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CHANGES IN THE LOCATION AND MEANING OF BANJALUKA'S URBAN CORE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR URBAN LANDSCAPE REGENERATION

ABSTRACT

The starting premise of this paper is that a careful interpretation of changes in the meaning of urban places, provided their autochthonous qualities and the quality of the urban environment and architecture are respected, can help to better understand and treat the built environment. The case study presented investigates Banja Luka's urban landscape, i.e., concrete changes to its urban core and the principles that have underlain its planning and construction over time. Also, it shows how the use of different regulation instruments and the formation of spatial hierarchies led to spatial-physical, visual, and symbolic or axiological-normative properties, as well as standards of use, translating into features of spatial identity. Changes to the location of Banja Luka's urban core and to the meaning and significance of its urban places are simultaneously considered to determine their value and meaningfulness. Analysis of the landscape-regulation-identity triad shows that the variability of the symbolic meaning of Banja Luka's urban core – considered in relation to changes in its content, location and form – is the central narrative thread of the city's urban history. The paper offers tools for and encourages urban regeneration by re-evaluating the key elements of Banja Luka's spatial identity and reconfirming their significance. These recommendations are given in broad terms, in view of defining standards of spatial regulation that could help to regenerate Banja Luka's urban landscape.

Keywords: *urban core, meaning, landscape, regulation, urban identity*

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is narrative, with its exposition developing along two lines of enquiry, spatial-morphological and axiological-symbolic. Changes in the location and symbolic meaning of Banja Luka's urban core are traced back to the late Middle Ages and analysed to determine their combined effects on the core formation and use of its symbolic content to express social values. The peculiarity of Banja Luka's linear polycentric urban development is recognised in the repeated movement of its core.

The conclusion of this study is that the different approaches applied to regulate Banja Luka's urban development were left conceptually or *de facto* unfinished [1]. The study results are a reliable source of recommendations for the regeneration of Banja Luka's urban landscape. It is recommended to translate the principles underlying the codes and rules established by the tradition into guidelines for planning and designing new urban spaces with identity.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY PROCEDURE AND INSTRUMENTS

This is a case study that examines changes to the location, form and content of Banja Luka's urban core, as well as to its symbolic meaning and significance. Given that the observed changes occurred over a relatively long time (16th–21st c.), the scientific method is used to analyse the primary sources, and critical analysis for the secondary sources. Comparative analysis is employed in the discussion, where the morphological models and regulation strategies used in the urban core in specific periods are compared, and comparisons drawn between their influence on the symbolic meaning of the core.

The study of the morphology of Banja Luka's linear polycentric development is combined with that of the symbolic signification and significance of its central urban places [2]. The textual part is illustrated with morphogenetic maps and drawings made using actual maps, plans and photographs. Six locations of the urban core are analysed for possibilities of new interpretation, appropriation and construction of meaning in relation to changes to the cultural and socio-political context.

First, the location of the urban core in the period under consideration is determined, followed by a differentiation of its physical and symbolic content; this is repeated for all six cores. Next, the morphology of the six locations is compared. The distinctive characteristics of the cores are read and interpreted based on the morphological maps drawn for the different periods in which the core underwent change. The sources used include archival materials, maps and photographs, specially made morphogenetic maps, relevant legislation and spatial plans, and other sources relevant for specific periods (unpublished primary sources) [3]-[17]. They come from the fonds and collections of the Archives of the Republic of Srpska, the Museum of the Republic of Srpska, and the Republic of Srpska Institute for the Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage [1], [18], [19].

3. CHANGES TO THE LOCATION AND MEANING OF BANJA LUKA'S URBAN CORE

The themes relevant to understanding the changes in the location and meaning of Banja Luka's urban core, to be discussed simultaneously, are those of the relationships of the city/urban core to: the local geomorphology; the River Vrbas and its tributaries; the main

thoroughfares; other patterns of spatial organisation; as well as the interrelation of the location and importance of the core to socio-economic, cultural and political circumstances, and the dominant urban paradigms. The space of every "new" urban core is always vacant for the self-representation of the authorities that control it; consequently, it is filled with symbolic content, with new values, which creates new meanings.

Several approaches to urban landscape organisation and planning have shaped Banja Luka. As different socio-economic systems superseded one another, the spatial hierarchy and the doctrine of spatial planning also changed. An analysis of these connected changes has identified six models of regulation of Banja Luka's urban landscape [1] and an equal number of changes to the location, content, meaning and importance of its urban core.

The first elements of Banja Luka's morphogenesis – its polycentric linear development along the city's north-south thoroughfare – date as far back as its early urbanisation, when a Roman settlement and a fortified military camp of *Casra/Castra* were built along the ancient road from Salona to Servitium. Medieval Banjaluka also had a fortress, a market square and a residential quarter built along a road running in the same direction. After the Ottomans conquered Banja Luka in 1526, its urban landscape developed into a *kasaba*, an oriental-type townlet, along both banks of the Vrbas, with a distinctly linear mosaic of organic residential *mahallahs* and a network of winding alleys built with the terrain [18].

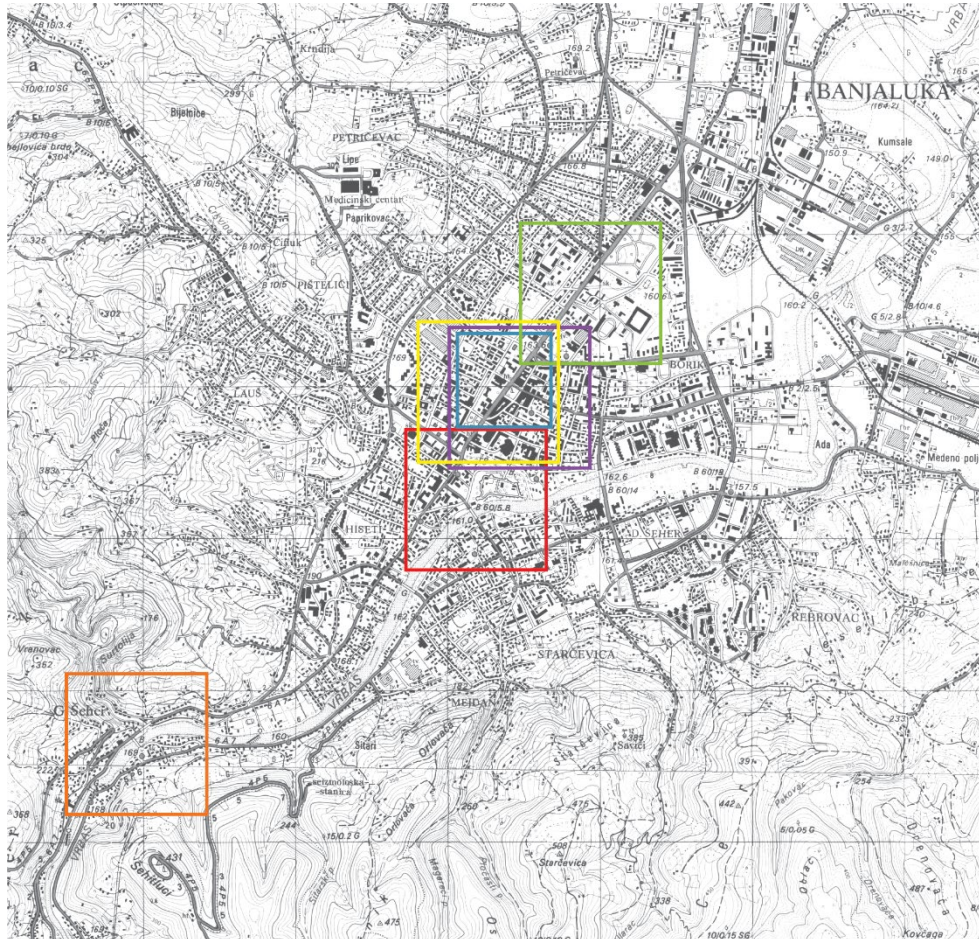


Figure 1. Shifts of location of Banja Luka's urban core (illustration by author on topographical map of Banja Luka, Cadastral Geodetic Administration of RS)

- | | |
|--|--|
| - Urban core 1 – Old town, Gornji Šeher | - Urban core 2 – Fort Kastel |
| - Urban core 3 – "Town" Railway Station | - Urban core 4 – Vrbas Banate capital |
| - Urban core 5 – New centre | - Urban core 6 – Banja Luka Field |

The landscape concept is the single quality present during all stages of Banja Luka's urban development, owing to which it has been to human scale and its regulation in line with spatial-logical standards. These standards are typical of generic and traditional or experiential urban codes and similar to the formation principles of the urban form of pre-industrial settlements [1:55]. The spatial effects of such a conceptual approach as can be seen in Banja Luka's urban landscape have resulted in a dispersed form and low population and building density [15], [20], [21], [22], [23].

The pace of change in the early stages of Banja Luka's urban development (until 1880) was typically slow. After 1880, the Austro-Hungarian administration introduced formal planning legislation to regulate urban development in Bosnia and Herzegovina [1: 198]. This middle period, which lasted until the end of the 20th century, was characterised by dynamic socio-political factors. The Austro-Hungarian principles of town planning and design (German: *Stadtlandschaft*) and the landscape concept were kept through the interbellum, the

Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941). In post-WWII Yugoslavia (1949-1991), socialism led to a new spatial hierarchy based on socially- and state-owned property. This translated to an expansive urban form, shaped through social and urban planning as an urban regulation instrument. After land was nationalised and consolidated and the old lot system abolished, a valuable spatial asset suddenly became a planning resource. Data from Jahiel Finci's study on housing in Banja Luka conducted before the 1969 earthquake for the Banja Luka Comprehensive Urban Plan (1967) testify to an "irrationally built and very dispersed city [21: 66].

The present stage of Banjaluka's urbanisation started after the breakup of Yugoslavia and the 1990s civil war, and it coincided with the region's socio-economic transition from socialism to capitalism. It is characterised by urban sprawl, with urban landscape penetrating into natural and rural landscapes, the loss of linear form, and the emergence of new spatial patterns in the city's urban landscape. [1: 132, 188]

3.1. URBAN CORE 1: TOWNLET – OLD TOWN (GORNJI ŠEHER)



Figure 2. Location of Urban Core 1 in Gornji Šeher, Banja Luka (illustration by author on topographical map of Banja Luka, Cadastral Geodetic Administration of RS)

3.1.1. Urban Core 1: Location

The location of the earliest, mediaeval urban core is unknown; most probably, it was in Gornji Šeher or the Old Town, i.e., at Londža, around the confluence of the rivers Suturlija and Vrbas (Figure 2), [1:78]. The main spatial elements of the core at the time of the Land of Bosnia (Donji Kraji (the Lowlands); the Zemunik (Zemljanik) Parish) were a fort, a residential quarter, and a market square. Another important spatial element formed under the Ottomans – the town developed linearly along both banks of the Vrbas, right around the bridge [19: 90].



Figure 3. Morphology of Urban Core 1 – Gornji Šeher, Old Town [1]

3.1.2. Urban Core 1: Morphology

The settlement was set in a natural environment and surrounded by lush vegetation, especially around the confluence of the rivers Crkvena and Vrbas. The overall impression is that of figurality and picturesqueness, with clearly distinct morphological elements. The form of the fort is self-contained, compact and closed (as befitting its defensive and military purpose). In terms of morphogenesis, the urban landscape consolidated in the structure of the fort (Figure 4).

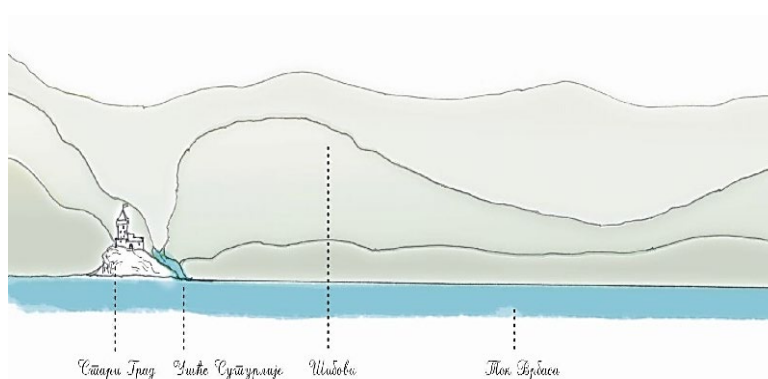


Figure 4. Fort as "crystalisation" of landscape of Gornji Šeher [1]

A residential belt formed somewhat radially along the ramparts and down the steep banks of the rivers Suturlija and Vrbas. Its cube-like houses with pyramid roofs stretched in lines over the hilly ground, one lying higher than the previous in both horizontal and vertical directions, respecting the rule of the "right of view". The commercial quarter was linear in form and ran along the left bank of the Vrbas, on both sides of the road that followed the river course. Forming the core centre, it consisted of narrow craft shops closely built on the narrow flat strip of land below the residential belt. There was a bridge connecting the fort and the residential and commercial quarters on the left bank of the Vrbas, with the square (market) and the second commercial quarter on the right bank (Figure 3) [19].

3.1.3. Urban Core 1: Meaning and importance

The prominent form of the fort was given its meaning in a political system that merged the defensive and administrative functions. A distinctive quality was the existence of two commercial quarters connected by a bridge into a single morphological and functional whole, which the subsequent construction oriented towards. The importance of the mediaeval urban core changed under the Ottomans, first, after the fort became the seat of the military administration, and second, when it was declared the seat of the Sanjak of Bosnia (the mid-16th century) [19]. This accelerated Banja Luka's urban development and changed the meaning of the core, which now represented the Ottoman administration as controlling the area, based on a combination of military, religious (Islamic) and traditional hierarchies and laws.

3.2. URBAN CORE 2: TOWNLET – FORT KASTEL

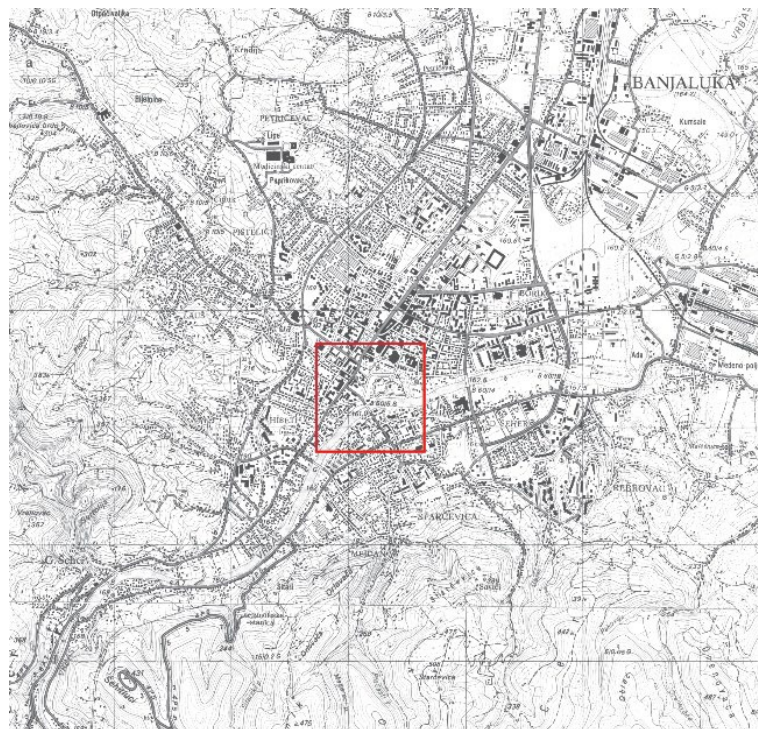


Figure 5. Location of Urban Core 2 in Donji Šeher, Banja Luka (illustration by author on topographical map of Banja Luka, Cadastral Geodetic Administration of RS)

3.2.1. Urban Core 2: Location

Banja Luka's urban core moved to Donji Šeher (Lower Banjaluka) after the residential quarters – *mahallahs* – spread downstream, to land in the north that was flat and more spacious (Figure 5). Fort Kastel, located at the confluence of the rivers Crkvena and Vrbas, first became a military headquarters (mid-16th c.). When the Bosnian Eyalet was established in 1580 and Banja Luka declared its seat, the fortress became an administrative and political centre. Between 1574 and 1587, Ferhad Pasha Sokolović built 2 markets with 200 craft and trade shops, a mosque, a caravanserai, a bathhouse, an administrative building, etc. around the fortress, and an arsenal and cannon workshop inside it [19]. Also,

two bridges were built and the Imperial Road between the old and new urban cores regulated, stimulating urban growth.

3.2.2. Urban Core 2: Morphology

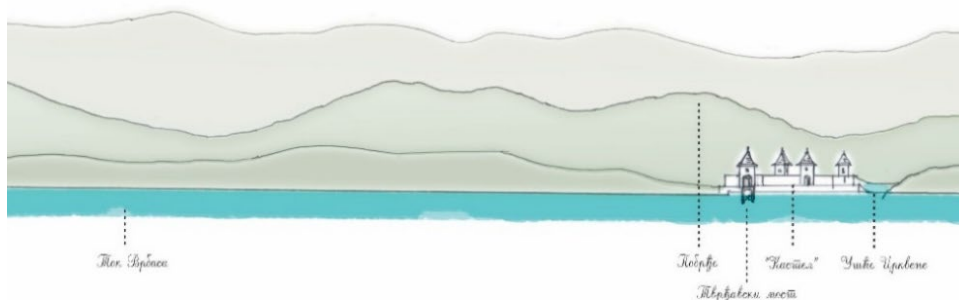


Figure 6. Morphology of Urban Core 2 – Kastel, Lower Banja Luka [1]

The main spatial elements were the spacious asymmetrical fortress with a moat, the market, the quarters just beyond and around the fort, and the special complex consisting of the Big Market along the Imperial Road, the Bezistan – a covered bazaar on the left bank, the Small Market on the right bank of the Vrbas, and the fortress bridge that connected them (Figure 7). Like Urban Core 1, this one had places of worship (mosques) on both sides of the river and next to the two markets.



Figure 7. Spatial and functional connection of Big and Small Markets within Urban Core 2 [1]

3.2.3. Urban Core 2: Meaning and importance

Within the whole of Banja Luka's longitudinally positioned form, Kastel established itself as the hub, the focal point of Urban Core 2. Its meaning as a military, administrative and economic centre fully corresponded to its being a morphological and spatial centre of

gravity. This meaning grew out of its protective role, subsequently combined with administrative and economic functions [18]. Banja Luka gained political importance after becoming the seat of the Bosnia Eyalet, a decision made in view of its economic potential (fertile hinterland rich in ores and flourishing trade), and thanks to the military industry and the supply of food to the Ottoman army as it advanced westward at the turn of the 17th century [19].

3.3. URBAN CORE 3: *STADTLANDSCHAFT* – “TOWN” RAILWAY STATION



Figure 8. Location of Urban Core 3 (illustration by author on topographical map of Banja Luka, Cadastral Geodetic Administration of RS)

3.3.1. Urban Core 3: Location

Banja Luka underwent spatial, architectural and social changes in the final decades under the Ottomans, which paved the way for a new core. Two new districts, the Serbian and Latin Town, were built after the Imperial Road was extended to the north and connected the river Crkvena and the Bosna Hotel (1860) and the flat land along it sold [1], [19]. The new districts, which were in the form of regular blocks, grew around places of worship and consisted of wooden houses and brick buildings erected on spacious lots. The railway reached the city centre and the "Town" railway station was built, which created the conditions for a new urban core, that of the Austro-Hungarian administration (3). It formed around the intersection of the Imperial Road and *Herrengasse* (Figure 9), i.e., the strip between the Military Headquarters and the "Town" railway station [1:176].

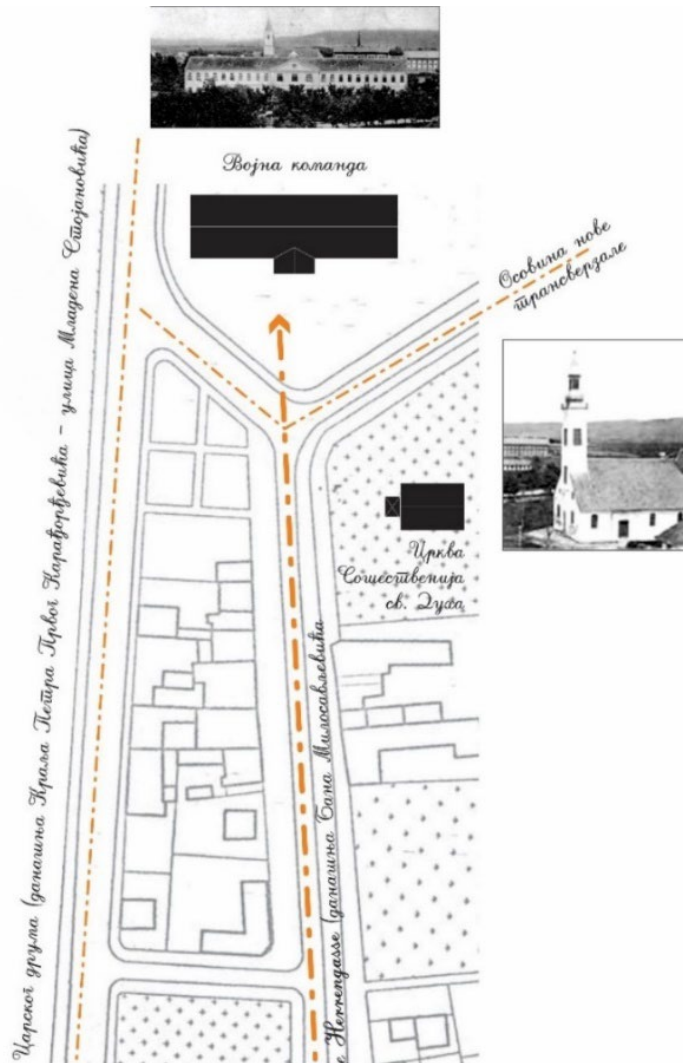


Figure 9. Axial composition of Urban Core 3, with Austro-Hungarian Military Headquarters closing the main axis [1].

3.3.2. Urban Core 3: Morphology

The “landscape city” concept (*Stadtlandschaft*) and urban regulation (*Bauordnung*, the Building Order Law) essentially defined the morphology of Urban Core 3 [1:182]. It consisted of a network of blocks created by cutting the Imperial Road, the city’s longitudinal thoroughfare, with new transverse streets. The Imperial Road was extended northwards and stately residential buildings erected along it behind a wide front setback. The blocks were formed by building massive structures at the corners, which allowed new construction in the space between them. As well as that, tree lines were planted and pavements and boulevards built, and the grounds of the major buildings (the municipality, church, post office, etc.), barracks, factories and markets landscaped. The structure got a new linear element, a railway line, with rails laid to the “Town” railway station, the Tobacco Factory, the Military Hospital and the Military Camp, and the Lauš Mine) (Figure 10).

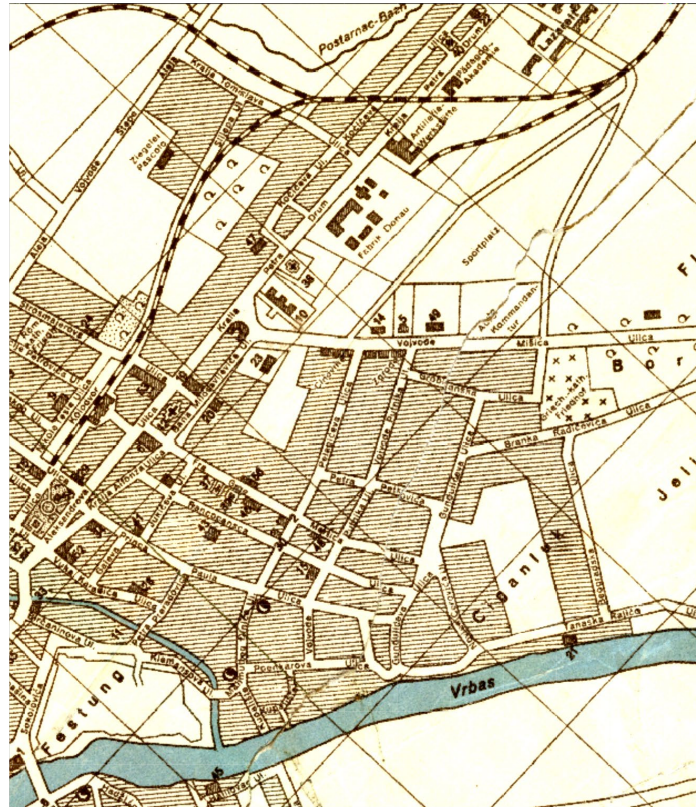


Figure 10. Urban Core 3 morphology (Source: Banja Luka Plan 1936, Museum of Republic of Srpska)

The main morphological elements of the elongated core were the tree-lined orthogonal network of blocks, a low-density physical structure (rows of brick buildings; free-standing structures on big lots), green open spaces (piazzas, parks and squares), and a railway line with the station building. The fortress and the bazaars were no longer the most important elements of the core. The urban composition was defined by axial directions and axes, accentuated with tree lines and oriented toward free-standing public buildings erected on spacious lots (Figure 9) [1:196].

3.3.3. Urban Core 3: Meaning and importance

Under the Austro-Hungarians, new public and private ways were given spatial expression. The core featured closed city blocks, boulevards with multiple tree lines and promenades, impressive free-standing villas and new forms of open space – squares, parks and piazzas [1:198]. With the separation of the defense and administrative functions, now placed in separate buildings, the fortress lost its meaning and importance, with its previous domination lost in a “competition” with the closed city block. The core served to convey the message of affiliation with the much larger Central European context (i.e., the Dual Monarchy) and to showcase the new values brought by technological and economic development, which transformed the city's urbanity. Public administration buildings, state-level and local (forestry, railway, mining, military), banks, schools and hotels all clustered together (Figure 10); thus, it was tertiary activities (services, administration, education, welfare, sports and entertainment) that prevailed in the core [1:199].

3.4. URBAN CORE 4: LANDSCAPE CITY – VRBAS BANATE CAPITAL

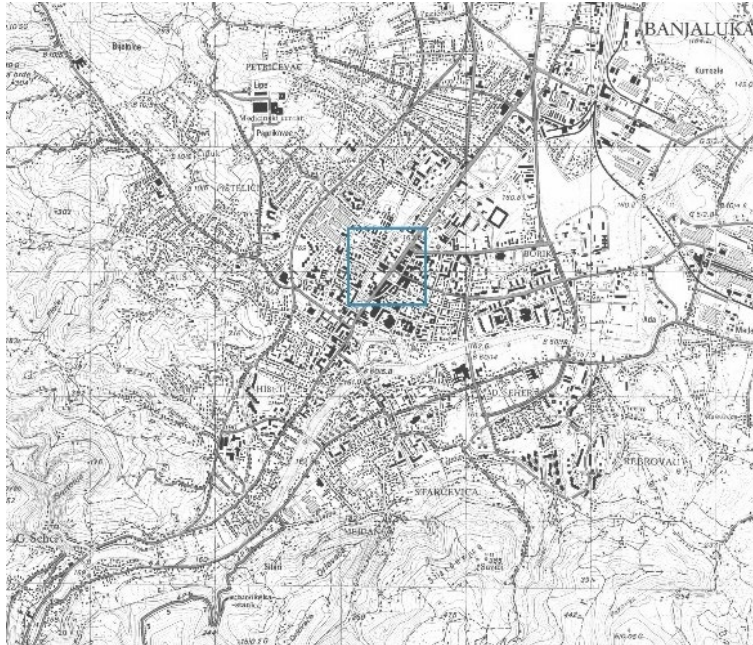


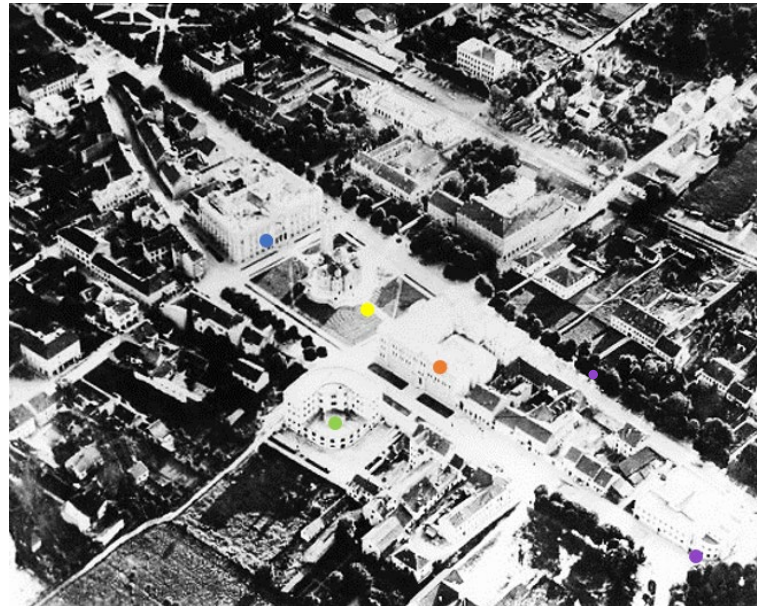
Figure 11. Location of Urban Core 4, seat of Vrbas Banate in Banja Luka (illustration by author on topographical map of Banja Luka, Cadastral Geodetic Administration of RS)

3.4.1. Urban Core 4: Location

Urban Core 4, which formed between the world wars, lay along the city thoroughfare, then called King's Road, practically halfway between Cores 2 and 3 (Figure 11). An Orthodox cathedral was built at the centre, with new rapid construction in all four directions. The newly built structures gradually formed a continuous frontage along King's Road. The buildings were of uniform height, but the front setback varied greatly: along the west side of King's Road it remained wide, like in the Austro-Hungarian period, but it was very narrow along its east side.

3.4.2. Urban Core 4: Morphology

With a new landscape solidifying, a new spatial pattern featuring prominent massive physical structures, so-called block structures, prevailed in the core. They occupied large parts of the town blocks, in contrast with the physical structure of the earlier periods, which consisted of small-sized buildings on small lots. It was gradually replaced by massive, modern structures, and the frontages and city blocks were filled in and closed. The street network was also developed, with the existing streets regulated and the missing transverse streets added, which came to form an orthogonal grid.



● Banate Palace ● Serbian Orthodox Cathedral ● Banate Court
 ● Mortgage Bank ● King Peter's Palace (Ethnographic Museum and National Theatre)

Figure 12. Pre-WWII aerial photo of Urban Core 4 (Source: Museum of Republic of Srpska)

3.4.3. Urban Core 4: Meaning and importance

Many important buildings were built during Svetislav Tisa Milosavljević's four-and-a-half-year tenure as the first Vrbas ban, among which the Serbian Orthodox Cathedral (1925/1928), the Banate Palace (1931) and Court (1932), King Peter I's Palace (1934) etc., which formed a conceptually unified, monumental city centre [25], [26], with the Cathedral as its centrepiece (Figure 12). The area showcased the main functions of the new administration – political and administrative governance, finances, culture, and religion, with an emphasis put on the political importance of Banja Luka as the Banate capital. The image of the city now featured a harmonious ensemble, the urban landscape consolidated, and the spatial identity expressed authenticity [1].

3.6. URBAN CORE 5: MODERN CITY – NEW CENTRE

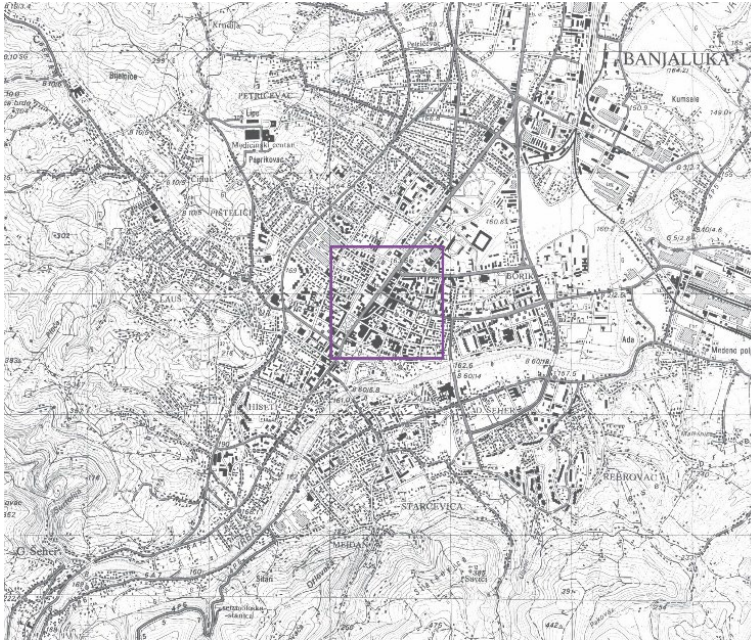


Figure 13. Location of Urban Core 5 (illustration by author on topographical map of Banja Luka, Cadastral Geodetic Administration of RS)

3.6.1. Urban Core 5: Location

The tripolar arrangement makes Urban Core 5 special. Like the previous cores, it was connected to the main street (then called Marshal Tito Street), which ran by its three “poles” – Krajina Square, the Municipality Green, and the National Theatre piazza, connected by Gospodska Street, a pedestrian and shopping promenade (Figure 14). It was a dispersed elongated form that included the previous two cores. The poles were the result of the city-level separation of functions, in accordance with the principles of modernist urban planning.

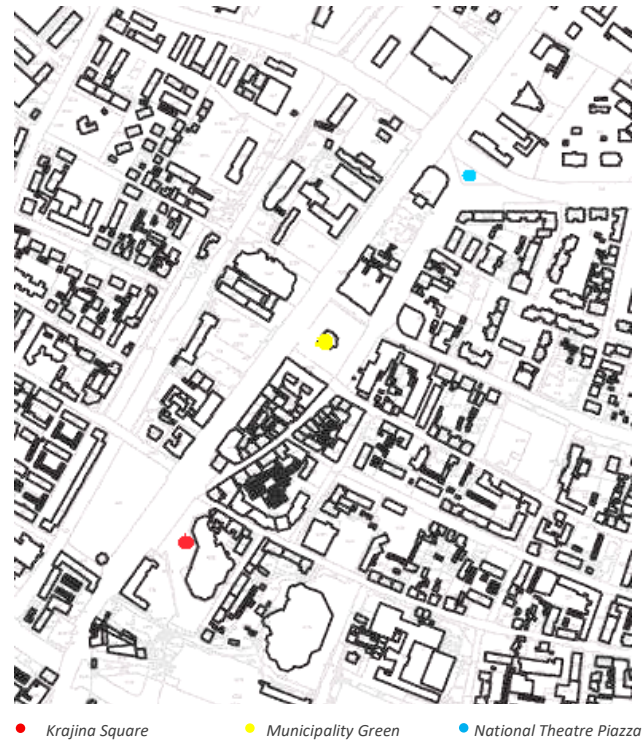


Figure 14. Tripolar structure of Urban Core 5 (illustration by author on geodetic map of downtown Banja Luka)

Urban Core 5 featured Banja Luka's first modernist urban composition (the corner of Fort Kastel), which was destroyed in the 1969 earthquake. This composition of regular geometry consisted of an elongated building, nicknamed the "Titanic", and a multi-story building, locally called the "Skyscraper" (Figures 15a and 15b). A new, geometrically more complex subcentre was built in its stead (Figures 15c and 15d), consisting of the "Skyscraper" and a large asymmetrical polygonal department store ("Boska"). With the extended Palace Hotel forming the adjacent closed block, the two directed the pedestrian flow from Krajina Square to the city market and Kastel.



Figure 15. Krajina Square before (Figs. 15a & 15b) and after (Figs. 15c & 15d) 1969 earthquake (Source: a, b – postcards of Banja Luka; c – Go Banja Luka walking tours on Facebook)

The second, central "pole" of Urban Core 5 overlapped with Core 4, whose meaning, spatial elements, proportions, and patterns of use nonetheless changed. What was missing from its centre was the Orthodox cathedral and the bell tower, which once dominated the area. It was damaged in a WWII bombing campaign, only to be razed by the Independent State of Croatia authorities. The post-WWII city administration erected a memorial to the fallen WWII Partisan soldiers, which soon became a favourite gathering place (Figure 16). It was a

part of the Gospodska-Ban Milosavljević Street pedestrian zone, typical of most socialist Yugoslav cities [1].



Figure 16. Representation area with memorial between House of Culture and Banja Luka Municipality (Source: Museum of Republic of Srpska)

The third, north “pole” of Urban Core 5 lay at the intersection of the main street and St Sava Boulevard (today), overlapping with the centre of Urban Core 3. Its most prominent elements are the National Theatre (previously King Peter I’s Palace) and the adjacent green piazza, which closes the Promenade, the pedestrian axis that connects the three “poles” of Urban Core 5 (Figure 14). There is a modernist building diagonally from the National Theatre, previously the Centre of the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA), with a very wide front setback and a spacious landscaped open ground. The intersection that divides the National Theatre, the former JNA building and the former Military Headquarters (built in 1892) across looks markedly open, thanks to the wide green belt between them.



Figure 17. National Theatre Piazza (Source: banjaluka.net)

Regarded as a whole, Urban Core 5 is marked by rather expansive spatial elements, removed boundaries, and functionally distinct “poles”. The “poles” are very open and the core distinctly elongated. It is far from the River Vrbas and lies entirely on its left bank (Figure 13).

3.6.2. Urban Core 5: Morphology

The main morphological elements of Urban Core 5 are the large free-standing building with a geometrically complex base and the vast sprawling open space. These forms, typical of mid-20th century modernism, differ from those of the previous core. The new morphological patterns differ physically and in terms of the atmosphere from those of the central part; dispersive and expansive, they are the so-called super-blocks built on lots that are no longer delimited or enclosed. This physical structure, prominent both in two- and three-dimensional space, is typical of all buildings, individual as well as complexes – residential, industrial and public.

After the 1969 earthquake, public bids were called for plans and designs of the urban core (or central zone, as it was called then). However, only segments of the winning designs, originally very ambitious, were built. Krajina Square, with the Palace Hotel in the southwest and the multi-story office building in the north, completely changed its appearance after the “Titanic” was removed. The winning design differed from the previous one paradigmatically, geometrically and visually. The base of the “Boska” Department Store is an asymmetrical hexagon, whose one side lies parallel to the main street, but then breaks and changes direction, continuing diagonally towards the market. The Workers’ Solidarity Building, erected at the site of the demolished Gymnasium (Grammar School), resembles “Boska” architecturally and typologically. Together, the two constitute the built segment of the winning urban design of the central city zone.

3.6.3. Urban Core 5: Meaning and importance

This urban core was perceived differently because of the new proportions, the loss of some of the frontages, the increased spaciousness, and the new patterns of land use. The landscape featured big public buildings sharply outlined against the vast open background. There was a sense of vastness and a new spatiality, which included residential neighbourhoods, separate zones serving different functions, and rural and natural landscape gradually permeated by the urban fabric. Dobrović describes it as the free space of the urban landscape, where all buildings enjoy equal status, with the roads forming a separate grid, independent of the arrangement of the buildings [28:1-3], rather different from Le Corbusier’s concept of the subordination of space and buildings to strict artificial geometric spatial hierarchy [29]. Although not completed, the design of the local concept is not subordinate to geometrisation, but freer and more alive, thus closer to the *Stadtlandschaft* concept (landscape city) [1].

The meaning of the “poles” also changed in socialism, especially due to the abolition of private ownership over construction land in towns. The concept of common social property was the reason for the irrational use of land and other public spatial assets. The urban core was a disproportionate and polycentric form with unclear boundaries. The open spaces served to showcase the new ideology of space and the corresponding spatial hierarchy. The new type of square – vast, with semi-open fronts – became a representation arena where national holidays were celebrated and members of all strata of society gathered. All towns

and cities had a central open area used for representation, with impressive political and administrative buildings, a hotel, and a department store [1].

3.7. URBAN CORE 6: CONTEMPORARY ADMINISTRATIVE CITY – BANJA LUKA FIELD

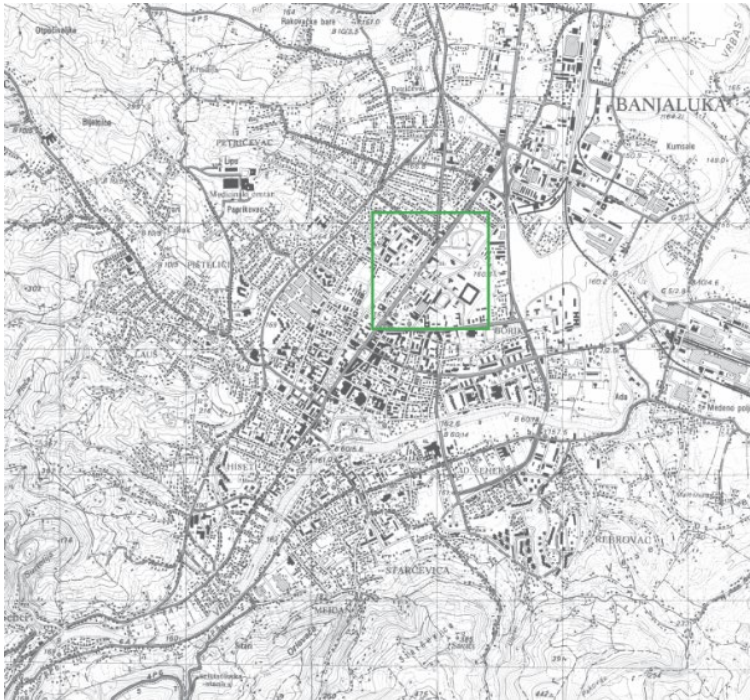


Figure 18. Location of Urban Core 6 (illustration by author on topographical map of Banja Luka, Cadastral Geodetic Administration of RS)

3.7.1. Urban Core 6: Location

Banja Luka's urban core has continued to move linearly along the city thoroughfare, which has been the defining characteristic of its urban morphogenesis. The after-1990s core, the northernmost one, formed far from the river, in Banja Luka Field. Banja Luka Field is a low building density zone, whose spatial and development potential has allowed the extension of the core – the new administrative, political, educational and cultural seat of the Bosnia-Herzegovina entity of the Republic of Srpska (Figure 19).



Figure 19. Development of Urban Core 6 in Banja Luka Field (Source: Author's illustration)

3.7.2. Urban Core 6: Morphology



Figure 20. Location of Urban Core 6, panorama of Banja Luka photographed from west (Source: G. Kukavica, 2014)

Morphologically, Urban Core 6 is a group composed of free-standing and partially attached structures, connected by an imposing public open space. The panorama of Banja Luka is dominated by two high rises belonging to the group (Figure 20). The group also contains a long medium-height angular structure forming a quadrangle. The rest of the group are commercial buildings whose simple cubic forms are typical of the social context of early capitalism.



Figure 21. Urban Core 6 group form RS Government, office building and RTRS (Source: ekonferencije.com)

These structures are of prominent height and form (volume); however, some lack distinctive qualities and instead share those characterising the group as a whole. Nevertheless, in the context of Banja Luka as a single urban form, they stand out dramatically, are formally wholly distinct from their immediate surroundings and are currently the city's most prominent landmark. Thus, the group constitutes yet another disparate element of Banja Luka's fragmented and dispersed urban fabric (Figure 21).

3.7.3. Urban Core 6: Meaning and importance

The authorities built a new core to emphasise Banja Luka's role as the government seat (since 1996), showing their resolve to make the city a modern capitalist one. The core draws its meaning from the greater regional political and administrative importance of the city. The functions found at the core are also directly related to the administrative role of the city. It is home to the Republic of Srpska Government, the ministries, different agencies and administrations, as well as the state radio and television (RTRS). The meanings and messages relayed to the public are stateliness, robustness, isolation, and the lack of architectural and urban uniqueness and particularity. One is acutely aware of the atmosphere of isolation, introversion and lack of vitality of the complex in relation to the rest of the public city space. The local population has not grown to use this complex; thus, it does not serve a social function, as a city core should. In fact, Banja Luka's form is bicentric, since the old urban core is still the heart of the city. Even so, Mladen Stojanović Park, which is the biggest city park, and Delta, currently the largest shopping centre in the city, are in the immediate vicinity of the new core. Also, the vacant land of Banja Luka Field will be used to extend the core and diversify its functions.

4. DISCUSSION OF THE COMBINED EFFECTS OF SPATIAL-MORPHOLOGICAL, AXIOLOGICAL AND SYMBOLIC CHANGES TO BANJA LUKA'S URBAN CORE

The discussion below is a synthesis of the previous interpretation of the morphological particularities of the changes of the location of Banja Luka's urban core and of the axiological and symbolic changes of its meaning. It simultaneously compares and interprets the core content, form, position, and how meaning was constructed differently [23].

4.1. SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGES

When Banja Luka first came under Ottoman rule, despite its greater importance and a change of meaning, its core did not move until after 1550. The expansion to Donji Šeher (Lower Banja Luka) was principally linear, in the downstream direction, towards the vast plain in the north. The city grew in stature with the influx of wealth after becoming the seat of the Eyalet of Bosnia. The new space symbolised the new administration, which exerted control over a much greater area. The core did not change much morphologically: built on flat, spacious land, it was more open and less dense. Nonetheless, better architecture, better roads in and outside the core, new functions (public eating, education, culture) and improved water supply and sewage systems enhanced its urban appearance and quality overall.

After the seat of the Eyalet moved to Sarajevo in 1639, Banjaluka's urban development slowed. At the end of Ottoman rule, as part of administrative reforms, the first railway was built in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1871-1873). The Banjaluka–Dobrljin line, operated by the

Rumelia-based Oriental Railway company, would have connected the city with Skopje and Istanbul and been the quickest route between Turkey and Western Europe. While the construction stopped in Banja Luka, foreign engineers and construction workers came to the city, bringing with them not only engineering expertise, but also a new, European way of life, both public and private.

The Austro-Hungarian administration chose a location in Banja Luka's north, on the flat left bank of the river Crkvena (including the Varoš district, populated mainly by Christians and Jews) for its symbolic public architecture and functions. The Crkvena got to mark both a natural and symbolic border between the Oriental/Balkan urban concept (hilly ground south of the rivulet), and the Central European one (flat ground north of the rivulet) [18]. The location expressed the expansionist politics of the Dual Monarchy, seeking to spread its dominion over all of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The core was a wide strip lying along two thoroughfares, organised as an orthogonal grid of blocks. The new urban concept and physical structure, built on vacant land, resulted in an arena for showing and promoting new, western values, which now coexisted with the old, traditional, oriental ones.

The Austro-Hungarians also changed Banja Luka's visual hierarchy. While preserving some of its early landmark architecture, they built in styles (classical, Secession) that were essentially a reaction to the local architecture [25:23]. While partly respecting the local and regional building codes, the Austro-Hungarians severed the connection of the core with the Vrbas, along whose banks it previously developed. The centre of gravity moved to the thoroughfare, the city's development axis, and to the flat ground in the north, which had more potential for urban growth.

Throughout its urban development, Banja Luka's spatial identity has been forged by politics. In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as the capital of the Vrbas Banate, Banja Luka was given the same importance as Sarajevo, the capital of the Drina Banate, but greater than in Austro-Hungary. The new social system produced new spatial hierarchy, established with the help of a different regulation strategy, disrupting the late-19th-century axial urban arrangement.

Banja Luka underwent major socio-economic and political changes in socialist Yugoslavia. The new collectivist values, which made borders and boundaries relative, defined the *modern city*, leading to a new kind of territoriality. The creation of social property made the landscape of Yugoslav cities, including Banja Luka, rather dispersive.

After the 1990s civil war, Banja Luka was made the capital of the Republic of Srpska. Its importance grew compared to its status in socialist Bosnia and Herzegovina; a contemporary administrative city, its status corresponds to that of a metropolitan city or national capital. The city and region have transitioned to a market economy and the socio-political system to a pluralist democracy. As of this period, the *landscape* concept is no longer as visible as in previous times.

4.2. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE LOCATIONS AND MEANINGS OF BANJA LUKA'S THREE EARLY URBAN CORES (2, 3, 4)

A comparison of Banja Luka's urban cores formed under the Ottomans (2), the Austro-Hungarians (3) and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (4) reveals that the one built in the 1930s (4) is situated midway between Cores 2 and 3.

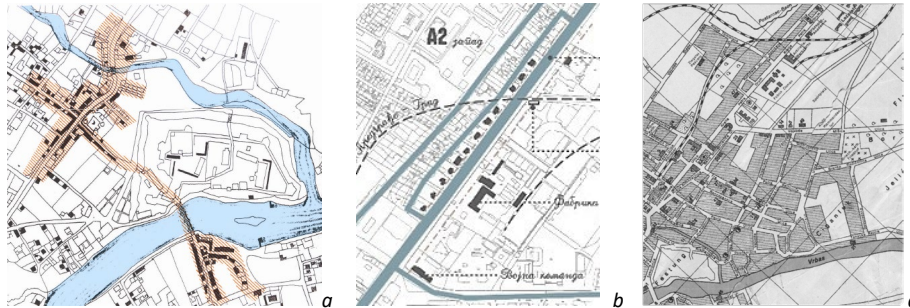


Figure 22. Comparison of structures of Urban Cores 2 (a), 3 (b) and 4 (c) [1].

A structural and functional analysis shows their shared and distinctive constitutive elements: services and trade existed at all three locations, and places of worship were the most prominent elements. Military facilities were the central elements of the earliest two cores. Urban Core 4 is special for the presence of all four “pillars” of modern society, namely, administration, economy, religion and culture, showing that the three aspired to and laid the foundations for institutional continuity.

The wider context of Banja Luka's urban landscape reveals the greatest building density along the city thoroughfare, with the city centre positioned inside the zone initially urbanised under the Austro-Hungarians. The core continuously moved away from the Vrbas River (Figure 22 (2)), with the effect of the left bank increasingly seen as an urban demarcation line. Urban Core 3 was a subtle transition from spontaneous organic development and communal experience and traditions to that regulated through legislation and plans. With Urban Core 4, a new urban landscape consolidated as partially homogeneous urban tissue was built concentrically around it.

The 1930s town plans reveal an indirect influence of modernist town planning ideas, thereby also of the urban landscape concept [1]. The axiological analysis of Banja Luka's urban landscape according to a predefined set of criteria and indicators yielded data on the effects that incorporation of minor elements of the modernist doctrine in the related legislation had on the urban landscape [1]. Their application was limited to architectural design, while it is conspicuously absent from urban concepts and urban landscape regulation.

4.3. CHANGES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING OF URBAN CORES 5 AND 6



Figure 19. Banja Luka's urban core, spatial-structural changes: during Banate 1936 (a), in 1974 (b), and in 2014 (c) [1].

Figure 19 shows the structure and content of the urban core built during the Vrbas Banate (1936), Bosanska Krajina (socialist Yugoslavia) (1974), and the Republika Srpska (2014), with evident influence of politics and social hierarchy on spatial hierarchy and regulation. E.g.,

the concept of social proprietorship and property of the socialist era produced block lots or "super blocks" on big lots, whose emphatic spatiality sets them apart from the paradigm of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Vrbas Banate) and the massive "block structures", as well as the fragmented physical structure built prior to the 20th century.

The political changes of the last two decades have thoroughly transformed the urban core. Although hidden, the intentions of the republic and city authorities are obvious: replace the strategy of stateliness of the old and new cores of Banja Luka as an administration centre with that of the "free market", which will consolidate the urban landscape according to the shifting interests of capital. Previously, the urban core predominantly represented power. With the transition to the "free market" strategy, this changes depending on the market developments and the interests of capital. With the new relations and distribution of power between the authorities and capital owners, decisions on urban interventions will be made to present the *image* of the city the ruling elites identify with, a "free market" landscape [27: 58-60].

5. BANJA LUKA'S URBAN LANDSCAPE: REGENERATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis has shown that changes in social values, when translated into spatial regulation instruments, have impacted on Banja Luka's spatial hierarchy and identity. Furthermore, the timeline of cultural, social and political changes overlaps with that of the breakages in Banja Luka's spatial arrangement. These points on the timeline mark the shifts in the regulation strategies, with the old urban doctrine and spatial hierarchy replaced by new ones, as resulting from changes to social hierarchy. Each new administration changed the location, form and symbolic content of the core, instrumentalising it to present its values and give urbanity a new meaning [1].

In conclusion, failed regulation concepts and strategies have "created" space for a peculiar general regulation strategy combining traditional and experiential urban codes with legally-based framework principles [1]. As well as that, Banja Luka has preserved an important feature of its urban identity – the complementarity of its physical and green structures within the totality of its urban landscape. Also, the connection of regulation and the related legislation with changes in the urban landscape and core has been established, along with their interconnection with spatial identity [30], [31] [32]. Despite Banja Luka's relative urban underdevelopment, the presence of rural patterns of land use in the city – a feature of its urban identity – could become a comparative advantage in the light of the city's development [31], [32]. Likewise, the key to all future actions expected to resolve the issue of identity crisis caused by ubiquitous space commodification is seen to lie in urban landscape regulation. [32].

In the context of the above-presented conclusions of this study and the results of the previously conducted research into the connection between regulation on the one hand, and landscape and identity on the other [1], urban landscape regeneration is recommended as underpinned by the following principles:

- 1) The principle of codification requires that spatial hierarchy be established at the state level and harmonised, at the regional and local levels, with the general principles formulated in the Code on Spatial Planning and Regulation of Settlements [24]. Specific

groups of rules – *specifics of hierarchy* – should be derived from the general principles to be used as guidance on construction, spatial planning and design, and urban regeneration [1].

2) The quality principle seeks to ensure urban regeneration in line with general principles and *per case* qualitative recommendations for urban landscape regulation and shaping [1], [22]. The analysis of Banja Luka's urban cores has confirmed that the physical and visual representation of the characteristics of morphological types can be monitored in the urban landscape and their quality enhanced through urban regeneration [22].

3) Integrity is the key principle of urban landscape regulation, whose application at all spatial levels is absolutely crucial (from settings, units and stretches, etc., to urban landscape as an integral unit) [1].

4) The principle of identity implies respect for uniqueness and case-by-case consideration and spatial interventions; as such, it must be integral to urban regeneration [1], [25], [32]. The presented study confirms the key role of social factors in the development of the spatial-physical properties of the urban landscape.

5) The principle of continuity requires that new regulation measures, instruments and strategies be harmonised with those applied previously, in order to ensure continuity and alignment with lasting social values – civilisational and traditional - in the process of urban regeneration [1], [2], [22], [33].

6) The principle of harmonisation or contextuality concerns the mandatory harmonisation of the spatial-physical, structural and functional characteristics of the under consideration or intervention [33], [34].

7) Flexibility is the most important principle of open urban landscape regulation, whose formulation and application involve combining formal or legal and traditional codes and adapting to concrete circumstances, development conditions, heritage, and characteristics of the area [33], [1].

8) The principle of value and signification implies consideration of the value and meaning of a concrete place and patterns of its use, with continuous reassessment and intervention aimed at reattaching meaning to it. Urban regulation is the tool to be used in the process of urban regeneration to translate shared values into urban landscape standards [34], [1].

9) The principle of diversity is connected with those of identity, quality, integrity, as well as the principle of value and signification of urban spaces. These principles are the prerequisites for and measures of adherence to the principle of diversity. In the case of urban regeneration, this concerns the urban-morphological, functional and cultural diversity of urban environments or urban landscape patterns [34], [1].

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ПРОМЕНЕ ПОЗИЦИЈЕ И ЗНАЧЕЊА УРБАНОГ ЈЕЗГРА БАЊАЛУКЕ: ПРЕПОРУКЕ ЗА РЕГЕНЕРАЦИЈУ УРБАНОГ ПЕЈЗАЖА

Сажетак: Полазна премиса рада је, да се пажљивим тумачењем промена у значењу урбаних места, уз уважавање њихових аутохтоних вредности и квалитета урбане средине и архитектуре, може допринети бољем разумевању грађене средине и нашег односа према њој. Кроз студију случаја се разматра урбани пејзаж Бањалуке, односно специфичне промене урбаног језгра и принципи на којима се заснивало њено грађење, обликовање и планирање, током времена. Такође, показује се како се кроз примену различитих инструмената регулације и реализацију различитих просторних редова, одвијао процес превођења просторно-физичких, визуелних, као и симболичких или вредносно-нормативних карактеристика и функционалног стандарда, у обележја просторног идентитета. Разматрање симултаних процеса промена просторног положаја урбаног језгра Бањалуке и промена значења и значаја њених урбаних места, води ка утврђивању њихових вредности и смислености. Променљивост симболичког значења урбаног језгра Бањалуке, које се разматра у релацији са променама његовог садржаја, позиције и форме, провлачи се као 'црвена нит' историјског наратива, кроз обрађену тријаду: пејзаж-регулација-идентитет. Ревалоризација кључних обележја просторног идентитета и реафирмација њиховог значаја, у раду се нуди као подстицај за урбану регенерацију. Препоруке за регенерацију урбаног пејзажа Бањалуке дате су оквирно, са перспективом на креирање стандарда просторне регулације, који би могли да допринесу процесу регенерације урбаног пејзажа Бањалуке.

Кључне речи: урбано језгро, значење, пејзаж, регулација, идентитет