007). The recent research of Restrepo Cadavid et al (2017) confirms that urban shrinkage is still the prevalent model of urban development across post-socialist region, whereas in Romania and Bulgaria affects more than 90% of all urban settlements. The same research also points out that small, spatially isolated and single cities are more prone to urban shrinkage. Knowing that the Danube flows through many post-socialist countries, where it is a significant physical obstacle and a national border in many cases, shrinking cities and towns dominates along its riverbanks. However, as well as many other global and regional processes, both post-socialist urban transformation and urban shrinkage have many local peculiarities (Richardson & Woon Nam, 2014), which are explained in the following case studies.



Fig. 30.03 / The new “look” of mass-housing estate to prevent its deprivation in Nova Gorica, Slovenia (Author: B. Antonić, 2015)



Fig. 30.04 / Suburbanisation as a “population flight” from central city, Gdynia, Poland (Author: B. Antonić, 2018)

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