

SYSTEM OF CENTERS, THE CITY OF BELGRADE AND TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION OF SERBIA

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Abstract

This paper presents the basic characteristics of the systems of settlements and centers in Serbia. A forceful process of industrialization in the second half of the 20th century caused intensive urbanization which resulted in increasing of the number of urban settlements as well as their size, with prominent supremacy of the capital city, Belgrade. The system of centers in Serbia is represented by the hierarchy of urban centers with their spatial and functional areas as determined by the National spatial plan (1996). Territorial organization of the state is partially completed and defined on a macro-regional and local levels.

Key words: settlements, urbanization, system of centers, metropolitan, territorial organization, Belgrade, Serbia.

SISTEM CENTROV, MESTO BEOGRAD IN TERITORIALNA ORGANIZACIJA SRBIJE

Izvilleček

V prispevku so predstavljene temeljne značilnosti sistema naselij in središč v Srbiji. Močan proces industrializacije v drugi polovici 20. st. je povzročil intenzivno urbanizacijo, ki je pripeljala do povečanja števila mestnih naselij in njihove rasti, z izrazito prevlado glavnega mesta Beograd. Sistem naselij v Srbiji je predstavljen s hierhijo mest in njihovih prostorsko-funkcijskih območij, ki so določena v državnem prostorskem načrtu. Teritorialna organizacija države je delno zaključena in določena na makroregionalnem in lokalnem nivoju.

Ključne besede: naselja, urbanizacija, centralna naselja, teritorialna organizacija, Beograd, Srbija

I. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the paper is to present the current situation and processes related to important urban geography research of Serbia which have been done so far for the academic and professional circles out of Serbia and in the area of former Yugoslav federation. In other words, the purpose of this paper is to present the process of urbanization and the characteristics of cities in Serbia as well as the capital city of Belgrade.

General impression about a network of settlements of macro-regional areas in Serbia, especially in the northern part is obtained on the basis of characteristics of population. In order to create a realistic image of the position of larger settlements, it was necessary to represent areas in Serbia which had the most suitable natural and anthropological qualities for the concentration of population and economic activities. Larger urban agglomerations developed gradually mainly on that drive shaft of development, and caused more prominent polarization in the network of centers, in river valleys with significant infrastructure corridors. Not only did the forceful urbanization in the second half of the 20th century cause a continuous growth of cities, but it also brought a permanent increase in the number of urban settlements.

Therefore, the hierarchy of urban centers was established in Serbia and on the basis of their spatial and functional reciprocity, their zones of influence were formed. The hierarchy can be most precisely observed by the presentation of systems of centers which are defined by the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia (1996) which is still in effect. Gravitational areas are determined in details for regional centers, while for macro-regional centers, these gravitational areas are only approximately represented.

Special attention in this work is paid to Belgrade, to the settlement as well as to its administrative position and the status of the city. The reason for that is prominent supremacy of the capital city, not only when it comes to the concentration of population, but also when it comes to all other aspects of development recognized from the economic and socio-geographical point of view. The above mentioned polarization produced imbalance in regional development of Serbia.

Processes in functioning of the areas of system cannot be analyzed without administrative partition of the state territory, on a regional as well as on a local level. Standards and rules of the European Union, concerned with territorial organization on a regional level, initiated the activities of Serbian legislation later on. The latest Law on territorial organization of the Republic of Serbia, which had been passed at the end of 2007, has partially solved the problem, but there is still an open question over the issues concerning the definition of meso-regional areas.

I.1. General characteristics of population

The territory of the Republic of Serbia, with total surface being 88,361 sq. km, is divided into three macro-areas: Central Serbia, which occupies 63.3 % of the state territory, as well as two provinces: Vojvodina (24.3 %) and Kosovo and Metohija (12.4 %).

Serbian settlements (without population statistics for Kosovo and Metohija) had almost 7.5 million inhabitants, according to the latest census in year 2002: 73 % in Central Serbia and 27 % in Vojvodina.

Together there are 6,155 settlements in Serbia, of which 68.9 % are in Central Serbia, 23.5 % in Kosovo and Metohija and only 7.6 % in Vojvodina. In Vojvodina, there are only two settlements per 100 sq. km and the average size is 4,351 inhabitants. Settlements in river valleys, or in mountain areas of Central Serbia have on average 1,290 inhabitants, and they are positioned in a four times denser settlement network (Table 1).

*Table 1: General data on population and settlements of the Republic of Serbia (2002)**

*Preglednica 1: Osnovni podatki o prebivalstvu in naseljih v Republiki Srbiji (2002)**

Features	Republic of Serbia	Central Serbia	Vojvodina	Kosovo and Metohija
Surface area (sq. km)	88,361	55,968	21,506	10,887
Population	7,498,001	5,466,009	2,031,992	–
Number of settlements	6,155	4,239	467	1,449
Average population size of settlements	–	1,290	4,351	–
Average area of settlements (sq. km)	14.2	13.2	46.2	7.3
Population density (inhabitants per sq. km)	–	98	94	–
Settlements density (number of settlements per 100 sq. km)	7	8	2	13

* Without data on population in 2002 for Kosovo and Metohija.

During the last quarter of the 20th century, the process of depopulation took place in Serbia, involving not only the rural areas as before, but also the cities. Low birthrate and negative population growth (–3,8 % in Serbia without Kosovo and Metohija), causes continuous decrease of the population in the countryside, as well as the stagnation of population in urban areas.

The process of the population redistribution led to the polarization of population and the creation of a heterogeneous system of centers. In other words, it led to the prominent domination of the capital city of Belgrade.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN CENTERS

Serbia is well covered by the network of urban centers. Nevertheless, all these settlements, being located in different areas, were developed under the diverse historical conditions, so they reached a different degree of concentration of their agglomerations. The centers of Serbia can be distinguished by size, the diversity of functions, the size of their sphere of influence, as well as by their role in the regional integration of Serbia. The higher level of the centers in the urban system of Serbia is of greater importance in the process of integration of these cities in the Balkans and South-East Europe.

2.1. Suitable areas for the development of urban centers

Urban centers developed in areas where there are numerous potentials of great importance for progress and concentration of economic activities. Those areas have extremely suitable

position within Serbia as well as within wider geographical context.

Throughout history, various factors had influence on the formation and development of particular settlements which are transformed into urban centers. First, the river valleys were suitable for development of roads and communication axis. Morphological features and frequent floodings resulted in creating of settlements at the edges of alluvial plain, farther away from river banks, or on river banks, which were not endangered by floods.

The rivers Danube–Morava and Sava corridors, which have extremely good position and natural conditions for settlement and infrastructure development, represent the main features of the spatial structure of Serbia. Corridor X, one of the most important European corridors, passes through Serbia and connects Western to the Eastern European countries (Tošić et al. 2004). The great number of Serbian urban centers is situated along this corridor (Fig. 1).

However, the Danube–Morava's development axis had a negative influence on population of Serbian mountain regions. Emigration from rural areas towards the towns in the above mentioned area, especially in the central and southern part of Serbia, caused stronger polarization between developed urban centers, as upholders of the overall development, as well as of other settlements in Serbia.

Areas, suitable for the development of towns in Central Serbia are as follows (Veljković et al. 1995):

- The area of the City of Belgrade along with northern Kolubara basin and nearby parts of Šumadija south of Belgrade. This area has extremely appropriate and significant geographical position within the Balkans and Europe. The conditions and resources for the concentration of population and agglomeration of manufacturing and other economic activities are exceedingly suitable in this region. Also, there are convenient possibilities of direct transportation links with north-western and north-eastern parts of Central Serbia, nearby areas of Vojvodina to the north of Belgrade, as well as indirect transportation links with other parts of Serbian territory;
- The river valleys of Velika Morava, Zapadna Morava and Južna Morava respectively are the structural features of Central Serbia. Within Morava's valleys there are important geographical potentials for creating of larger urban agglomerations and higher density of population, as well as major corridors, which provide opportunity for connecting with other macro-regions of Serbia and with the neighboring countries.

Geopotentials for the arrangement and development of urban centers are very good as well as the territory of Vojvodina. The most important geographical structures are mainly the same as in Central Serbia: vast plains and flatland terrains, which are very fertile, stable for construction, with very good conditions for water supply. The zones along the Danube river and the Tisa river are especially advantageous, as well as motorways of international importance. Nowadays, the arrangement and development of cities in Vojvodina have been influenced by significant historical factors (Bukurov 1954; 1971; Kojić 1961):

- Certain elements of towns and roads network belong to the period before the end of the 15th century;
- Turkish occupation as well as serious deterioration of towns in the 16th century;
- Great Serb migrations from the Ottoman empire to the Habsburg monarchy at the end of

- the 17th and during the 18th century;
- Economic and social development and administrative organization in the second half of the 18th and during the 19th century;
 - Building of basic railway network in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy;
 - The change of borders at the formation of Yugoslavia after the First World War;
 - Several land colonizations in Vojvodina by inhabitants from other parts of Yugoslavia during the first half and in the middle of the 20th century, along with the settling of war refugees from the former Yugoslav republics (mainly from Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina) at the end of the 20th century.

Figure 1: Serbia – settlements network, rivers and Pan-European corridor X

Slika 1: Srbija – omrežje naselija, rečna mreža in evropski koridor X



Source/vir: <http://kartasrbije.googlepages.com>.

The most suitable areas for development of urban centers in Kosovo and Metohija province are their central parts, which consists of the Kosovo plain along with the valley Little Kosovo area and western part of the province – Metohija with the Prizren plain. The Kosovo plain is a vast region with significant natural resources (lignite), which can help the development of various economic activities, but it is also the intersection of highways and railroad lines, which provide link with other parts of Serbia and the neighboring countries. The slightly lesser importance has the Metohija valley which is linked with Montenegro and Albania. The urban centers of Kosovo are unevenly distributed, since they are situated in the places with the most suitable conditions for the development of economic activities and settlements. The urban network of Kosovo has its origins in different historical periods (Nikolić 1968).

2.2. The process of urbanization

A very intensive and forced process of industrialization after the Second World War has had parallel influence on the processes of urbanization and deagrarization, which were intensive as well. Industrialization was not directed well enough, and deagrarization was spontaneous and hard to control. Moreover, at that time there was no organized policy which would keep population in the countryside and make plans for rural areas. Towns were developed so fast that smaller centers became middle-sized towns, and historic trade towns were getting the status of cities. Morphological image and social circumstance were following strong functional changes with difficulty in many Serbian centers during the second half of the last century. The changes occurred as the consequence of establishing large industrial facilities. The facilities were built in the settlements which did not have enough workforce. Rural-to-urban migrations as additional pool of labor force was inevitable. Rural population itself had been trying to find better life in cities because of hidden economic employment and unsuitable conditions for the development of agriculture. The great concentration of population in small number of cities, especially in Belgrade, brought about the formation of irregular urban system. Apart from the population concentration and polarization on the macro-level, polarization also took place within the municipalities because of concentration of population in municipality centers.

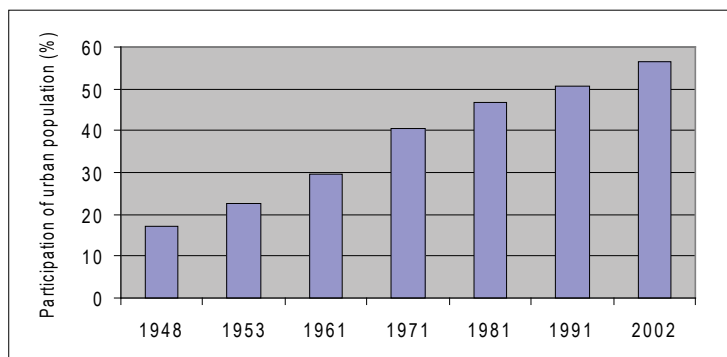
Until 1960, Serbia was still a rural country according to population characteristics, and, also, according to the economic structure. After the Second World War, according to the population census of 1948, only 17 % of total population had lived in urban settlements. Five years later, in 1953, the number increased to more than 20 % of total population. Vojvodina was the most urbanized macro-region at that time, with 29.5 % of urban residents, while Central Serbia had only 21.2 % of urban population and Kosovo and Metohija 14.6 % of urban population respectively. Almost 75 % of total population was agricultural.

The process of urbanization continuously grew, although not so intensely, in the period after the Second World War (Fig. 2). The fastest growth of cities took place in the period 1961–1971, it was increased by 10.8 %. At the end of observation period, in 2002, the level of urbanization was 56.4 % in Serbia. It was equal in Central Serbia and in Vojvodina. According to the last census data 1991–2002, the intensity of migration from rural to urban areas was stagnating. During that period, urban population increased by 91,000, while the

population of other settlements decreased by 161,000 inhabitants. The share of agricultural labor force decreased from 73.5 % to 28.3 %.

Figure 2: The process of urbanization in Serbia

Slika 2: Proces urbanizacije v Srbiji



Such spatial-demographic characteristics make Serbia very heterogeneous. Vojvodina is characterized by weak spatial-demographic division into the zones of prominent concentration of population and depopulation zones, as well as slower urbanization pace. The fastest urbanization took place in Central Serbia, considering the fact that it was influenced by Belgrade. According to the tendencies, the process of demographic polarization was in initial stage with slower urbanization pace in Kosovo and Metohija.

2.3 The size of urban settlements

According to the methodology of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, and according to the last census data (2002), there were 119 urban settlements with more than 5,000 inhabitants in Serbia. The number of 5,000 inhabitants, above which a visible influence of a settlement as the center of development should be expected, was taken as a measure for the minimal concentration of inhabitants, as well as for economic activities. Moreover, those settlements should be developing faster than some other (more intensive changes in the structure of activities and/or much faster increase in population). According to the applied methodology, there were additional 51 urban settlements in Serbia, which had less than 5,000 inhabitants and whose population represented 3 % of the total number of urban population. Those urban settlements are not considered here, because they represent municipality centers which are not significant centers of development in Serbia.

The number of towns decreases with size, contrary to the portion of inhabitants from a particular group (Table 2). The participation of larger cities, with 100,000 to 200,000 inhabitants, as well as total population, is rather small (only 3 towns with 12.5 % of total urban population). This information shows uneven progress of urban system in Serbia. It is the result of the lack of cities with 200,000 to one million inhabitants.

Table 2: The distribution of urban settlements by size (2002)*

Preglednica 2: Urbana naselja po velikosti (2002)*

Groups by size	Number of settlements	Population	Participation of group in %
5,001–10,000	42	311,764	7.63
10,001–20,000	35	514,425	12.59
20,001–50,000	24	726,007	17.77
50,001–100,000	14	902,848	22.10
100,001–200,000	3	511,502	12.52
≥ 200,000	1	1,119,642	27.40
Total	119	4,086,188	100.00

* Without Kosovo and Metohija.

Table 3: Distribution of urban settlements by size from 1948–2002*

Preglednica 3: Urbana naselja po velikosti v obdobju 1948–2002*

Groups by size	1948	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002
5,001–10,000	3	23	45	40	36	42
10,001–50,000	21	43	65	55	58	59
50,001–100,000	2	4	4	9	12	14
100,001–200,000	0	1	2	4	4	3
≥ 200,000	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	27	72	117	109	111	119

* Without Kosovo and Metohija.

After the Second World War, the number of urban settlements, followed by the intensive process of urbanization, significantly increased by 4.5 times. At the beginning of this period there were scarcely 27 urban settlements and their number increased mostly in 1960s and 1970s. In later years, the total number decreased to some extent because of depopulation. The analysis of each particular size group do not show significant exceptions to above mentioned rules, which are valid for the total number of urban settlements (Table 3).

The prominence of the City of Belgrade, as well as other 10 largest cities in Serbia, confirms demographic polarization in the Republic of Serbia. The asymmetry of Serbian urban system developed as a consequence of disproportion in size of Belgrade and other large cities. The urban settlement of Belgrade is 5.8 times larger than Novi Sad, that is 5.3 times larger in terms of whole city areas. Belgrade is larger than the total number of inhabitants in other 9 cities of Serbia (Table 4 and Fig. 3). Hence, about 27 % of the urban population of Serbia lives in Belgrade.

Cities with 200,000 to one million inhabitants with macro-regional functions, which could be leaders of the balanced and polycentric development of Serbia, would also be a very important factor for linking the Serbian urban system with the European one. Due to lack of such cities, the major role in international integrations of Serbia have, apart from

Belgrade, the largest cities in Serbia – Novi Sad, Niš, Kragujevac, Subotica etc. Being a border city, Subotica is carrying out several activities in trans-border co-operation with nearby Hungarian cities.

Table 4: The ten largest cities in Serbia (2002)*

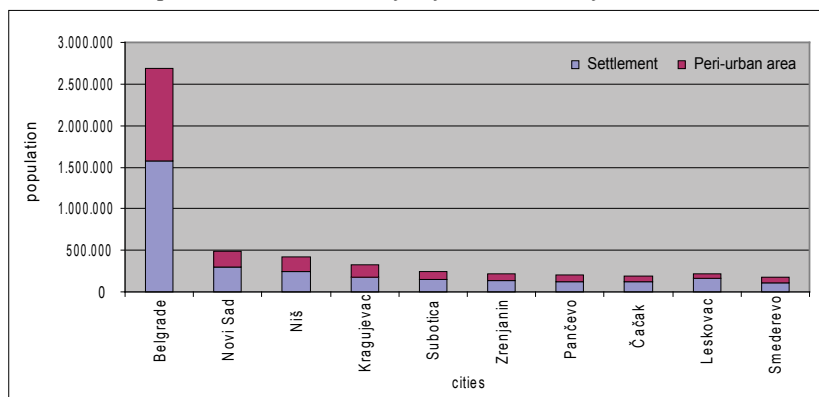
Preglednica 4: Deset najvećih mest v Srbiji (2002)*

Cities	Population – the territory of city	Population – settlement	Index of settlement (Belgrade = 1)
Belgrade	1,574,050	1,119,642	1.000
Novi Sad	298,139	191,405	0.171
Niš	250,518	173,724	0.155
Kragujevac	175,182	146,373	0.131
Leskovac	156,252	63,185	0.056
Subotica	148,401	99,981	0.089
Zrenjanin	132,051	79,773	0.071
Pančevo	127,162	77,087	0.069
Čačak	117,072	73,217	0.065
Smederevo	109,809	62,805	0.056

* Without Kosovo and Metohija.

Figure 3: Population in ten largest cities in Serbia

Slika 3: Število prebivalcev v desetih najvećih mestih v Srbiji



3. THE SYSTEM OF CENTERS

A hierarchical structure of centers network with correspondent spatial systems of functional characteristics is established in Serbia. Zones of their influence are defined on the basis of it. Although regional differences are prominent in Serbia, unique criteria for

the classification of centers are determined according to the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia (1996):

- The existing network of centers, the position and the function of certain towns in the network of settlements, and gravitational areas of towns;
- The size and the capacity of gravitational areas of centers;
- The position of certain centers in relation to the system of existing planned areas of more intensive development.

The most important characteristics of such a model in Serbia are:

- Polycentric organization model;
- Urban centers with developed structure of activities (advanced economy, particularly producer services, as well as a component and complex structure of services) are the base of such a model.

The outline of urban centers model, which is situated in Serbia and in the territories of three macro-areas, consists of the following categories of urban centers:

- the center of the (inter)national significance;
- macro-regional centers;
- regional centers;
- sub-regional centers.

The following categories stand out as being on a low level:

- developed urban centers;
- larger urban centers;
- urban centers;
- future urban centers.

Macro-regional centers are cities which, apart from Belgrade, have the highest ranking in the system of centers in Serbia. Their gravitational area covers a great number of functional areas – regional systems of settlements which satisfy the needs of 100,000 inhabitants. Six urban centers with the above mentioned characteristics stand out: Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, Priština, Kragujevac and Užice.

Table 5: General data on the macro-regional centers in Serbia*

Preglednica 5: Osnovni podatki o makroregionalnih centrima v Srbiji*

City territory	Population (2002)	Surface area (sq. km)	Number of settlements	Population density
Belgrade	1,574,050	3,224	157	489
Novi Sad	298,139	699	16	428
Niš	250,518	597	71	420
Kragujevac	175,182	835	57	211
Užice	83,022	667	41	123
Priština	–	572	46	–
Total	2,380,911	6,594	388	395

* Without population of Priština.

Given the fact that Belgrade is a macro-regional center, it is very outstanding because of the population size, surface area and number of settlements in the city territory. All the above mentioned centers belong to the larger, or middle-sized Serbian cities, except for Užice, which got the macro-regional status thanks to the favorable transportation and geographic position in Serbia as well as the position in the system of urban centers (Table 5). Population in gravitational areas of Serbian macro-regions (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš) is between 1.2 to 2 million people. Exceptions are Belgrade, with 3.3 million inhabitants as well as Užice, with 500,000 inhabitants.

According to this model, the outline of macro-region Belgrade should be the Danube-Sava zone. Nevertheless, the zone along the river Sava, until now, did not have nor it will have the opportunity to develop as more development axis, linked with Belgrade, and especially in regard to motorway corridors Subotica–Novi Sad–West Serbia–Montenegro. Only a small part of Trans-Danubian development outline is situated in the area of this macro-region, between Belgrade and Požarevac. Besides, Belgrade macro-region divides two significant development zones (the Morava river valley and above mentioned direction – Subotica–West Serbia–Montenegro) which should be representative of more balanced regional development, as well as the outline of functional integration of the Serbian territory (Veljković 1998). These facts prove that the gravitational areas of macro-regional centers are not precisely determined (Fig. 4).

Gravitational area of *regional centers* covers at least three municipalities, which provides for at least 150,000 inhabitants or about 100,000 inhabitants if they are situated in border areas with neighboring countries. There are 28 centers of this kind (17 in Central Serbia, 7 in Vojvodina and 4 in Kosovo and Metohija).

Many Serbian regional centers (17) belong to middle-size towns, with 30,000 to 70,000 inhabitants. Two thirds of the total number of inhabitants in regional centers live in these centers. Smaller urban centers, with 15,000 to 30,000 inhabitants, achieved their status of regional center because of favorable geographic location and transportation position, border lines, as well as of their functional areas. The largest regional centers (Subotica, Zrenjanin, Pančevo and Čačak) have 70,000 to 100,000 inhabitants (Table 6).

Table 6: General data on regional centers (2002)*

Preglednica 6: Osnovni podatki o regionalnih središtih (2002)*

Groups by size	Number of centers	Population	Participation (%)
15,000–30,000	5	108,444	8.53
31,000–50,000	8	315,732	24.85
51,000–70,000	9	518,307	40.79
71,000–100,000	4	328,278	25.83
Total	26**	1,270,761	100.00

*Without Kosovo and Metohija.

** Regional center city cluster (Jagodina–Čuprija–Paraćin) is analyzed separately for each town.

Figure 4: Areas under prospective influence of the macro-regional urban centers (PPRS, 1996)
 Slika 4: Območja predvidenega vpliva makroregionalnih urbanih središč (PPRS, 1996)



The features of *subregional centers* are developed central functions and gravitational zone, which includes parts of nearby municipalities. There are 10 centers of this kind in Serbia. They have mostly between 20,000 and 30,000 inhabitants, and there are almost three fourths of total populations in sub-regional centers (Table 7).

Table 7: General data on subregional centers (2002)*

Preglednica 7: Osnovni podatki o subregionalnih središčih (2002)*

Groups by size	Number of centers	Population	Participation (%)
≤ 20,000	2	32,210	13.37
21,000–30,000	7	176,404	73.24
≥ 30,000	1	32,229	13.38
Total	10**	240,843	100.00

* Without Kosovo and Metohija. ** Regional center Bečej–Novi Bečej is analyzed separately for both urban settlements.

3.1. Functional areas of regional centers

Spatial-functional organization of Serbia is arranged with the aim to provide (PPRS, 1996) rationalization of management and more efficient performing of duties from the domain of daily needs; organization of public services in accordance to the needs, abilities and interests of local communities, more efficient co-ordination of activities and the programme of local communities. Moreover, a population is one of basic factors, since it is very important to establish a good relation between functions and population needs.

Criteria for distinguishing functional areas are:

- Importance and role of a town as a center in the network of settlements and as a center of development (the size of a town, the development of communal services, concentration of public places, zones of intensive travel-to-work connections, population changes, the intensity of changes in functional structure);
- Rational functional thresholds and possible peak radius of gravitational areas (a minimum number of users in the influential zone of every urban function and each hierarchical level of that function – possible peak time of traveling or distances from the border of functional area to its center);
- The level of socio-economic development of a certain territorial parts in Serbia (population density, settlement density, criteria for defining economic development);
- The morphological structure of the terrain and conditions for the linkage of urban areas proper;
- Directions and zones of traditional linkage between cities and nearby settlements;
- Principles of steadier regional development.

There are 34 functional areas in Serbia, 21 of which are in Central Serbia, 8 in Vojvodina and 5 in Kosovo and Metohija. The centers of these gravitational areas have the status of regional centers or macro-regional centers (Fig. 5).

More prominent integration of settlement sub-systems should take place in the zones of functional connections. That would result in a more suitable organization of infrastructure as well as other built objects, which would satisfy physical and social development aspects. The effects of sub-system integration must be conveyed even through joining of activity of population, operational structures and economy in the above mentioned zones.

Criteria for placement of Serbian functional areas should be arranged in such a way that they can perform their tasks. In that sense, there are three general objectives in terms of future spatial development of Serbia (Veljković 1998):

- More balanced dispersed development of Serbian territory, along with decrease in differences between development of certain parts and polarization of Serbian spatial structure;
- To boost integration of Serbian spatial structure;
- To encourage social and economic integration of Serbia beyond borders.

The areas, for which spatial plans at regional level (e.g. planning regions) would be made, stand out on the basis of regional centers network and their functional zones. Those areas

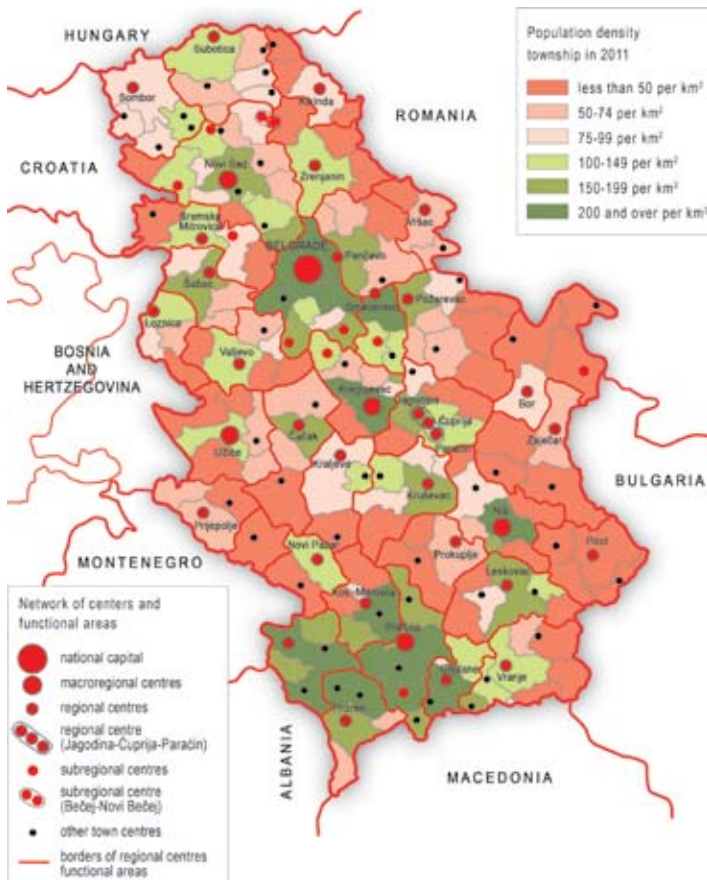
are spatial units, within which interests and objectives for solving common economic, social and development problems had already been outstanding or there are suitable conditions for mutually co-ordinated development.

The outline of spatial model of urban network consists of the main zones of intensive development. The highest levels in the network of centers are associated with the meeting point of those zones (i.e. center of national importance, macro-regional centers and some regional centers). The network of functional areas of regional centers, from which the planning regions are determined, is distinguished on the basis of population size.

Gravitational areas of regional and certain sub-regional centers mostly match with the administrative division of Serbia into districts, but there are exceptions in certain areas. Exceptions exist in terms of functional areas of regional centers and models of planning regions as well.

Figure 5: Network of centers and functional areas (PPRS 1996)

Slika 5: Omrežje središč in funkcijskih območij (PPRS 1996)



4. THE CITY OF BELGRADE

The above mentioned importance of the capital city requires more detailed presentation of its administrative area in terms of concentration, as well as in terms of the system of urban centers as Serbian development factor.

The total surface area of the administrative area of the City of Belgrade is 3,224 sq. km (3.65 % of Serbia's territory). There are 157 settlements with 1,574,050 inhabitants in year 2002 (21 % of Serbia's population). There were 1,119,642 inhabitants in the urban settlement of Belgrade, or 454,408 inhabitants less than in the total administrative area of the City of Belgrade, which is 71 % of the population in the City of Belgrade (RPP AP BGD, 2004). There are 17 municipalities in the territory of the City of Belgrade (i.e. urban region), of which are 10 inner city municipalities. There are 26 other nearby settlements of urban, urbanized or rural type, also situated in these ten municipalities (Fig. 6). Other settlements (130) are located in other 7 municipalities in the Belgrade urban region. The average population density is 407 persons per sq. km in the whole, above mentioned area (Belgrade urban region).

Settlements, situated in this territory, are under strong influence of the urban settlement of Belgrade but they are also distinctive areas, whose development is based on resources of local, regional and national importance. On average, the population size stagnates, but 70 % of the settlements in this area have been lately influenced by the process of depopulation. Population growth rate of the City of Belgrade was high until 1970s, but since it has been decreasing (Table 8; Živanović 2006).

The territory of the City of Belgrade takes up one fifth of employed population as well as nearly almost one third of employed population in service activities (Table 9; Živanović 2006).

*Table 8: Population growth rate of the City of Belgrade and Serbia (1948–2002)**

*Preglednica 8: Naraščanje števila prebivalcev mesta Beograd in Srbije (1948–2002)**

Area	1953/1948	1961/1953	1971/1961	1981/1971	1991/1981	2002/1991
City of Belgrade	28.65	31.41	24.84	19.46	8.60	2.04
Serbia without Belgrade	6.84	8.93	4.39	4.34	-0.6	0.49
Serbia	12.29	10.04	7.56	7.05	1.20	0.81

* Without Kosovo and Metohija.

The structure of the active population in the City of Belgrade is very diversified. The process of very intensive deagrarianization until 1990s caused a great number of urbanized settlements, with less than 50 % of active population in primary sector (over 62 % of settlements). Active population, registered by the place of living, consists of daily migrants of manufacturing and customer service sector which move towards Belgrade (Stojkov and Tošić 2003).

These communities are completely supplied with the facilities of public services and infrastructure on the average, corresponding to the size of the communities of Central Serbia, or, they are slightly under the average, influenced by the vicinity of Belgrade. The economic

structure is also below the polarized threshold of development of surrounding areas and the apparent diversified economic structure of population is only a consequence of a large share of daily migrations to Belgrade or towards a mining-power complex in one of peripheral municipalities south of Belgrade.

Table 9: Demographic and economic characteristics of Belgrade and Serbia (2002)*
 Preglednica 9: Demografske in ekonomske značilnosti Beograda in Srbije (2002)*

Area	Total number of active population	Primary sector (%)	Secondary sector (%)	Tertiary-Quaternary sector (%)
The City of Belgrade	556,060	4.99	26.72	68.29
Serbia	2,642,987	22.01	31.42	46.56
The participation of the City of Belgrade in Serbia (%)	21.04	4.77	17.89	30.86

* Without Kosovo and Metohija.

Figure 6: Administrative division of the City of Belgrade (Belgrade settlement = the inner city; the whole area is the Belgrade urban region)

Slika 6: Upravna razdelitev mesta Beograd (Belgrade settlement = območje mesta; celotno območje je beograjska urbana regija)



The main characteristic of seven peripheral municipalities is dispersed type of settlements, not only in the plains but also in hilly areas. Only parts of the municipalities situated on main and regional roads belong to a compact or linear type of settlement. Many week-end houses ‘have inundated’ (have sprawled) not only the communities (in the settlements), but also the

whole municipal area. Together with the week-end houses, mostly built without the planning or construction permit, the whole area is overwhelmed by a large number of illegal or semi-legal buildings for permanent residence or some other purposes.

The status of Belgrade as a center of metropolitan area is undefined. A city-metropolis is a kind of an urban area with several urban settlements which development is clearly interdependent from the city monopolis, the center of metropolitan area, or as a kind of a regional town under intensive urbanization (Bojović 1996).

The administrative area of the City of Belgrade is certainly smaller than the area which could be considered as metropolitan, especially taking in consideration that the areas to the north of Belgrade are part of Vojvodina province. »The administrative border line of Vojvodina has been an obstacle to the functional widening of the administrative area of Belgrade and it has been getting larger as the rights of the regions have more firmly been formed« (Bojović and Borovnica 1998). Complex researches should confirm if the metropolitan area includes a certain number of the already surrounding municipalities of the administrative area of the City of Belgrade.

A macro-region of Belgrade would include even larger number of municipalities and would be connected with the wider area in the valleys of the Sava and the Danube rivers.

5. TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION OF SERBIA

If regionalism is defined as a process resulting in dividing individual parts of a territory, then it can be connected with the administrative division of the state. Given that the administrative entities are defined for providing higher quality governing of the state, and based on the criteria which have not included all the relevant characteristics of the examined areas, they cannot equal regional entities. As the adequate administrative territorial division represents one of the ways and conditions of providing the appropriate organization of the state government on one territory, firm political influences on introduced solutions are not rare. However, the conditional acceptance of a concept of the administrative regions enables that a process of regionalism in Serbia is being spoken of within the historical context.

Generally considered, the administrative entities are most often divided on the basis of transport and geographic criteria which have, to some extent, reflected the economic connection of various parts of the state territory. The administrative connections of settlements for the municipality centers economically drifted by them represents an attempt of co-ordinating the regional border-lines with the ones of functional areas.

If we start from the moment when Serbia has obtained its current territory, including Vojvodina and as one of the ex-Yugoslav republics, we can define several different administrative territorial divisions:

- According to the Vidovdan Constitution in year 1921 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was divided in districts (counties), county towns and municipalities. The criteria for confirming regional border-lines represented natural, economic and social opportunities, and none of these territories should not have had more than 800,000 inhabitants, so that greater concentration or maintaining the already existing national and ethnic groups within the border-lines of some territories was prevented.

- According to the same law and division of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia into governing areas in year 1929, the state was divided into 9 regional units on the basis of economic and transport characteristics, and it was not divided on the basis of historical entities. The regional units were further divided into county towns and municipalities.
- The first political and territorial division after World War Two was carried out by the general law of the National Committee in the year 1946. Serbia was then divided into 23 districts (Živanović 2006).
- According to the 1952 law, two types of territorial units were defined: municipalities and county towns. Considerable cutting of a certain number of municipalities, as a consequence of enlargement, resulted in 737 municipalities in total instead of 2,225 municipalities, as there were after the Second World War. They were arranged in 42 districts (Leško 1975). Up to 1966, the number of municipalities in Serbia was about the same as nowadays. Up to the year 1974, they were arranged in county towns.
- After enacting the Constitution in year 1974, the area of Central Serbia was divided into 9 inter-municipal regional communities.

In 1992, Serbia was administratively and territorially divided into 29 districts with the City of Belgrade as the special entity. There were 18 districts in Central Serbia, 7 in Vojvodina and 5 in Kosovo and Metohija (Fig. 7). The district centers are macro-regional and regional centers of Serbia.

The special entities like these are not completely adequate for the demands of an appropriate regionalism which would take into consideration all the relevant criteria in order to organize the state territory by separating the regions into basic, governing, economic and functional units, on one side, or that the division like this is in accordance with principles and demands of the European Union, on the other side. It means that a territorial organization of the state territory is yet to come in Serbia, first of all on a meso-regional level.

According to the new Law on territorial organization of the Republic of Serbia (enacted at the end of 2007), the state territory was divided into municipalities, cities and the City of Belgrade as territorial units, and autonomous regions – provinces (Vojvodina, Kosovo and Metohija) as a form of a territorial autonomy. In this way, there are 24 territorial units with the city status, including the City of Belgrade (Fig. 8), with a total number of about 4,303,000 inhabitants (57.4 % of population of Serbia) and 150 municipalities with about 3,195,000 inhabitants (42.6 % of population of Serbia).

The Law on territorial organization of the Republic of Serbia (2007) defines a territory with the city status and a municipal territory in the following way:

- A *city* is a territorial unit representing an economic, administrative, geographical and cultural center of a wider area and it counts more than 100,000 inhabitants. Exceptionally, when there are specific economic, geographical or historical reasons, a city can be defined as a territorial entity with less than 100,000 inhabitants, if it fulfills all the other criteria specified by the Law. The territory on which a city is formed represents a natural geographical entity and an economically connected area having well-established communication within inhabited areas with a city center as a gravitational center. The city territory can be divided into city municipalities.

- A *municipality* represents a basic territorial unit with a local government, able to individually fulfill all the rights and duties within its jurisdiction and counting at least 10,000 inhabitants. Exceptionally, when there are specific economic, geographical or historical reasons, a new municipality can be formed with less than 10,000 inhabitants. The territory, on which a municipality is formed, represents a natural and geographical entity, an economically connected area having well-established communication within inhabited areas with a city center as a gravitational center.

Figure 7: Districts and municipalities in the Republic of Serbia

Slika 7: Upravne enote in občine v Republiki Srbiji



Figure 8: Territorial units with the city status
Slika 8: Območja s statusom mesta



The territories of municipalities, the territories of cities and the City of Belgrade represent inhabited areas, that is, the areas of cadastral communities, becoming a part of the local government entities.

6. CONCLUSION

A network of centers of the Republic of Serbia coincides with distribution of quite favorable natural characteristics and positional conditions for building the cities and roads. A series of cities, poles of development and the most significant roads have coincided with the valleys of the most important rivers, larger plains and basins.

Because of strong and wide-spread processes of industrialization, deagrarization and urbanization in the second half of the 20th century, and especially during the 1960s, not only has the level of urbanization significantly increased (for almost 40 % to 56.4 % in 2002) but also a number of city communities (4.4 times increased; without data for Kosovo and Metohija). The size and structure of urban centers within all the three macro-entities of Serbia was articulated, and their operating structure became more developed. In that way, all the types of developing of centers got more strengthened. They could also be seen in the transformation of settlements, surrounding the centers, not only in terms of size but also in terms of changing the activity structure.

Considering their polarized and encouraging operation, Serbian center systems have been the main factor of the population redistribution and the community structure transformation (both immense and functional). Greater density of population as well as a significant level of the development of the functional community structure have been achieved both in narrower and wider zone around the axis.

Distinct domination of the size and functions of the capital city of Belgrade and the non-existence of the cities with a half of a million of inhabitants have resulted in forming an irregular urban system (i.e. the index of size of the second-other city, Novi Sad, comes to 0.17 in relation to Belgrade). The so-called de-metropolization of the Belgrade agglomeration established on the basis of the concept of decentralized concentration are envisioned by the planned documents in Serbia.

Decreasing in the development of the agglomeration of Belgrade is not connected with the spacious range of the administrative area of Belgrade. The area of the City of Belgrade is certainly smaller than the one which could be considered as metropolitan area, especially taking in consideration that the northern part of the area is located in Vojvodina province. During the previous decades, the urbanization process in the area of the City of Belgrade was negatively displayed through the control of building and settling, on one hand, and the community system development, on the other. When the community system development is concerned, there was no more significant developing or investing decision on the other municipality centers of the suburban municipalities.

Beside a more moderate development of Belgrade, a current Regional plan of the Republic of Serbia (1996) includes even five more macro-regional centers, contributing to a more balanced regional development. However, these center's areas and functional competence were not precisely determined. By defining 34 functional areas at a meso-regional level, the control rationalization, the organization of public services and more efficient co-ordination of local communities would be established. The centers of those areas include macro-regional or regional centers of Serbia. At a lower hierarchical level, subregional centers and more levels of municipality centers, some of which have no status of an urban center, should represent a basis of the concept of organizing a community and center network. At a local level, however, the organization of a community network should be planned through a group of communities, that is, by their gathering from a lower level to a higher one. This concentration stemmed from both a problem occurring in rural settlement communities and the fact that the communities like these represent an indispensable condition for the territorial organization according to the adequate European standards.

Good conditions for regular functioning of the center system influence and the balanced regional development are made by the adequate administrative state division. A new territorial division of Serbia includes two existing autonomous regions, the City of Belgrade with a special status and 23 territorial units with a city status, having the possibility of dividing into the city municipalities, and 150 municipalities. The 1992 division of the Republic of Serbia in 30 regions does not completely comply with the demands of the rational regionalization organizing the state territory by dividing regions as basic, governing, economic and functional units, on one hand, or in accordance with the principles and demands of the European Union, on the other. It means that the territorial organization of the state territory, especially at a regional level, is still yet to come.

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SISTEM CENTROV, MESTO BEOGRAD IN TERITORIALNA ORGANIZACIJA SRBIJE

Povzetek

Omrežje urbanih središč Republike Srbije se dobro sklada z razporeditvijo razmeroma ugodnih naravnih značilnosti in lokacij, primernih za izgradnjo mest in prometnic. Nizi mest, razvojnih polov in najpomembnejše prometnice so nameščeni v dolinah največjih rek, velikih podoljih in kotlinah. Kot posledica močnih in tudi v širšem prostoru prisotnih procesov industrializacije, deagrarizacije in urbanizacije v drugi polovici 20. st., še zlasti v šestdesetih letih, so se močno povečali tako stopnja urbanizacije (za skoraj 40 %, na 56,4 % v letu 2002) kot število mestnih naselij (za 4,4-krat; brez Kosova in Metohije). Frekvenčna distribucija mest po velikosti je postala v vseh treh makroenotah Srbije bolj raznolika, struktura njihovih dejavnosti pa veliko bolj razvita. S tem so se močno okrepili vsi vidiki razvojnega učinkovanja mest, kar se je pokazalo tudi v transformaciji okoliških naselij, tako njihove velikosti kot tudi v spremenjeni strukturi njihovih dejavnosti.

Zaradi polarizacijskega in spodbujevalnega delovanja so bili sistemi urbanih središč Srbije glavni dejavnik prerazporeditve prebivalstva ter spreminjanja velikosti in funkcij naselij. V ožjem in širšem pasu vzdolž razvojnih osi je prišlo do večje gostote poselitve in do precej bolj razvite funkcijske strukture naselij.

Izrazita prevlada glavnega mesta Beograd, tako po velikosti kot funkcijah, in odsotnost polmilijonskih mest sta pripeljala do nastanka nepravilnega urbanega sistema (indeks velikosti drugega največjega mesta, Novega Sada, znaša samo 0,17 glede na največje mesto). S planskimi dokumenti se v Srbiji predvideva demetropolizacija beograjske aglomeracije in vzpostavitev urbanega sistema na principu decentralizirane koncentracije.

Počasnitev rasti beograjske aglomeracije ni povezana s prostorskim obsegom beograjskega administrativnega območja. Območje Mesta Beograd je vsekakor manjše od ozemlja, ki bi ga lahko opredelili kot metropolitansko, zlasti na njegovi severni meji proti Vojvodini. V preteklih desetletjih se je proces urbanizacije na območju Mesta Beograd v negativnem smislu kazal na eni strani preko kontrolirane izgradnje in naseljevanja, na drugi strani pa je vplival tudi na sam razvoj sistema naselij. Z vidika razvoja sistema naselij npr. ni bila za druga občinska središča primestnih občin sprejeta nobena pomembnejša razvojna ali investicijska odločitev.

Poleg zmernejše rasti Beograda predvideva sedaj veljavni prostorski načrt še pet makroregionalnih središč, ki bi prispevala k bolj uravnoteženemu regionalnemu razvoju. Toda, površine in funkcijske kompetence teh središč še niso natančneje določene. Z definiranjem 34 funkcijskih območij na mezoregionalnem nivoju bi mogli izpeljati tudi racionalizacijo upravljanja in organiziranosti javnih služb, pa tudi učinkovitejšo koordinacijo lokalnih skupnosti. Središča teh funkcijskih območij so obstoječi makroregionalni in regionalni centri Srbije. Na nižji stopnji hierarhične lestvice bi morali zasnovati organizacijo omrežja naselij in središč predstavljati subregionalni centri in več nivojev občinskih središč, od katerih nekatera niti nimajo statusa mestnega naselja. Na lokalnem nivoju bi morala organizacija mreže naselij potekati prek skupnosti naselij, oziroma prek združevanja od nižjega k

višjemu nivoju. Do te koncepcije je prišlo zaradi problemov, ki se pojavljajo v podeželskih naseljih, in zaradi dejstva, da so takšne skupnosti nujen pogoj za ozemeljsko organiziranost po evropskih standardih.

Ugodni pogoji za pravilno funkcioniranje sistema centrov in uravnotežen regionalni razvoj se vzpostavljajo z ustrežno upravno razdelitvijo države. Nova teritorialna razdelitev Srbije obsega dve obstoječi avtonomni pokrajini, Mesto Beograd s posebnim statusom, 23 teritorialnih enot s statusom mesta (z možnostjo razdelitve na mestne občine) in 150 občin. Razdelitev republike na 30 okrajev iz leta 1992 ne ustreza povsem zahtevam po racionalni regionalizaciji, po kateri bi se ozemlje države organiziralo po regijah kot osnovnih upravnih, gospodarskih in funkcijskih enotah, kar bi bilo tudi v skladu z načeli in zahtevami Evropske unije. To pomeni, da Srbijo še čaka proces organiziranja državnega ozemlja na regionalnem nivoju.

(Prevod povzetka iz srbskega v slovenski jezik: Karel Natek)