The Socialist City
Spatial Structure and Urban Policy

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Editors' Preface

...Moscow is not an ordinary city like thousands of others; it is no silent immensity of cold stones piled one upon the other to form symmetrical patterns... no, indeed! It has its own soul, its own life... every stone is graven with its own inscription, carved by time and destiny, an inscription beyond the comprehension of the crowd but rich and rewarding in thought, feeling and inspiration for the scholar...

Mikhail Lermontov, A Panorama of Moscow, 1833–1834

It is appropriate to commence this book by a reference to Moscow. To those who know the city well today, Lermontov's words are remarkably fresh, vivid, and meaningful. Few cannot but be inspired by that 'majestic panorama stretching out almost beyond the range of vision'. His verse points up a complexity, a depth of history, which many can identify or sense in the present-day city. Yet in those extraordinary 150 years since Lermontov was writing, few cities could have undergone such profound changes as has Moscow. Feudalism was swept away in Russia, permitting industrial capitalism to penetrate the life of the city, only to be removed by the first successful and lasting socialist revolution that converted Moscow into the capital of the world's largest state, into one of the world's foremost industrial, scientific research, and cultural centres, into a forward point for the international diffusion of a new social order. The first socialist metropolis, Moscow became also the first large city in which socialist planners drew up a blueprint for the future growth and development of an entire city on new philosophical lines. Were Lermontov to return and to ascend, for another panorama, the 'Stalinesque' skyscraper, for example, standing beside the square that bears his name, surely he would find a city far more dominated by 'symmetrical patterns'—though he would also identify much in the vicinity of the Kremlin that had been familiar to him. Thus even this city demonstrates continuity, as well as much change.

Moscow became a model, one to which planners and scholars—anxious to learn in an expanding socialist world—could turn for inspiration on urban designs and strategies, for object lessons in solving urban problems. This book, however, looks far beyond the 'communist metropolis' and examines the processes in operation, the thinking behind, and the patterns resulting from, the planning and management of cities in socialist countries. The major focus is on their internal spatial structure—a theme so far neglected by urban scholars everywhere. Undoubtedly the editors' first-hand experience of living in Moscow, and
Chapter 18

Urbanization—Planned and Unplanned: A Case Study of Braşov, Romania

STEVEN L. SAMPSON

Economists, geographers, planners, and social scientists require varied information when studying any city—be it large or small, socialist or capitalist, industrial metropolis or agrotown; the historical factors that shaped its evolution; the social processes operating today; and predictions about future developments. Since no settlement exists in isolation, the salient features of a given city are also shaped by national-level inputs which arise from national-development needs and by relationships with smaller towns and villages in its hinterland. By examining Braşov*, regional capital of Braşov County in the Romanian Socialist Republic, according to such information, it is clear how radically the city differs from non-socialist cities of similar size (260,000 inhabitants in 1977) because it is embedded in a socialist political economy subject to central planning and to the high ideals and achievements of rapid industrial development. It is this ubiquitous planning—everly controlling alternative futures and using land, labour, and capital resources towards specified goals—which makes Braşov a distinctly socialist city. While not everything in the city has occurred as planned, planning itself is a major variable; urbanization has occurred, and will continue to occur, both because of and in spite of planners' wishes. Thus planning assumes importance not only when national plans are adopted wholesale by the city but also when such plans are transformed or even ignored by it.

The Development of Braşov

The Pre-Socialist Period

As one of the 'seven fortresses' (Siebenbürgen) of Transylvania, Braşov—from its founding in the early thirteenth century—straddled the southeastern border between the Hungarian (later Austro-Hungarian) Empire and the Ottoman-dominated Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia (known as the 'Old Kingdom'). Since it controlled two key passes (Predeal and Bran) which connected

* Pronounced 'Brah-shov'.
Transylvania with Wallachia, it rose to prominence as a trade centre, despite customs' wars and frequent sackings by marauding Mongol, Tatar, Ottoman, and Wallachian armies. By the mid-sixteenth century, Braşov derived wealth from its collection of tolls, customs duties, and 'staple rights' (stapelrecht) on goods in transit—Transylvanian cattle, silver, and copper going west to Budapest, Vienna, or Nuremberg; finished fabrics and metals en route to the Black Sea, Istanbul, and beyond. There was little manufacturing, though crafts grew rapidly; a powerful merchant class ruled the city. Evidence of wealth is provided in Braudel (1972), quoting a travelling Frenchman who, on entering Braşov in 1574, had the 'illusion of arriving at Mantua, so fair is the town, the walls of the houses shining with paint'.

Yet like much of southeastern Europe, the Braşov region was settled by diverse ethnic groups, often stratified by class or occupation. Romanians were the demographic majority, having lived there from pre-historic times. Hungarian-speaking Magyars, and later Szeklers, settled there from around 900, while after 1225 Saxons moved in as farmers and craftsmen on the strength of special privileges from the Hungarian king.

Yet in Braşov itself Romanians were a small minority, comprising—as late as 1880—only 31 per cent. of the city's 29,584 inhabitants (Podea, 1938). They had played a key role in the city's economic life as hauliers of goods through the Carpathians (Dunare, 1972), but in 1699 when Braşov was directly incorporated into the Hapsburg Empire, the Romanians were disenfranchised, being relegated to worker status or to serving as semi-skilled craftsmen. The city's bourgeoisie became dominated by Saxons, Magyars, Jews, Turks, and Armenians. Residential segregation increased, Romanians living in their own quarters of Schei, located near the city's entrance gates. This ethnic stratification was somewhat replicated in the countryside, Saxons occupying fertile land immediately around Braşov, Romanians subsisting either as their farm labourers or as hill shepherds. Nevertheless, Austrian and German investment produced vigorous industries, manufacturing metal goods for Romanian and West European markets, while crafts and commerce provisioned surrounding Saxon villages.

With unification of Transylvania and the Old Kingdom in 1919, however, the function of Braşov changed from that of a border town to that of a central place for Greater Romania. By 1930, with 60,000 inhabitants, it was the tenth-largest Romanian city (Anuarul Demografic..., 1975, p. 31). Then 79 per cent. of the country's population were rural, 80 per cent. of its labour force peasants, the comparable figures for Braşov County being 75 per cent. and 'only' 67 per cent. respectively (Magda, 1969, p. 35).

The Socialist Period

With the ascendancy of the Romanian Communist Party after 1945, Braşov began to experience marked social and economic change. Heavy industry, which during the Second World War had produced armaments, was now retooled and expanded for truck, tractor, and metals production. Landlords, owners, and businessmen—many of whom were of Saxon origin and had collaborated with Nazi occupation forces—were expropriated, their enterprises and property nationalized. Romanians replaced Magyars and Saxons in some jobs. More important, expansion of industrial plant opened a niche for Romanians from the countryside. In sharp contrast to their minority status of 1880, and even 1930, they now comprise more than four-fifths of the Braşov population. This dramatic ethnodemographic shift has resulted from the emigration of Saxons (so that the German minority has shrunk from 33 per cent. in 1930 to 3.6 per cent. today), lower birth rates among urban Magyars than among Romanians, and the in-flow of Romanians from both nearby and distant villages.

Braşov plays a key role in Romanian economic development, both in supplying the domestic market and in earning valuable hard foreign currency through exports of its vehicle and machinery manufactures and its overseas tourist traffic. Reconstruction and expansion of factories required thousands of new workers: two plants alone now employ more than 20,000 workers each. There followed the rapid construction of apartments, dormitories, and even barracks for those who came in the 1950s and 1960s: such buildings now house 60 per cent. of the city's population. Some migrants came to work in the developing tourist trade. More than a dozen hotels in or near the city serve thousands of domestic and foreign tourists the year round, who visit medieval castles and hike or ski in the surrounding Carpathians. Germans are also attracted by their common ethnic bond with the city's remaining Saxons.

As a result of such economic growth, Braşov has risen to fifth place among Romanian cities. Its population grew from 83,000 in 1948 to 260,000 in 1977. Braşov is thus prominent among the country's nine cities which occupy second rank below that of the capital and primate city, Bucharest (1.8 million inhabitants). Indeed, it is the administrative centre of Braşov County which is the most industrialized and second-most urbanized among the thirty-nine Romanian counties and which comprises eight smaller towns (ranging from 8,000 to 35,000 inhabitants) and 150 villages.

The demand for labour had to be met by the surplus of workers made available following farm collectivization, which was completed in 1963, and subsequent farm mechanization, both because factories have required many thousands more workers than the city's demographic resources could provide and because young Braşoveniians avoid unskilled or semi-skilled jobs, preferring to enter commerce, services, or higher education. Thus the expansion of heavy industries has continually faced manpower shortages, causing: high turnover; long-distance commuting; recruitment of labour from counties up to 300 km distant; difficulties in housing workers and their families; competition between factories for available labour; preferential recruitment to large plants to the disadvantage of small plants; an emphasis on the quantity of workers recruited rather than on their
school or apprenticeship qualifications; and difficulties for commuters in integrating with productive and extra-productive activities (meetings, recreation) at their places of employment (Bogdă, et al., 1970, pp. 42–43).

Labour-supply exigencies have meant that neither commuting nor migration—taken separately—could have yielded sufficient labour for Braşov at minimal social cost. In 1977, 18 per cent of the work force, some 30,000 persons, travelled daily from surrounding rural areas (Consiliul Popular, 1972, Vol. 2, p. 61), though this represented both an increase in number from 20,000 and a proportionate reduction from the 25 per cent. cited in a 1968 report (Consiliul Popular, 1968, p. 2). Of all commuters, who are dominantly male, more than one-fifth spend more than 45 minutes on journeys to work (Consiliul Popular, 1972, Vol. 1, p. 112), the vast majority travelling by rail, some by bus. Commuting by car is rare because there are few cars and petrol prices are prohibitively high by comparison with subsidized public transport. So much in-migration has occurred since 1950 that, in 1966, 71 per cent of the population had been born outside Braşov. The pace of in-migration has varied with investment decisions, the periods 1950–1954 and 1960–1964 seeing more than 5,000, the years 1965–1967 more than 4,000 net migrants settling in the city each year (Magda, 1969, p. 33). Indeed, only 15 per cent. came from within a radius of 50 km (Mănescu, 1976, p. 53), but high rates of return migration and labour turnover is evidence of the gap between the needs of the factories and the city’s ability to provide housing and services. In part this has generated a category of migrant who comes to the city under contract to construction trusts or specific factories for ‘limited’ periods. These flotanți are usually young, unmarried males from rural areas who have to live in factory-owned dormitories near their work or rent private rooms in Braşovenian apartments. Numbers of registered flotanți have fluctuated widely in recent years: 20,739 in 1966; 13,192 in 1970 (Consiliul Popular, 1972, Vol. 1, p. 112); and 17,000 in 1974 (Negoescu, 1974, p. 110); while three unofficial estimates by city planners in 1977 ranged from 25,000 to 50,000 with an additional 2,000 to 25,000 illegal (undocumented) migrants in the city. This increase in flotanți is not unreasonable, as the official population in Braşov rose by 60 per cent. between 1966 and 1977 (Scintelea, June 14, 1977, p. 3). Yet by adding the unofficial flotanți, the city had about 290,000, not 257,149 residents, as officially claimed in 1977.

The addition of so many thousands of uncoun ted residents obviously hinders the city’s ability to calculate the amount of housing, goods; and services required to support the population. Crowded buses, long queues, and limited or sold-out merchandise are symptoms (see angry letters to Drum Nou, the newspaper of the Braşov County Peasants’ Council). State- or factory-owned apartments have strictly controlled rents, but a virtual sellers’ market exists in privately owned apartments so that those who must rent rooms pay 2 to 3 times the rate for similar State-owned living space.

Migrants from almost every region of Romania have added to social heterogeneity in Braşov. Long-standing Magyars, Romanians, or Saxons Braşovenians now rub shoulders with Moldavian peasants working in factories or itinerant construction workers from Maramureș. While such immigrants speak Romanian, the native population perceives them as culturally distinct in speech patterns, clothing, and mannerisms. And they particularly irritate city planners who perceive them as leaving half-empty village houses to aggravate the housing crisis in the city. Even when building proceeds apace (up to 5,000 flats per year) and strict migration controls operate, in-migration still results in overcrowding.

For the State, commuting is more economic than migration as a form of labour recruitment: the commuting worker contributes his labour to the city while food and housing needs are supplied back in the village from garden or collective-farm plots. Negoescu (1974, p. 121) has calculated that commuters save Romania 41 billion lei ($3.4 billion) on food alone in a five-year period (based on a theoretical in-migration of 300,000 families from rural to urban housing, with each family relinquishing their food production of 20 lei ($1.80) per day of full-time work in the villages. They also save 30 billion lei ($2.5 billion) in apartment-construction costs. By comparison, the costs of subsidizing rural–urban commuting are miniscule. Moreover, there are also certain intangible benefits. Rural households provide many social necessities to the commuter which the city must provide to the isolated immigrant in his apartment or dormitory. Commuting also offers intermediate adjustment to urban life while the immigrant experiences anomie and loneliness in the city. The advantages of commuting over migration should be put into some perspective, however, since commuting time and train-ticket costs are borne by the commuter, for which he is not compensated. In addition, benefits which workers realize from their private village plots cost extra time (in reality, a second shift) in agriculture (Konrad and Szelenyi, 1976).

Meanwhile, rapid industrial and demographic growth in Braşov and efforts to apply the norms of socialist equality in residential units have not yet succeeded in eradicating the distinct neighbourhoods of pre-war Braşov. The old villas of the pre-war bourgeoisie, overlooking the centre of the city, now house many of its professional and administrative elites. Ethnic enclaves in the old commercial district—homes for Magyars, Saxons, Romanians, or Jews—have changed their architectural and social character, being integrated both spatially, through modern architectural structures, and socially, as members of different ethnic groups or occupations live in the same apartment blocks. On the fringes of the city, completely new residential districts have been constructed near, and are named after, the factories they serve. Unlike older Braşov, which contains two- and four-storey terrace houses now converted into apartments and small stores, new neighbourhoods consist of four-, six-, or even ten-storey housing blocks occupied by young families, with dormitories for unmarried workers, and communal service complexes comprising schools, stores, clinics, and a post office. Following massive construction projects since 1965, Braşov is now attempt-
ing to extend a gamut of services from the centre into the new neighbourhoods.
At the same time, the central retail and administrative district has received a new multi-storey department store, a pedestrian precinct containing shops and restaurants, and new hotels catering to the thriving tourist trade. Yet services in the city employed only 13 per cent. of the labour force in 1970 (Consiliul Popular, . . ., 1972, Vol. 2, p. 62), while an unofficial estimate in 1977 was 19 per cent., which conforms with the norm of 20 per cent. cited by Chițulescu (1977, p. 114).

Because of its successful development, both prior to and during the socialist period, several problems remain: the social costs of in-migration, dependence on commuters, the need to expand in a space constricted by mountains, and problems of being a highly developed settlement in a relatively underdeveloped economy. These problems interact with territorial planning policies developed in the early 1970s.

Urban Planning Strategies in Romania

Ideas about urbanism and urban planning pre-date the socialist era in Romania (Bold, Matei, and Sabadeanu, 1974; Sfîntescu, 1933, 1942; and Stahl, 1974). While inter-war plans existed, the lack of resources, the fragmented political structure, and the events of the Second World War prevented their implementation. Thus the evolution of urban and regional planning in Romania is strongly tied to the post-war consolidation of political and economic control by the Romanian Communist Party and has progressed through three subsequent phases.

First, after 1945, highest priority was given to rebuilding war-ravaged cities and re-starting socialist industry in those cities like Brașov which already had the initial plants. A second phase followed: as cities grew, inexpensive housing was built which reflected the socialist egalitarian order. Slum or squalor settlements (mahalla) ringed large cities, particularly Bucharest, were gradually eliminated. Like many urban areas today in the ‘Third World’, such outlying districts consisted solely of one-family hovels with strong village-type characteristics, including gardens and animals. They lacked any utilities or services and their expansion was totally anarchic. To deal with such slums, socialist planners established strict zoning regulations. Commercial, industrial, residential, and recreational zones were established, characterized by intensive land use, and apartment blocks went up. The goal of physical planning was to integrate the spatial order with economic growth: efficient transport arteries, bus, and rail lines were organized to bring workers to the factories. Housing blocks with four to ten storeys have arisen where the mahalla once stood. By restricting sprawl, controlling urban in-migration, and preventing squatter settlements, State planners were able to restructure urban geography. In Bucha-

reșt, large housing projects—some bigger than Brașov itself—were built as adjuncts to nearby factories, thus taking some of the pressure off the city centre.

The third phase of urban planning has seen the reconstruction of many cities’ central areas to conform to modern aesthetic and architectural values, though in conjunction with local traditions and styles. Finally, as the existing urban settlements were rebuilt, some new towns were also established. The latter serve chiefly as a means for exploiting the country’s mineral wealth, but they also form part of a general policy for rural industrialization. New towns such as Gheorghiu Gheorghiu Dej, (petrochemical), Dr Petru Groza (mining), and Victoria (chemicals) were built practically from scratch, while Hunedoara (steel) grew from 5,000 to 80,000 inhabitants in the last two decades. But the building of completely new towns has played only a small role in Romanian settlement strategy.

As the economy developed, the settlement network was seen as an impediment to future growth (Bold, Matei, and Sabadeanu, 1974; Enache, 1973; Ioanid, 1968; Lazarescu, 1976; Turnock, 1976). Planners have realized the importance of a national-settlement strategy which relates to an entire network of rural and urban settlements, unified in geographic, economic, and administrative zones (Constantinescu, 1974). This concept underlay Romanian territorial reorganization in 1968 when sixteen large regiuni were redivided into thirty-nine județe (counties) and cumbersome sub-districts (raiones) were eliminated. In 1972, the National Conference of the Romanian Communist Party issued detailed directives for a national settlement policy, and these were codified in 1974 into Law 58, ‘Concerning the Systematization of the Territory and of Urban and Rural Localities’. The term ‘systematization’, Romanian sistematizare, connotes any kind of physical or territorial planning, and the actions resulting from this planning. While being a form of planning, sistematizare nevertheless differs from the Romanian planificare which means only sector planning. To prevent confusion, ‘systematization’ is used here to refer to Romanian settlement strategy, while ‘planning’ refers to either sectoral or spatial planning.

The systematization law is not just a pro-forma ideology nor a set of specifications about building sizes. It represents, first, an ideal of how spatial planning should be integrated with economic planning and socialist development. Second, it is a programme for developing (or in some cases phasing-out) each settlement in the country, from hamlet to metropolis. Third, it sets up an organizational structure in which national concerns, regional imbalances, and specific local potentialities are all harmonized into a single, overall policy which is centralized under a government agency. The law pays particular attention to smoothing out inequalities between developed and backward regions, so that new factories or urban growth will be located preferentially in underdeveloped areas. In turn, this will help to reduce some out-migration from such areas into more developed cities like Brașov. The law also stipulates intensive land use.
Constructive perimeters (perimetre construible) are established for each settlement, beyond which no building is permitted, so restricting both urban sprawl and village dispersal and preserving more land for agricultural or recreational uses. Small and medium-sized towns will be upgraded, while certain dispersed and isolated hamlets with no possibilities for development will be regrouped or abolished, and their populations moved to larger villages or towns. Finally, 300 to 400 villages will be converted into small towns to establish a systematic urban–rural hierarchy. In this way, no village will be more than 15 to 20 km from an urban centre. The law thus aims at reducing the city–countryside differences which are still so marked in the Balkans today.

Systematization is national in scope, highly centralized, and bureaucratic in its decision-making, implementation, and control-monitoring functions. Yet national planners must still rely greatly on local initiative and mobilization to implement the plan. This is because investment capital is insufficient for the myriad of projects necessitated by systematization. Thus, towns or villages participate through discussion meetings, voluntary labour, and self-taxation. The success of the plan usually depends on the degree to which local interests are satisfied, but the overriding factor is still the fulfilment of national development goals. These goals may mandate the expansion (or, more rarely, the contraction) of certain enterprises and thus expand (or reduce) local population and services.

Socialist Planning in Braşov

How was systematization translated into practice in Braşov? The city had inherited advantages from the pre-socialist and immediate post-war eras: it continued to be a hub of land transport as it had progressed from a border town to a centrally located city in the national-settlement system. It had also become an important administrative centre, but historical evolution as a fortress town amid mountains had produced a high population density so that urban sprawl was not a serious problem.

Yet systematization policy has had to deal with acute problems, some of which have resulted from historical advantages and prior planning successes. One such problem is that Braşov, with a high level of development in a country with great regional disparities, must now subsidize the growth of other towns by contributing to investment channelled into them. This contrasts with previous policies which had emphasized expansion in existing urban centres. The benefits of diffusing industrialization and urbanization to all Romanian provinces cannot be seriously disputed, but it is necessary to recognize the consequences of such policy for established cities like Braşov.

A second example of the ‘disadvantage of success’ is the city’s attraction of long-distance in-migrants which has created psychological adjustment problems, heterogeneity, and social frictions in some new neighbourhoods (Bogdan et al., 1970). Planners must reconcile the increasing need for labour with the limited housing and services. The control of in-migration is a problem of prime importance.

A third problem is that confinement of the city by mountains demands high-density housing to maximize the use of the limited land available. This must be achieved while improving the high cultural standards, maintaining the character of the Transylvanian ‘Burg’ city, and avoiding social tensions or anomic which often accompany such projects.

These, then, were the specific factors in Braşov with which a generalized national-systematization policy has to contend. What is interesting for our social scientists is not whether systematization resolved these problems, i.e. whether it can be judged to be a success or a failure; this will not be known for some time. Rather, it is necessary to examine the degree to which this general policy was made flexible enough to incorporate local conditions in its implementation. Inflexibility has previously resulted elsewhere in empty platitude towards doctrine and in row upon row of grey five- or ten-storey apartment blocks in muddy, isolated fields. This has not been the case in Braşov. The city’s planners have tried to apply the systematization law to the specifics of Braşov. As one said: ‘Instead of an “iron law” of systematization, we have developed a system where flexibility for action is maximized, while mistakes in urban planning are minimized.’

The primary concern in applying systematization to Braşov is the national goal of increasing productivity in the major industries. Urban population is determined mainly by the demands of the economy, not by housing availability. The latter, and services, are provided for the growth of the industrial labour force. By 1985, this will have risen by at least 32,000 persons, 80 per cent. in industry and 20 per cent. in services, so that population increase will reach at least 65,000 (Consiliul Popular, . . ., 1972, Vol. 2, p. 61), bringing total projected population to about 330,000 persons. Such an increase will necessitate the building of 12,000 to 15,000 apartments (Negoescu, 1974, p. 120) with corresponding construction of food outlets, health facilities, schools, stores, and transport routes. Some 7,400 apartments and 4,800 dormitory places for single workers were to be ready for occupancy by the end of 1977 (Drum Nou, September 2, 1977, p. 4).

The current plan requires restructuring of the city’s land-use patterns. A new civic centre is to be constructed in an area outside the old core, closer to the factories and neighbourhoods forming part of the new, socialist Braşov. Approved personally by Romania’s president Nicolae Ceauşescu, this centre will contain a political-administrative complex of buildings and offices, a palace of culture, a large department store, new apartment blocks, and, in keeping with Braşov’s commercial tradition, a modern open market-place (Drum Nou, September 2, 1977, p. 6). Construction of the new civic centre recognizes the geographic shift
of the 'centre of gravity' in post-war Braşov, which now stretches far from the old core.

Other plans call for the extension of urban services to residential neighbourhoods, new sewage and waste disposal lines, and more retail outlets so that residents will not need to take the bus to the centre for the slightest necessity. All ground floors of apartment buildings will eventually contain commercial establishments. Yet the city's 500 year-old commercial history has encouraged the planners to limit dispersion of all services to outlying areas. Braşov, they say, has a tradition of markets and trade, and the daily interaction of people in the market-place should be encouraged. Obviously, some conflicts arise between the needs for dispersion, the economy of reducing unnecessary transport, and the maintenance of the old 'Burg' style central marketing area—conflicts which are recognized rather than being avoided altogether.

While more housing will be constructed, greater diversity in style will be introduced. Enache (1973) and Lazarescu (1976) have objected to the building of monotonous ten-storey apartment complexes lying in isolated lots, separated from main arteries. Instead, they propose a variety of dwelling types—four to ten-storey apartments, dormitories, and some duplexes—to be dispersed into already existing residential quarters. Variety in dwellings will cater better for the needs of a heterogenous population ranging from stabilized families to unmarried, temporary migrants. By distributing new housing equally around the city the infrastructure costs will be reduced and the strain on services will be lowered.

There are no plans for building single-family homes in Braşov. Planners consider them to be unaffordable luxuries right now, though some identify such homes with 'retrograde bourgeois-type mentality' which puts personal interest above collective needs. For other planners, it should not vanish, but be maintained as a viable housing strategy for particular types of household. For example, the growing family with young children could best use a house with a garden, while apartments better suit childless couples, unmarried persons, and pensioners. Thus, the single-family home is not incompatible with the socialist city so long as it is integrated into a controlled master residential plan.

The systematization law mandates intensive land use and vertical construction in all parts of the city. An urban house (with courtyard) may not exceed 100 m² in area (250 m² in rural areas). All future buildings must be at least two to five floors in height, with mandatory four-storey construction in the administrative-commercial centre. In some older parts of Braşov, one- and two-family houses which appear to be irrationally spaced will be demolished and replaced by high-rise flats. Since anyone whose house is demolished—including those renting rooms in that house—receives a new, modern apartment, demolition can be advantageous for those living in older quarters which lack adequate space or modern plumbing and heating. However, there are also tensions between some long-standing homeowners and the planners; these are usually resolved in favour of the collective over the personal interest. In one case, however, a homeowner who absolutely refused to sell out has found herself surrounded on three sides by giant apartment blocks.

Over the years, the State has enacted several national policies with the object of reducing the flow of urban in-migrants to ease the housing problem. One such policy is the administrative 'closing' of certain cities through strict migration laws. In March 1976, the Council of State passed Decree number 68, 'Concerning the Changing of Domiciles from Other Localities into Cities Declared—According to Law—Large Cities'. These 'large cities' include Bucharest and thirteen other cities (of which Braşov ranks fifth) with populations over 180,000. Legal entry for residence into one of these cities may be achieved in the interests either of work or of family.

For work-related migration, permission to live in a city will be granted only if the city cannot cover this post with a currently residing person or with someone who lives within commuting distance (30 km). Reduced migration means less strain on city services and housing, and also minimizes the alienation and social pathologies caused by abrupt rural–urban transition and which manifest themselves through worker absenteeism and job turnover. Indeed, one study directly links increased rates of delinquency in the city with the large numbers of recent immigrants (Tunaru and Rujan, 1976). In more serious cases they result in petty crime, vandalism, rowdiness, alcoholism, and marital instability: Braşov County has the highest Romanian divorce rate (Anuarul Demografic ..., 1975, p. 401). Such problems are especially common among young people living in workers' dormitories, and they are aggravated by overcrowding and inadequate leisure-time facilities. The social discontent of some rural youth, partly caused by their unfamiliarity with urban industrial life, is the justifiable concern of apartment-house committees. These difficulties, discussed by the local press, are clearly brought out in sociological studies of Braşov's worker neighbourhoods (Bogdan et al., 1970). Yet social problems resulting from urban migration are still deviations from a norm, rather than regularities. Due to prior experience or to a network of kinsmen and friends, the vast majority of migrants from the countryside quickly adapt to their new life-styles and, according to Bogdan et al. (1970), do not wish to return home.

The second motive for entering the city is the family. Newly married couples are permitted to live together in the city if either one of the newlyweds is a legal resident; dependent children attending vocational or high schools in the city may move in with relatives. Pensioners may in-migrate if they are dependent on their children or grandchildren for support. In all cases, housing accommodations must be suitably arranged to prevent overcrowding. The process of obtaining permanent resident status in Braşov begins with a recommendation from the work place and is then passed on to the Braşov City People's Council. Ultimate approval rests with the Council of State in Bucharest. Thus, immigration into Braşov and into other cities is literally a national concern.
Though Brașov will expand to over 300,000 persons, commuting will still continue, though at a rate of 11 per cent. by 1985, or about half of the present rate (official estimates vary from 18 to 20 per cent.). Transport links will be upgraded so that no worker is more than a 30-minute ride from his village to his work place. This represents a massive input, since in 1972 only 7.8 per cent. of Brașov’s commuters came from within a 30-minute radius of the city (Consiliul Popular . . . , 1972, Vol. 1, p. 112).

With upgrading of residential districts, planners have envisaged the integration of work place, services, and residence. Though spatial constriction severely limit industrial siting, the actual zoning of industrial plants is being carried out to minimize the undesirable side-effects of pollution and traffic congestion. Indeed, in reducing population movements within the city, planners in Brașov can better optimize transport resources to serve commuters entering the city. Any rationalization of urban spatial structure which reduces unnecessary movement would result not only in workers saving time (thus increasing productivity) but also in reducing State expenditures on transport. By improving living conditions in residential neighbourhoods and by providing services which were previously available only in the centre, job turnover and worker absenteeism should also be reduced. Brașov city will receive little new industrial plant in the next few years, since this has been earmarked for less-developed counties in Romania. Instead, the city faces the more difficult task of doubling worker productivity. City planners have been wise in realizing that this effort is not just a matter for the factories themselves, but involves the upgrading of the entire physical and social environment.

Future Problems for Planners

While planners in Brașov have confronted their city’s problems with some success, nevertheless key problems still remain. One of these is that the needs of industrial growth in the developing socialist state of Romania are creating stress points in the urban system; the influx of labour has produced crowded apartment complexes, soaring private rents, and a dearth of retail facilities.

Second is increasing social differentiation, itself a by-product of in-migration fostered by earlier planning decisions. Informally, one hears misgivings about the numbers and the behaviour of the in-migrants, which are expressed as jokes about country bumpkins not familiar with city ways. Yet planners in Romania can control demographic change or ameliorate its effects. While it may be convenient to resort to the official ideology of socialist equality and consensus between all residents in the city, the real attitudes of the residents must be dealt with and not capriciously labelled ‘bourgeois mentality’ or ‘retrograde concepts from the past’. In fact, residents’ attitudes are more the result of changes effected in the socialist era and must be approached not just by ideological measures but with practical social, political, and economic policies, too.

Brașov: Planned and Unplanned Urbanization

The gravity of the demographic situation is illustrated by the 1977 census results, which show that the city’s population increased by 60 per cent. in just 11 years! That this population increase was wholly unexpected is shown by Bucur (1974, p. 181) who projected that the population would reach the current figure of 260,000 only by 1990! Clearly, a sensible demographic plan for Brașov is needed that will seek to limit both the amount of in-migration and the types of in-migrant. However, since in-migration is tied to industrial needs for labour, and industrial planning is carried out by central ministries, decisions about in-migration are basically out of local hands. In some cases, special problems of the city may spur the national planners to revise their decisions. For example, Brașov officials were successful in obtaining more retail outlets by showing evidence of high rates of official and unofficial in-migration. But the structure of Romanian planning does not institutionalize interregional conflict over scarce State resources; nor does it set up mechanisms whereby conflicts between local needs and national priorities may be adjudicated. In the end, the problem is not one of local input into national planning decisions but of local power to control (Brașov’s) development. While the State has seen fit to run industry and to solve the migration problem from a central office in Bucharest, an alternative strategy might be for Brașov to control both the industrial needs and the population influx into the city. Instead of decision-making for migration being brought up to the national level, industries could be brought down to the local level.

As the city has grown, planners have had to reckon with the problem of social segregation. Some of the newest residential complexes in Brașov house only functionaries and professionals who can often afford to purchase their flats. In contrast, older neighbourhoods near large factories house workers’ families and young in-migrants, who only rent their quarters. Some analysts have tended to conclude that an incipient class structure is re-emerging in the city, while more rational explanations point to the fact that workers want to live near their factories in the periphery while functionaries and professionals desire to live near their places of work, which are in the centre of town. The spatial correlates of social stratification have consequences for planners, who work under the doctrine of increasing and sustaining the norms of socialist equality. That Brașov’s planners recognize that these differences exist is an important first step in resolving them.

A third problem for the future is the political environment. As a highly developed industrial centre, Brașov, in effect, subsidizes development in other areas of Romania. In a country where regional patriotism and ethnic traditions run deep, this affects local planning decisions. Like planners everywhere, those in Brașov will not blindly sacrifice all local interests to national goals without changing their attitudes towards the national polity. One planner thinks that Brașov has enough industry already and that further development will only hinder the goals of increasing the material, social, and spiritual welfare of the residents.
A fourth problem concerns the specific difficulties of urban development in a city which has a pre-existing urban structure. In other areas of Romania, socialist planners were able to construct new towns or new neighbourhoods on totally empty space; thus, they were working from only a single spatial paradigm. Brașov’s planners had to superimpose socialist planning policies and construction upon a pre-existing urban structure. Their job was not to transpose the new over the old forms, but to combine and reintegrate them into a higher level of socialist urban form. Given spatial, economic, and political constraints, this has proved to be a difficult task. The current plans, which call for maintenance of the old market centre together with construction of a modern administrative-political-cultural centre in the newer part of the city, are attempts to resolve this contradiction.

A fifth problem is how planning policies affect the relationship of Brașov with its hinterland. Commuting results in ‘peasant workers’ who have the advantages of dual incomes but also dual roles and responsibilities. The peasants are dependent on the city’s transport to get them to factories in a reasonable amount of time so that they can earn cash incomes. In return, the factories depend on the peasant’s labour and the city requires that the surplus of the private plot or collective farm will provide food for the urban-dwellers. Development decisions for nearby settlements have long-term implications for the future of Brașov, specifically, the expansion of ten villages into towns. With their control over land, labour, services, and capital investments, socialist economies are theoretically able to establish stable settlement hierarchies and prevent the unrestricted fluctuations of labour or capital so prevalent in the United States, as, for example, the apparent decline of northeastern United States cities in favour of those in the Sun Belt. Under socialist planning no change in the settlement hierarchy could occur except under State direction. One example comes from a village near Brașov which is scheduled to become a town in the next five years. A request by village officials to establish a small meat-packing plant which would serve consumers in the future town was refused by higher authorities on the grounds that it would draw away raw materials from the slaughter-house in Brașov. This refusal occurred even though animals come from this village in the first place and meat must then be transported back to the village for sale. This hints that it is a misconception to suppose that socialist planning sweeps away competition between settlements. While the stabilizing of a settlement hierarchy of cities, towns, and villages has obvious beneficial effects, there is still the danger that such stabilization might lead to stagnation.

Since decision-making for urban and rural development is so centralized, overtly economic decisions about industrial location are in fact political decisions. Places vie for scarce resources, to raise their way up a settlement hierarchy in which large cities are the preferred category. Rather than capitalist profit maximization, planning decisions under socialism can be governed by cost utilization (Stván, 1973), political symbolism (Sawers, 1977), or by regional favouritism and behavioural factors (Hamilton, 1970). The key questions about urban development then become: what criteria are required to make a ‘rational’ decision? Given agreement on the criteria, one can then ask: what is the best decision-making process for selecting among competing alternatives? These are the major problems facing socialist planners today and in the future.

Such practical dilemmas lead us to one final problem: that of mobilization. The daytime population of commuters, the political factors cited above, and the social heterogeneity of Brașov all influence the ability and desire of the citizens to participate in, and accept, planning decisions which directly affect their lives.

**Brașov: a Socialist City**

Can the experience of a single Romanian town of 260,000 in its unplanned and planned development give us any theoretical insights into the general character of ‘the socialist city’? While the historical and idiosyncratic elements of Brașov’s past, present, and future should not be underplayed, it is necessary to consider seriously how Brașov fits a general model for a socialist city (for contrasts with Soviet, Polish, Chinese, and Yugoslav cities, the reader is referred to Fisher, 1962; Frolic, 1963; and Sawers, 1977).

First, the Brașov experience shows how the socialist political economy draws the city into complete integration with the national polity; the socialist city cannot—and must not—stand alone, unlike Western cities. Central control over political, economic, social—even cultural—life makes socialist cities very highly dependent on national-level decisions and policies.

Second, the priority that Romania has given to development in Brașov expresses again socialist emphasis on heavy industry in national economic development. Nevertheless, planners built upon existing historical advantages to further industrialize Brașov, until the State had enough resources to strike out on new urban frontiers to construct new towns and expand old ones.

Third, Brașov, as a socialist city, must foster rural development too. Previous relations where cities generally exploited peasants have given way to peasants availing themselves of high-paying urban employment and urban services, while their villages maintain them with food supply and housing. Indeed, it may be the case that those living the best life in Romania are not the urban-dwellers, who suffer from inadequate living space and provisions, but the rural-dwellers in proximity to large cities, where peasants can obtain urban industrial employment (and cash incomes) while retaining a cheap food supply, country air, and the congenial village setting of kinsmen, friends, and neighbours.

But peasants bring home urban ideas as well. The urban–rural interchange is further enhanced as city-dwellers spend their free time in the villages, often visiting relatives or attending weddings, baptisms, and other life-cycle festivals. Thus, the town–country relationship is not just economic, but sociocultural too. As peasants have become the new workers, class differentiation between worker
and peasant, between city and country, tends to fade as a result of planning actions.

Fourth, the Braşov case also demonstrates the problems of a controlled urban hierarchy. The possibility of stagnation in that hierarchy may arise when ‘pull’ factors and the internal development of urban places are not given full latitude. While competition between places (for workers, residents, resources) does not formally exist, the administrative aspects of planning and migration controls clearly show that such competition is still present in Romania. Though socialist planning has not yet abolished inequality between regions or between places, a serious attempt is being made to make urban life-styles available to as many people as possible (even if it entails rural–urban commuting).

Finally, the city itself provides a symbolic model for socialist planning in general. It is a visible, effective expression of the political viability and effectiveness of the social order. The plans themselves, the prominent apartment complexes, the large industrial plants, the bustling retail district, the well-kept parks, and the general orderliness of Braşov amid the constant construction activity all give it an ideological value. That value is perceived not only by the foreign visitor but by the city-dwellers and peasant commutes as well. Indeed, one can argue that socialist urbanization is not so much the physical presence of clean streets, public transport, new apartment houses, or residential harmony through the controlled use of space, but, instead, a state of mind, a ‘spirit of place’, and a perspective on the future from which the world can learn.

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References to towns and cities, regardless of their size, are given in small capitals (e.g. ALMA-ATA) while districts, streets or buildings which are cited as significant elements in the internal spatial structure of cities are given in italics (e.g. Abator). Special Soviet or East European terms appear in italicized small capitals (e.g. AGROGOROD). Only those authors whose work is actually quoted or debated in the text are referred to in this index (e.g. Aitov, N.A.); references to other authors whose publications are simply mentioned, or were consulted as background material, are listed at the end of each chapter.

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