



Lucrările Seminarului Geografic Dimitrie Cantemir
Vol. 39, October 2015, pp. 115-120
<http://dx.doi.org/10.15551/lsgdc.v39i0.11>



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To cite this article: Mihail, C. (2015). The functional organization - administrative and development tool of urban living areas. Case study: Iasi city. *Lucrările Seminarului Geografic Dimitrie Cantemir*, Vol. 39, pp. 115-120. DOI: 10.15551/lsgdc.v39i0.11

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15551/lsgdc.v39i0.11>



ISSN: 1222-989X www.seminarcantemir.uaic.ro

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THE FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION - ADMINISTRATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT TOOL OF URBAN LIVING AREAS. CASE STUDY: IASI CITY

Ciprian Mihai¹

Abstract. This study aimed to emphasize the characteristics of the urban space in Iasi, referring to the triad of local authorities - companies - residents in order to identify how occurs the management and the exploitation of the urban living space. Representing a real urban laboratory, Iasi City feels each intervention on its living spaces, that reconfigures the site, the functions, the symbolic structures and the neighborhood relationships. Through the inventory of the building/demolition permits, issued by the local authorities from Iasi in the period 2007 - 2014, we highlighted both the evolution of the number of interventions on the urban space, their nature and the responsible actors. The analysis result showed clearly the primacy of the residents over the technocratic interventions, leading to the individualization of an informal planning made by the inhabitants in parallel with the formal planning carried out by the authorities.

Keywords: functional organization, urban planning, urban living area, urban actors

1. Introduction

On the complex background of the contemporaneity, studying the functional organization as a tool of management and exploitation of living in urban areas requires the identification of the structural mechanisms of the society that caused the morphological and the functional development of the urban space and the elements that have led this development decision one way or another.

The right of each individual to produce its own space (Harvey, D., 2000) and the right to the city (Lefebvre, H., 1968) of the residents, legitimated by refusing to be removed from the urban reality by a discriminatory segregated organization (Mihali, C., 2009), led to a society involvement in the organization of the urban life which is reflected in the city through an intense social life, civic responsibilities and a constructive spontaneity in the urban landscape (Tudora, I., 2009). Involving the inhabitants in the urban organization of Iasi represents a switch from the government of the city to governance (Bălăceanu, C., 2011), from the public policies based on coercion to the public policies based on consent, in terms of a too complex society to only answer to the central command, without considering the citizenship a real stake (Oblet, T., 2008).

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2. Material and methods

In order to highlight the structural and the functional features of urban area of Iasi, there were used both the traditional research methods (observation, analysis, synthesis) and modern methods based on the use of electronic software.

The preservation of the centrality of the investigated topic, led to an examination of the management and exploitation of the living spaces through which the graphic and cartographic materials transposed the quantitative evolution of the development interventions and the spatial distribution of the urban actors.

The edification of the nature of the interventions, the space-time framing and the responsible actors were conducted by the inventory of building/demolition permits issued by the local authorities. Thus, in Iasi were inventoried 11,246 building permits issued in the period 2007-2014 by the Municipality of Iași.

The inventory sheet included the following elements:

- Status - divided into three categories: individuals, companies, local authorities (various departments of the City Hall, City Council, County Council);

- Purpose - construction, renovation, equipment and technical - urban (water and sanitation, electricity, artery circulation etc.)

- Location - we followed the way from the particular to general, from street to neighborhood. The exact address at which the intervention took place facilitated the framing within the district area as a street can be included over several areas;

- Year and month - the period for which the database is conducted from January 2007 - May 2014.

3. Results and discussions

The daily operations of the administration and citizens related to space bring to the fore the urban functional spacing as a resource for new civic and political attitudes on the organization of space. This resource is derived from the near ratio between the functionality and the inhabitant and from the objectivity of the administration in the urban planning and land management.

The subjectivity and the objectivity can work together, if the city is regarded as a puzzle from the perspective of population. In this way, the functionalities summarize the community values (Groza, O., 2005) found in the actions of practice, conception and perception of space. These actions are derived from the obligations which it has the population to cover a number of basic needs: residential, work, shopping, formative, recreational and social life.

The involvement of the residents in the urban organization of Iasi lead to the production of space (Lefebvre, H., 1991) as a social product, made productive through the social practices and a space where people are changing and where they are also changed by the place. Reported to the created social group, this space becomes a landscape in relation to which people behave differently reflecting their subjectivity.

Therefore, the city becomes a subjective, unique, unrepeatable work, a result of the relationship between the society and space, over the first layer of technocratic or political construction overlapping always a second layer of the vernacular building, the result of actions of various groups, individual tactics, which are not reproducible (Tudora, I., 2009). In this context, the physical space management must take into account the logic of everyday life and to generate urban policies of the citizens (Purcell, M., 2002).

Along with the ability of residents to choose the activities they carry out and adapt more easily to different social conditions, the urban areas can not be managed by a simple tool of

spatialization areas, but a tool of management and exploitation of living space. When determining the rules and regulations underlying the urban space, it should not start from the area and their functions, but from how we desire to look the space like, whether it is a block or a neighborhood, or even the entire urban community.

As a tool of management and exploitation of the living space, the functional areas must relate to the individual, by entering into the secrets of its behavior in relation to urban areas and to rely on the development of a sustainable relationship between the human capital and the quality of life of the urban environment. This relationship should be based on the principle of proximity, which has the function to enable social interactions (Moser, G., 2009) and on the principle of economy (Law no. 94/1992) by which these interactions take place with minimal costs.

The establishment of such neighborhoods of urban living requires the removal of the forms of urban segregation (social, spatial) and avoiding the forms of discrimination concerning the provision of community services in relation to certain areas (Philip S., 2009), bringing to the fore the ancient quality of the city as a favorable space for exchanges and interaction between people (Oblet, T., 2008).

Reporting the functional zoning to these social and economic norms, involves the generation of a new strategy oriented to the valuation of the area within the spatial entities which is limited by the public space (interstitial entities - streets, alleys, sidewalks, unsuitable green areas etc.) whose quantitative and qualitative characteristics influence the quality of life. The public space, became public place (Frumkin, H, et al., 2014) is experienced and used by everyday practices that go beyond political administrative and economic barriers, creating unwritten traditions that govern the living spaces. The functional organization needs to build on these traditions and aim to create a balance between the built environment and the practiced space.

Thus, it outlines the need to reconsider the way of collaboration between the technical committees (planner, designers, architects), local authorities and inhabitants. The geographical functionality of an area should not be circumscribed to the current semiotic regimes, but to imagine an anticipatory geography to capitalize on the participative momentum that arises within the reference areas.

The valorisation of the living spaces must take into account the specific of the static city promoted by the communist architecture so that through adapted functionalities to generate new architectural dynamics corresponding to the current needs of the society. Even if the skeleton of the gray city, it's still present, the exploitation of the living space can be achieved by a proper management of urban regeneration process and through the insertion of the new functions suited to the lifestyle of the residents.

There are two major forces which are operating on the living space: a force generated by the intervention of the public policies and private investors and a participatory intervention force, from the citizens, which generates an informal planning policy.

The official intervention acts evenly on an horizontal plane from top to bottom, and it is often very little flexible. The participatory intervention consists of a multitude of individual decisions whose result is reflected on the urban landscape. If the formal intervention by its mechanisms, manages to anticipate and to counteract the specific projects of the residents, it becomes an instrument of the community coagulation. Otherwise, it is just a reaction to the actions of the inhabitants arising naturally and directly of the real problems that they are experiencing.

Based on these considerations, we will use a heuristic interpretation of the urban space in Iasi, reporting us to the triad local authorities - companies - residents in order to identify

how occurs the management and the exploitation of living spaces and the actors that do and undo continuously the city. The territory of Iasi City represents a real urban laboratory in which each intervention reconfigures the place, the functions, the symbolic structures and the neighborhood relations, writing and rewriting of this a narration of the present.

The urban landscape as a result of the interventions on the living spaces is the result of an official project through everyday use which enter inherently into the field of a popular culture. The analysis of the chart below representing the evolution of the number of permits for construction/demolition issued by the Municipality of Iași between 2007 - 2014, reveals an obvious primacy of the individual interventions before the technocratic ones, which makes that the result of overlapping of the two types of projects to determine the images of the hegemony of the inhabitants.

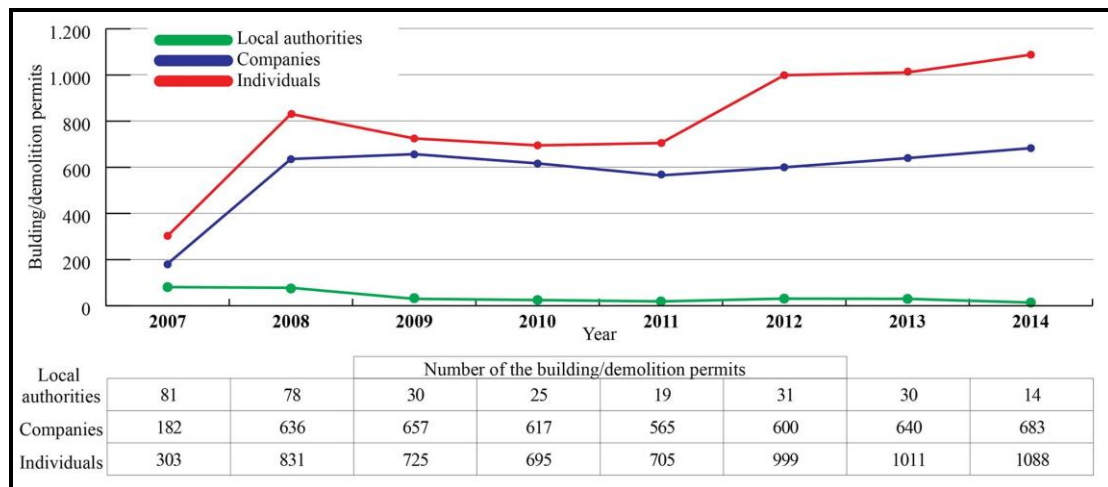


Figure 1: Evolution of the number of building/demolition permits issued by the Municipality of Iași, the categories of beneficiaries in the period 2007-2014

Thus, the urban space in Iasi becomes a vernacular space, a product of everyday practices and of the specific actions of the inhabitants and in this manner, the functional organization represents only a result of the community transformism.

The territorial distribution of the building/demolition permits in Iasi, reveals the areas with a noticeable dynamic, driven by a widening of political and economic possibilities of intervention (Figure 2). The diffuse areas, such as Bucium, Galata and Moara de Vânt neighborhoods are considered as urban emergence modules capable of generating public policy reaction. The Civic Center, also features a consistent urban dynamics, manifesting an uniform intensity over the entire period.

The reality as a script where the Iasi City must be read in the light of the functional organization, highlights the limited and the restrictive vision of the residents and local government on the living spaces. In this way, the spontaneous management and exploitation of living spaces by the two actors leads to an organic, ephemeral and personal evolution of the functional areas. Thus, through the quantitative dimension of the interventions on the living space, there appears a transformation project of the objectivity of the technocrat project in the subjectivity of the individual one.

Accordingly, the functional organization is reducible to the qualitative aspects of the urban landscape, being possible to identify overall spatial continuity and discontinuity generated by the two types of planning: formal and informal.

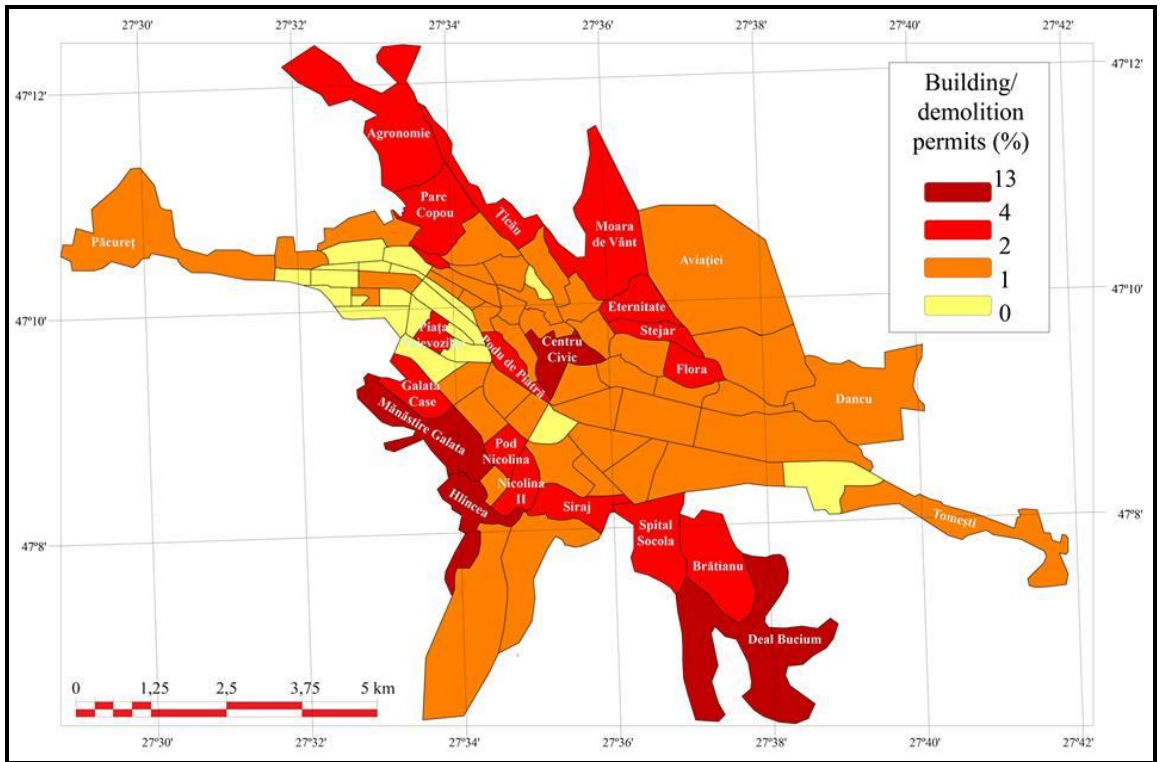


Figure 2: The territorial distribution of the building/ demolition permits issued by the Municipality of Iasi, between 2007-2014

Conclusions

The analysis carried out showed that the urban area is the result of the increasing of the civic responsibility of the inhabitants of Iasi City who are working alongside of the local authorities' official project.

The interactions between the administration and the individuals takes two forms: one destructive, when the functional organization ignores the everyday practices of the inhabitants and constructive when the creation/ modification of the functional entities articulates a social environment that uses in an optimal way the spatial structures of the city.

The interventions of the residents on living premises registered an upward dynamic in the period 2007-2014, influenced by the specific political, economic and social fluctuations. The companies and the local authorities have a steady, lower trend than the citizens, leading to a spontaneous management and development of the living spaces.

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