Spatial and social dimension in urban community: a case study on the community in the center of the Bucharest City
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SPATIAL AND SOCIAL DIMENSION IN URBAN COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY ON THE COMMUNITY IN THE CENTER OF THE BUCHAREST CITY

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La dimensión social y espacial de la comunidad urbana: estudio de caso la comunidad desde centro de Bucarest. En este estudio se propone para abordar la dimensión social y espacio comunitario urbano en el centro de Bucarest, los cambios dinámicos y tendencias de importancia del espacio y la comprensión clara de la conducta socio-espacial, la identidad y la percepción influye en su sitio a nivel cognitivo y en el espacio. Después de que evaluamos el sitio e identificar el centro de ciudad hicimos una incursión en la morfología de la comunidad. También, mediante la división del espacio urbano, la dimensión de comportamiento o ámbito de vida y por los problemas específicos de centro logramos entender algunas de las características de la estructura social de los barrios.

Palabras clave: comunidad urbana, espacio social urbano, el centro, sitio, identidad urbana.

Dimensiunea social **şi spaţială a comunităţii urbane: studiu de caz comunitatea din centrul Municipiului Bucureşti**. În acest studiu ne propune să abordăm dimensiunea socială şi spaţială a comunităţii urbane din centrul municipiului Bucureşti, dinamica, modificările şi tendinţele actuale ale semnificaţiei spaţiului şi evident înţelegerea comportamentelor socio-spaţiale, identitatea şi percepţia influenţelor cognitive la nivel de loc şi spaţiu. După ce am evaluat locul şi identificat central oraşului am făcut o incursiune în morfologia comunităţii. De asemenea, prin fracţionarea spaţiului urban, dimensiunea comportamentală sau spaţiul trăit şi prin problemele specifice centrului am reuşit să înţelegem câteva caracteristici ale structurii sociale a vecinătăţilor.

Cuvinte cheie: comunitate urbană, spaţiu social urban, centru, loc, identitate urbană.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the philosophy of difference, after the famous demonstration of L. Blaga, Romanian space conception was characterised by hill-valley wavy, transposed in the place pertain [1]. It gets rather a perceived space yet closely related to physical and geographical spatial configuration of the Romanian territory. Obviously there is the possibility of reducing the matrix space - perception only at the level of space due to the fact that, for example, in French territory is rich in variations than Romanian territorial land, however it cannot produce the same perceived structure over time; therefore territorial variation may be a common feature of the European common matrix [2].

As we know the social space is created by humans and **"as people live and work in** urban spaces, they gradually impose themselves on their environment modifying and **adjusting it, to suit their needs and express their values"** [3]. therefore **the space " cannot be** regarded simply as a neutral medium in which social, economic and political processes are **expressed"** [3], and distance, among others **"emerges as a significant determinant of the** quality of life in different parts of the city because of variations in physical accessibility to **opportunities and amenities"** [3].

"Cities have often been described as a mosaic of social worlds, because they are composed of a number of areas of different character, making the urban experience endless**ly fascinating"** [4], and in the same vein "some may argue that the individuality of places is so unique that only subjective descriptions of area, based on intuitive insights, into their distinctiveness can capture their essential character - an approach that has gained ne**w impetus with postmodern ideas"** [3].

All of a sudden city Bucharest became a combat theater of the spatial and social transformations, thus, from a cosmopolitan city, **an "***eine Vergnugungsstadt*" [5], (city of fun) turned into a hidden city in his own image behind amorphous flanks.

The urban landscape is marked on this occasion one of the most common methods of construction of cities, namely flank, in purport of urban obstruction. Major axes of the city will be rebuilt one after the other blocks that hide behind their old neighborhoods and guilds neighborhoods, so that the entire historic city central will be hidden [6].

During the 1960s-1970s Bucharest is marked by a series of additions to the building in the downtown area of the city, unique blocks occupying empty spaces following discrete demolition, for instance: ***Mihail Kogălniceanu,*** *Roman* and ***Națiunile Unite*** (*United Nations) squares*, the ***Nicolae Bălcescu*** *Boulevard*, or large ensembles such as the Sala Palatului (*Palace Hall)* or thoroughfare such as *Griviței Route* [6].

Urban reconstruction has found state **in the 1974 law** "systematic planning and urban and rural places" with its central idea of systematization [7].

What we see today in central areas combines that dual elements, compact and deconstructed, with opening and closing relative perspective by building with a greater height than in other areas. Space with elements such joints can be found in territorial clippings regional urban plans for protected areas taking into account the lengths of streets such as *Moşilor, Magheru, Dacia, Rosetti, Traian, Victoria Avenue*. *Victoria Plaza* area is switched to other types of spatial structure, to the center with a denser structure of the territory, while to the outside perimeter of a structure more diluted.

This duality is emphasized aggressive dense urban character with building blocks to the south during '80s (ten\twelve storied blocks) and now start flanking Buzeşti street. It is a relatively homogeneous area except the part of the West less deconstructed.

New civic center of Bucharest has to undergo depersonalization with demolition that followed the 1980. Thus, stretches, demolition and tissue perforations as *Nicolae Iorga* and *Taras Şevcenco* streets demolition for the extension of *Dacia Boulevard*.

Nevertheless, as says T. Octavian, *Victoria Avenue* signify "a unique fact of self-**understood urban personality**" [8].

Historical urban cores constitute counterstructures to the ephemerality of consumer values [9]. Pecuniary nature of things pushing works to different situations as for community – e.g. "pursuing any development or neighborhood plan today involves working with a myriad of actors beyond professionals collaborators during planning and design phases". These include direct abutters, surrounding neighborhoods, elected officials, public agencies, opponents (often), investors, financial institutions, and regulators, all billed as "**stakeholders**" [10].

In social space, for more fulfilling environment, the sense of place is fundamental **thus "creating a strong relationship between the street and the** buildings an spaces that **frame it"** [11].

2. IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION OF THE PLACE

Network formation is a continuous urban socio - historical complex and dynamic highlighting distinct phase cities. In terms of urban structure in the southern cities, due to specific conditions, Bucharest has developed poly-nuclear as a result of merging time of several settlements united owing to position and added some functions [12].

The center of Bucharest although it would seem curious is not well defined. Centers generally depend on location (in sense of position), influence, urban structure, historical evolution, dynamic residential, public policy, and not least the perception of residents.

Space perceived and lived space, as said A. Fremont, so we can understand substitute for practical dimensions: perception and representation of place, social space, social relations and inter-group designed and understood the psychological value of such groups. In the past, *the city center* form to slowly but with the development of the industrial city centre presence in the urban texture melts by itself increase the city tend to occupy urban space in an uncontrolled expansion but not accidental [13].

Establishment of specific space elements remained typical for most Romanian cities; a special situation is that the city result of merging with the other communities (distinctive character). Distinguish thus state for Bucharest the presence of historic centers outside the historic core itself (here there later crystallization moments), understanding that historic space must not be understood only in the compact configuration in medieval – style [13] (Image 1).

Image 1. Restoring the old center of Bucharest (Onea D. 2010)
(1. Lipscani Street – 2. Smârdan Street – 3. Gabroveni Street)

Delimitate neighborhoods/districts or areas, taking into account the juxtaposition parameters, features and content area. These areas, different economic and social, signify the general phases of urbanization [14].

Areas delimit by us, framing them along a street system, in the sense to consider them as part of the center of Bucharest and so that to form a more homogeneous territorial unit, considering the social and spatial factors, we have classified as follows (Image 2):

1. *Independenţei* (Independence) *Embankment - Ştirbei Vodă Street - Schitu Măgureanu Street* (*e.g. Cuibul cu Barză* <<The Nest with Stork>> *– Plevnei zone*);

2. *Cişmigiu – Universitate* (University) area: *Schitu Măgureanu Street - Mihail Kogălniceanu Boulevard – Nicolae Bălcescu Boulevard – Ştirbei Vodă Street;*

3. *Centrul Istoric* (The historic center): *Independence Embankment – Corneliu Coposu Boulevard – Hristo Botev Boulevard - Mihail Kogălniceanu Boulevard* (area includes the historic centre and *Baraţiei* (Crossed) *– Moşilor zone*);

4. *Izvor: B. P. Haşdeu Street – Izvor Street – 13 Septembrie Avenue – Libertăţii* (Liberty) *Boulevard – Naţiunile Unite* (United Nations) *Boulevard* (*e.g.* Izvor area, Palace of Parliament);

5. *Unirii - Traian:* Unirii *Boulevard – Traian Street – Călăraşilor Avenue – C. Coposu Boulevard* (with *Halele Centrale* <<Central Market Halls>>*, St. Vineri* and *Hala Traian neighborhood*);

* Commercial architecture is introduced in Bucharest in 1872 by Alexis Godillot, who leased producing Central Market Halls, build up of French engineer Alfred Berthon as for model of Paris built between 1854-1866, later, between 1887-1889, were made: Fruits Market Hall, Fish Market Hall, Birds Market Hall [15].

6. *Moşilor - Foişor*: *Hristo Botev Boulevard – Călăraşilor Avenue – Traian Street – Moşilor Avenue;*

7. *General Gheorghe Magheru Boulevard – Carol I Boulevard - Moşilor Avenue – Dacia Boulevard* (*Batiştei – Nicolae Filipescu* area, *Armenească* <<Armenian>> area, *Icoanei* zone);

8. *Victoria Plaza*: *Dacia Boulevard –Lascăr Catargiu Boulevard –Buzeşti Street – Griviţei Route;*

9. *Ştirbei Vodă - Gen. Gheorghe Magheru Boulevard – Dacia Boulevard – Griviţei Route - Buzeşti Street* (*Puţul cu Plopi* <<Shaft with Poplars>>, *Amzei* area, *Popa Tatu – Griviţa* area).

Image 2. Bucharest city center.
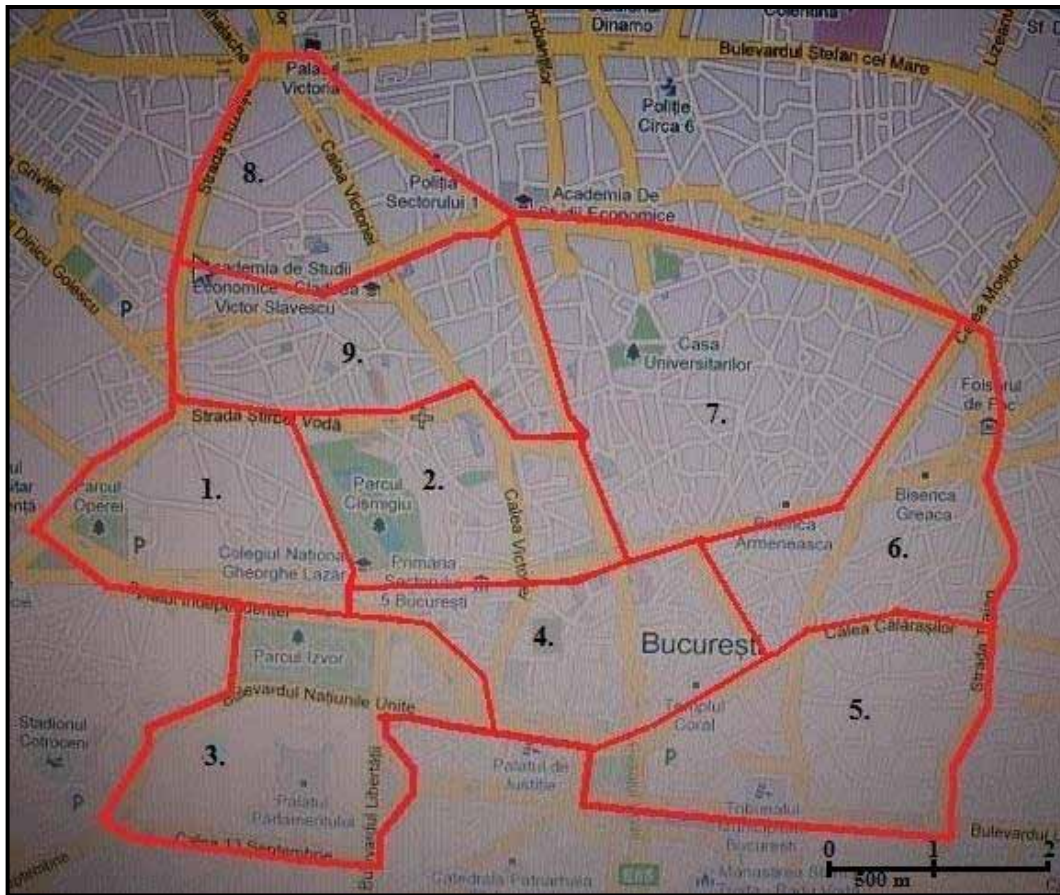
Due to the above delineation, the situation created by the perception of people and their pertaining in a community/neighborhood and historical factors, the influence of the center and area, below try to identify the characteristics of social structure. Delimited area frames in relation to city size, limiting it to a maximum of about 4.76 km square (estimated value). The population so calculated as a reference point for the downtown of Bucharest is 91,955 people, of which the historical center totaling 30,000 inhabitants.

Central character may be given several situations such as functional dynamic space, square as a public space, residential space, culture and mercantile activities. City center, seen as an area of a larger territory principle defines a relationship with adjacent areas (suburbs) and the organization in relation to the rest rooms or territory expressing essentially the city center (which depends on its quality) is defined as urban land and environmental good [13].

The difficulty of delimitating an area considered urban center leads us to the idea of not limited strictly to historic core defining the historic downtown as a place accumulate the values typical to urban community.

As historical center of Bucharest identify the perimeter defined about the Government Ordinance no. 77/2001, respectively between: *Victoria Avenue* (west), *Elisabeta* (Elizabeth) and *Carol* (Charles) boulevards (north), *Hristo Botev Boulevard* (east) and *Corneliu Coposu* and *Independence* boulevards (south) [16, 32], which include the concentration of historic urban and architectural values relevant resulting of superpose from a restricted area of the current urban planning, of physical mark successive stages of historical development of the area.

It is also the reason why we allow us to analyze the downtown delimitated as area (one that in generally separates the realities of territorial units and takes into account the physical, economic and social of the characteristics) [14].

3. FRACTIONATION OF URBAN SPACE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES CHARACTERISTICS OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Avoiding reaffirming social theory or reducing human geography only to a reflection into itself, we are asking, how society is reflected in specific social situations in the community of belonging, or the living space?

Thus, we selected ten dimensions of social structure (Table 1) based on official statistical database structure in Romania, considering them distinct layers of variation in social ecology of the city, and no specific urban social spaces with variable interdependent.

Table 1. Social structural variables

Contents/Social dimensions:	Variables
Labor force	1. Occupied civilian population
	2. Average number of employees
	3. Average number of employees by gender
	4. Registered unemployed and unemployment
Income	1. Gain in net montly nominal salary (on activities)
Prices	1. Average prices of main products sold in food markets
	2. Average prices for some goods sold by retail
Social security	1. The average number of pensioners and montly average
Housing and public utilities	1. Housing
	2. Indicators of housing derivatives fund
	3. Urban passenger transport

Education	1. Dropout rate in secondary education
Transport	1. The number of vehiculs in circulation
Environmental quality	1. The main areas of pollution from stationary sources
Justice	1. Persons definitively convicted
	2. Crimes investigated by the police
Population	1. Divorces by the number of remaining minor children through divorce
	2. Internal migration caused by changing residence
	3. Internal immigrants
	4. External immigrants

Source: Statistical Yearbook Bucharest, Regional Department of Statistics Bucharest;

4. CENTRALITY AND BEHAVIORAL DIMENSIONS

In a study of "American Anthropologist" M. Seth Low, resuming an old idea, consider that "contemporary anthropological studies of the city focus predominantly on the center, producing ethnographies of culturally significant places such as markets, housing projects, gardens, plazas, convention centers, waterfront developments and homeless shelters that articulate macro- **and micro urban processes**" [17]. Both at regional and at the specific urban areas, the location, geographically seen, continues to be a differentiating factor of urban space [18].

Quote by Vollebregt A.G., Soja E. said "all social relations become real and concrete, a part of our lived social existence, only when they are **spatially <inscribed>...** in the social **production of social space**" ([19]: 85, [20]: 46).

To spatial analysis level, we identify two specific problem situations. One of them had residual communism explained by socio-economic factors, and the second case we highlight the ambiguity of determining the actual neighborhoods, with boundaries and precise coordinates.

We're talking about communism that add residual communist social justice issue because of all the options that are part of social determination [21] and allowed to stand still in people's options. Poverty and uncertainty about nowadays cause many people to regret the collapse of the socialist system. We see that communism residual map overlaps poverty map.

Setting neighborhood defined on the basis of the housing and home proximity, I. Tudora value that (as R. Ledrut), is that "an informal primary group are structured of face-

to- face relations, it is still not reduced to a system of primary and informal social relations" [6].

Except neighborhood / residential area, well defined, central neighborhoods are difficult to determine, which is added the situation within the sector overlaps with those of districts as known. Thus, the central areas, as we call them, are launched anonymously giving the feeling of a amorphous center without good representation.

For empirical analysis we selected a number of factors that determine participation in the community to see and understand the specific location and characteristics of urban experience. In this approach, we've used and some signs of I. J. Townshend [22], transposed time situation, specific to urban social space in Bucharest.

The variables we considered pursuing some experiential dimensions as follows:

1. Community interaction (close friends neighbors, new neighbors);

2. Feeling and attachment (deep-rooted);

3. Place valuation (level of satisfaction compared to neighbors, the desires/ expectations);

4. Mental map (recognition of neighborhood streets, important points in the neighborhood – squares / junctions);

5. Political participation (political orientation, political preferences);

6. Support/support from the authorities;

7. Safety and security (young aggressive, spacing hazards);

8. Urban image (maintenance, the aesthetic of the neighborhood).

Our questionnaire (achieved between 24 and 27 of May 2010) includes 15 questions, both open and closed, trying to capture the behavior of people in downtown Bucharest. For this we used a random sample of 100 respondents aged over 18 years, regardless of the socio-economic status of the respondents.

The first question 50% of those questioned said they *live in the area* for over 20 years, while 20 % said between 15 and 20 years, most of them indicated that they own the dwelling.

When asked if "*you close among neighbors*?" 65 % said yes, and 60 % of them indicated that they visit their neighbors more than a month, except incidental, daily if necessary. Weekend neighbors reveals a value of 20% weekly, and this shows specificity, are more frequent if the collective dwelling neighbors, friends neighbors report being smaller but closer relationship group. Those who do not visit their neighbors are only 1 %.

Attachment area is divided: 40 % - less, and 20% for much and a lot more for each one. No friendships are not so easy, 63 % befriending harder to predict due soon, that does not know well the other, maybe try that first.

Paradoxically, perhaps, 70 % said they were *satisfied with the area/neighborhood*, even if not so attached. As their satisfaction and expectations are, the cleanliness and safety on the streets, which are the top 40 % and 20 %, is the need for silence (caused both by the attribute space in crowded areas, and the young uproarious), waste management, green space, waste land, housing conditions, segregated areas and even cables on poles that need to be "hidden".

After a survey conducted by a team led by sociologist Alfred Bulai revealed to us a paradoxical situation at least as far as 80% of Bucharest inhabitants considers that they hate the city but 76% say that they love their neighborhood instead. This is especially the way the practice of urban space that is more related to some points in the center (social spaces, clubs, etc.) than the district itself thus focusing both on uniform use of the urban system.

In the situation of *recognition of landmarks surrounding* 80% said they can do this (claimed to), and relevant points that they have acknowledged their great link in part of a market or an educational establishment, parks, streets/avenues, churches, shopping malls and centers of production.

67% of the respondents have *political preferences*, the remainder said they were apolitical or not interested, 2 % refused to answer the question. Turnout in last election showed us 58%.

Involvement of *Police* is recognized for that is preferred by 41 % followed of *General Municipality* by 30 % and 19 % *District Municipality*. The last two places are split equally between the *Church* and *Parliament*. One thing to note is that downtown residents believes that General Municipality has been involved more in place than the district municipalities issues obviously must take into account the fact that they have distinct functions.

78% of respondents said they feel *safe in their neighborhood*, problem areas are considered especially the East and West (e.g. *Gemeni* (Gemini) plaza, Buzeşti-Griviţa area).

About the image of neighborhood, people say that is important, namely 92 %.

The last question, 65 % of respondents considered that they are satisfied with living area, 25 % are dissatisfied while 10 % are very dissatisfied.

The sample is generally soft in the new neighbors and owners prefer old residents and fewer neighbors, and even if they stay in an area that is not to please their sense of place and assessed with other areas.

Behavioral dimension translates thus fragmented nature of experiential (affective, knowledge checks, etc.) and differences are in the neighborhood (different residential status, segregation, economic, general development, aesthetics, etc.) lead to social and spatial inequalities both within neighborhoods and between neighborhoods.

5. CITY INNER BUCHAREST: TRANSPORT TICKLER

As in many cities, in general, Bucharest suffering from deprivation and no jointing to the spatial level. Also downtown lends an aspect sometimes degraded by aggressive urban image with discontinuities, incomplete urban facilities (from street furniture aspect to urban green spaces), breaking of scale, breaking of urban and social tissue, all these in addition to a world car suffocating.

We turn our attention mainly on the problems of public transport in downtown Bucharest, and we individualize also consistent, specific sources of pollution and how they affect the city center dynamic.

Transport system and services are the public face of community [23]. S. Grava, appreciate in an interview that **"all modes of transportation are good, but not every mode fits every situation"** [24].

Trend movements in Bucharest is to increase the number of private cars at the expense of means of conveyance that facilitates congestion situation, increasing travel time, increasing discomfort, problems with business and environmental problems (increase in gas emissions , climate change) and safety. The situation is even more difficult as urban transport has a high degree of transit through the city center.

Obviously, due to increased transit also relocation industry and activities, residents influence daily movements contributing to the road journey times from home to work.

It tried the implementation of a strategy to promote sustainable mobility through a series of actions such as promotion and non-motorized transport, new propulsion technologies to reduce emissions, improve throughput, support and promote bicycle [25][26].

Transportation planning tends to be directed only to the removal of jams or provide better capability in place to ensure wider societal goals (considering the needs of the community as a whole and identified vulnerable groups) [27].

Number of vehicles kilometers per day unit of time is ascendant [28] (Table 2).

Table 2. Distance way by means of conveyance

A vehicle's daily medium distance (vehicle km/day)			
Type of vehicle	2008	2009	2011
Tram	195,30	205,22	207,20
Trolley bus	157,29	166,35	268,50
Bus	178,25	185,33	187,10
Total	530,84	556,90	662,80

Source: www.ratb.ro;

Number of passengers of public surface transport units show declining to other years and an increasing number of people using the subway underground transport (Figure 1). However there is a network of interconnected subway and surface to facilitate better connections between buses and traffic flow.

The number of cars compared to 1989 increased ten times and the road network has not changed and the daily traffic occurs around the 400 streets. A solution identified by the Japanese in the '90s was that the middle ring road traffic closure by building *Basarab Passage* to avoid transit center [29].

Figure 1. Number of passengers carried - millions
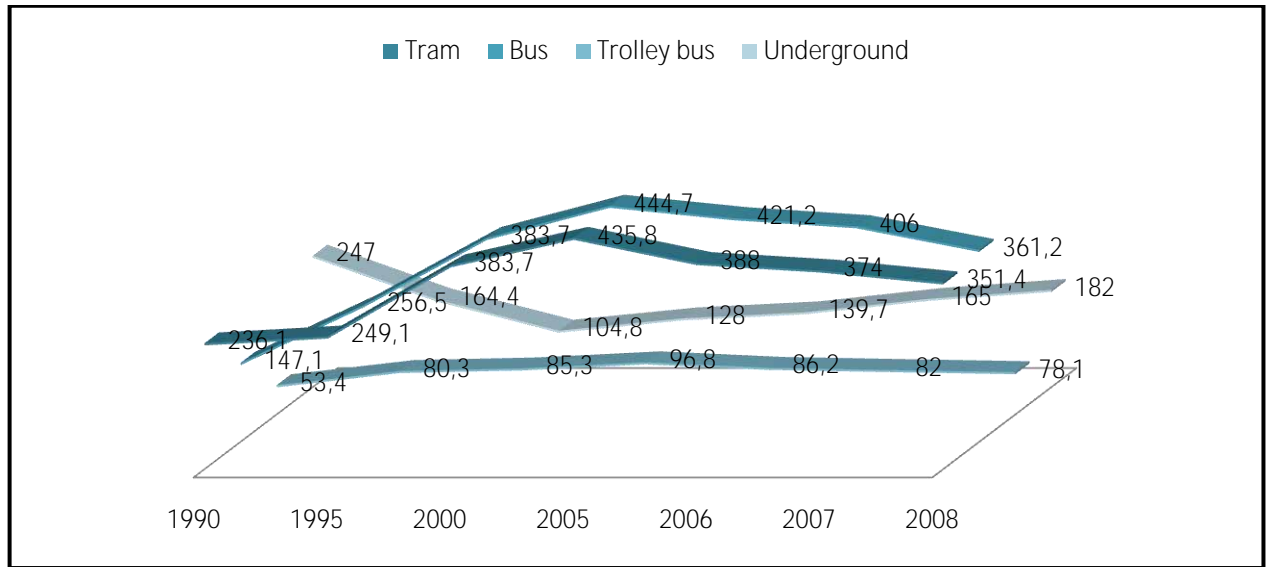
Source: Statistical Yearbook Bucharest 2009, Regional Statistical Division of Bucharest Municipality

The streetscape character of the whole urban system is imperfect ring feature which to the central ring has a radial [30]. Major thoroughfare passing through downtown are: North-South thoroughfare consisting of **Lascăr Catargiu Boulevard** - *General Magheru*

Boulevard - **Nicolae Bălcescu Boulevard** - **I. C. Brătianu Boulevard**; East-West thoroughfare, **Moşilor** *Avenue* - *Carol I* (Charles the I-st) *Boulevard* – *Regina Elisabeta* (Queen Elizabeth) *Boulevard* - **Mihail Kogălniceanu** *Boulevard* and also their interconnected **Ştirbei Vodă Street**, *Dacia Boulevard* or *Victoria* (Victory) *Avenue.*

To eliminate traffic congestion have proposed solutions such as using public transport at the detriment of private car use, pedestrian network city centers, urban toll, or use bicycles.

Regarding the use of bicycles has made a pilot project comprising mostly Bucharest downtown. It was conducted by M. Popa and R. Movileanu [31] of the Polytechnic University of Bucharest and offers a network linking universities from Agronomy, *Aviatorilor* (Aviators) *Boulevard*, *Kisseleff Boulevard*, Victory Square, Roman Square, University Square; likewise *Elizabeth Boulevard*, *Eroilor* (Heroes) *Boulevard, Iuliu Maniu Boulevard, Regie Complex* (Image 3).

Image 3. Network of bicycle lanes in Bucharest
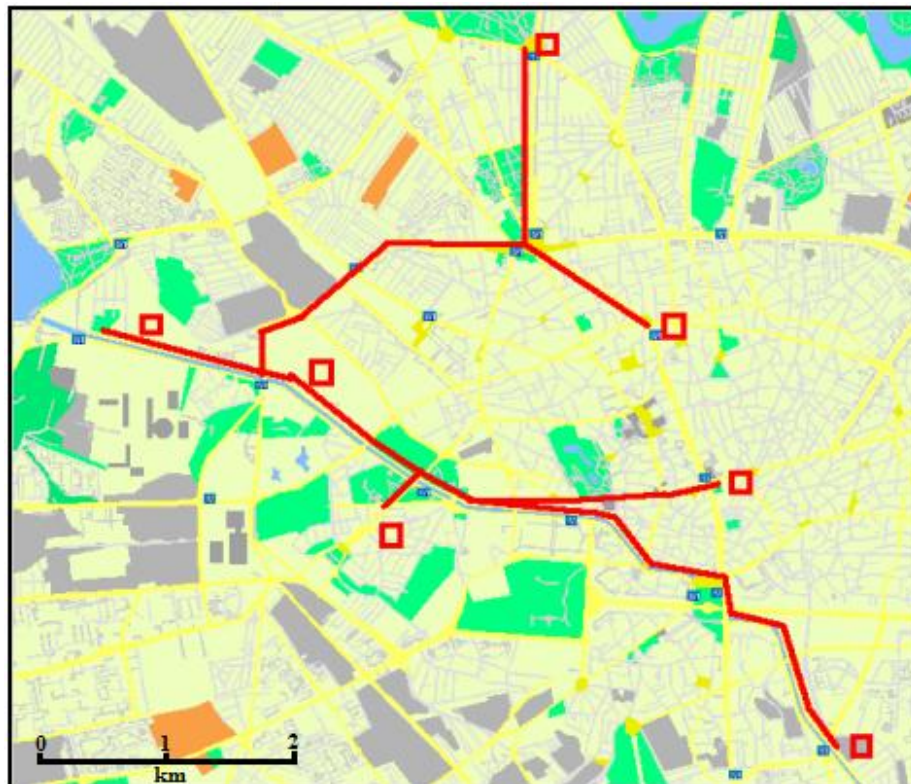
Source: Popa Mihaela, Movileanu Rareş (2004)

Next we summarize some aspects that concern the environmental factors in our study area.

The main pollutant sources in the central area are given by two characteristics, namely: stationary/fixed (industrial zones, construction zones, residential areas) and sources in the corridor/mobile (network of urban transport). Fixed source of pollution the most important near the center - the Obor industrial platform (plastics, powders, textile, chemistry, industrial combustion, foundry) exhibit a number of 13,000 people. To this is added the sources in the corridor through traffic causing noise and emissions.

The high level of acoustic discomfort caused by traffic flows along the main streets of Classes I and II is the result of frequency exceeding 20 to 30 dB permissible level of 70 dB.

As measures that could help traffic flow of analyzed area can include: organization of parking, detour of heavy transit traffic, light timing adjustment depending on traffic volumes, the calibration of transport network in proportion with flows of people, creating separate lanes for cyclists, creating separate routes for means of conveyance.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Space in central Bucharest has provided since its past occasions agitation of a stock in anticipation of his destiny, and constrained the horizon as an attitude of impassive.

City center spatial determining and defining areas as confined spaces, led us to identify specific characteristics, prevailing, which distinguishes each neighborhood/community separately. Modeling the spatial differences and expression behaviors of some neighborhoods in the area analyzed, we have found that variations within the community concentrated in the center of the city capital is a consequence of the relationship influences society – urban space as well as some individual behaviors.

The neighborhood community structures, the specificity, led us to exemplify place features, including the given space of pertain cognitive subordinate laws, of understanding and sense of place. Understanding the spatial dimensions of place, individual behavior, reflected fragmented community, customize various space cutouts.

Transition from dependence and subordination of group interaction and involvement, i.e. affective dimension in community ownership, shows individual or group differences that are reflected in known urban areas.

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