

INTRODUCING DISPARITY ABATEMENT OF SOCIAL-CULTURAL ATTRACTORS IN THE WESTERN PART OF TÂRGU-JIU MUNICIPALITY

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Abstract: The municipality of Târgu Jiu, as an ensemble of urban space organization, is strictly dependent on the physical environment in which it is located, starting with relief, hydrography and so on. The peri-central part of the city had developed the urban tissue poorly at the start of the 19th century, with a deficient historical, cultural and architectural load. Landscape improvement owes heavily to the central axis of the city, represented by the "Calea Eroilor" Cultural Ensemble, which brings a touch of uniqueness to the urban context. The article hopes to emphasize the discrepancies between the two banks of the River Jiu, which are extremely contrasting from both an architectural and a functional points of view. The left bank has administrative and architectural roles, while the right side is a former industrial area. In its entirety, the project aims to combine the two components, economic and social. The existing patrimony will help bring a harmonization and anew dynamic to the western part of the city, in terms of profits as well as in terms of the social course. The urban structure of the city as a whole must correspond to a territorial harmony and operational status so that a revitalization of the analysed area can transform the entire city. The specific objectives are the increase in real-estate action in the implementation area and developing the infrastructure, which will eventually lead to more entrepreneurial activities for a sustainable development.

Key words: social-cultural attractors, social and urban development, discrepancy reduction,

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INTRODUCTION

The urban plan created by the Romanian urbanists at the start of the 20th century exemplifies, at a cartographic level, the essence of a relatively small urban space, but one that was highly crucial at regional level. The concentration, on the left bank of the river (figure 1), of the entire residential structure chronologically exemplifies the city's evolution (Pânișoară, 2001).

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The article proposes a pragmatic approach on the urban potential by implanting social and cultural objectives in the western part of Târgu-Jiu Municipality, currently lagging behind in real-estate, social and cultural development, thus creating the premises for a unitary and sustainable evolution. The spatial organization and the whole development of Târgu-Jiu are now limited by several components, having restrictive roles, such as morphology, climate, hydrography etc.

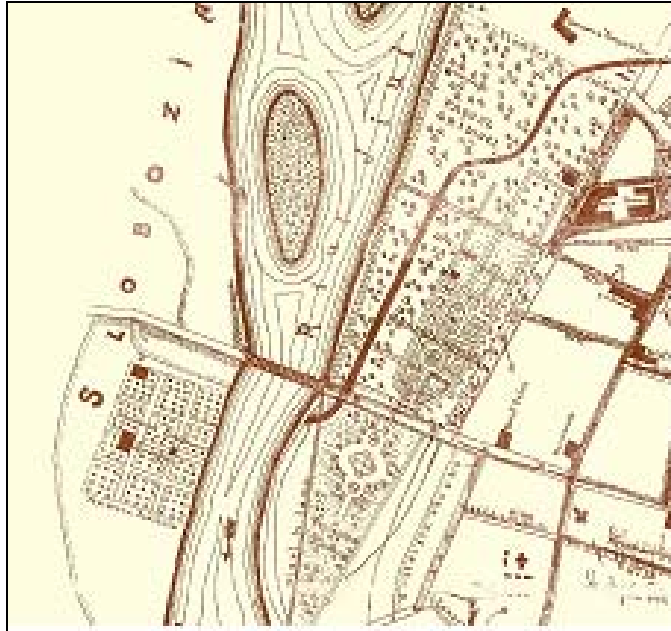


Figure 1. Plan of Târgu-Jiu in 1912 - detail of case study area
Source: Pânișoară, 2001

THEORY AND METODOLOGY

The study area is not one of the most representative parts of the Municipality of Târgu-Jiu, even though it is crossed by the highly important east-west road axis: București Boulevard – Unirii Street – Severinului Boulevard. The area is located in a pericentral manner, having a weak and chaotically developed urban structure, which emerged in the 19th century, characterized by a low historical, cultural and architectural heritage. It is mostly comprised of industrial buildings, characteristic for the 1940-1970 period (Elena, 1988).

The article intends to emphasize the necessary means for innovations and restructurings, starting with the whole area in general, and ending with the buildings themselves, and also from the purely technical details (insulation, protection, maintenance) all the way to creating a contemporary architectural vision and proper landscape design. Furthermore, the article proposes a unitary landscape approach of the entire study area, taking into consideration its proximity to the Constantin Brâncuși Sculptural Ensemble. This study of protected urban insertion will take into account the urban functional structure of the existing weave and the area's defining features, focus in on typology, functionality and also exterior design (figure 2):

- general location within the city;
- location of social and cultural functions in the study area;
- historical analysis;
- placement of buildings on plots;
- analysis of built/vacant spaces;
- typological analysis;

The area contained in this study is lacking in infrastructure and is unappealing and unattractive in terms of real estate development due to its location. The buildings and communication routes coexist with green areas and scrublands, which discontinuously occupy large surfaces. This characteristic is further emphasized by derelict land, brown and grey fields, and also unoccupied tracts of land (Lemny & Velescu, 2004).

The green areas of the city are distributed spatially among the different residential neighborhoods as well as along the banks of the river Jiu. Landscape zoning is tightly connected to the territory, meaning there are agricultural zones in the extravilan as well as huge brown fields originating in the socialist and postsocialist eras (Petrișor, 2016).



Figure 2. Satellite image of the study area
Source: Apia Portal

Introducing a certain function in relation to the public domain leads to defining the urban structure and weave, and thus the area's identity. Historically speaking, the study area has been disadvantaged and overlooked ever since the beginning of the 20th century, creating a significant location gap between the western and the eastern banks of the river Jiu. The only public investment in the area is the building of the County Technical Department (built in 1912) (Expectatus, 1973).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The project proposes taking the former industrial area located in close proximity to the Constantin Brâncuși Sculptural Complex, but on the other side of the river Jiu, and transforming the industrial buildings, currently under preservation and almost abandoned, into administrative and cultural spaces (Andronache et al., 2016).

The plan of the city that expands on both sides of the river Jiu is an adaptation to the terrain as well as to the demographic flows that took place in the last centuries (figure 3).

The proposed area will be extended and revitalized according to the existing legislation, both functionally and architecturally. The buildings will be awarded protected status and the following urban functions:

- functions of public interest;
- regional (governmental agencies), local (local administration services);
- administrative, cultural, educational;
- higher tertiary functions: media, publishing houses, agencies, commerce and trade, retail, personal and professional services, recreation and tourism etc. (Stăncioiu, 2011).

Traffic amplification is recommended, which implies opening new roads and resizing existing ones, creating mass transit opportunities (bus, trolleybuses, trams) and so on.

A spatial approach of the urban system is part of the built-up area planning which must be correlated with the street network and the other existing territorial elements. The way we correctly choose the spatial scale for area modification can be established by an urban designer which will start from a rather larger scale, the whole city and eventually end up at a detail element like each individual building (Pei-Ju & Yang, 2015).

The idea is to make functional conversions that are compatible with the character of the area and with the protected status of each building, in the following manner:

- facade architecture - harmonization of vertical and horizontal force lines and element frequency;
- harmonization with the immediate surroundings as proportions of the architectural elements, facades etc.;
- colour - keeping the chromatic ambience of the area, emphasizing the facades etc.;



Figure 3. Plan of Târgu-Jiu - locations of social-cultural attractors
Source: Open Street Map

The sculpture ensemble functioning as a central axis for the city brings authenticity and prestige to it and of course to the entire county. These massive monuments are actually made of limestone composites and their significance ranges from philosophical elements like the path taken by man throughout his life to home ages to the Romanian soldiers who perished during the First World War. The Infinity Column is considered the most grandiose and significant pieces of art of the 20th century (Mateescu, 1980). The artist did not conceive it or the other pieces as solitary landmarks, not even as an ensemble of decorative works, but as a whole with a meaning. By installing them in Târgu-Jiu in 1938, he wanted to offer its country and its birth place a representative remembrance, accessible to all, thus making it the most valuable artistic message, destined to his compatriots and to their entire history (Brezianu, 1974).

The positive effects, anticipated through a project of such magnitude, are the urban revitalization of the area by functionally balancing existing elements and the creation of an urban space with esthetic-configurative qualities, as well as a diversified and accessible offer for all investors. The actual proposal is to establish an expositional complex (composed of art gallery and creative workshops) as well as spaces for local and county governments (the employment and professional training agency, local cultural and educational departments, departments of the city hall and county council and many more). The reinvention of this area's, using said insertion intends to reinvigorate and part of the city which is currently ignored and shunned by real-estate investors (Petrișor, 2013). The economic dynamic of the entire project is based on stimulating public and private initiatives. The proposed objectives to be implanted will redefine not only the study area, but also the whole urban structure of the City of Târgu-Jiu (Pogorilovski, 1976). In terms of built "heritage", the area will not definitively change due to the insertion of the above-mentioned social and cultural functions. But through the detailed adaptations to be implemented, the study area will be better integrated at city level, in terms of urban access, pedestrian or otherwise, without major changes in the general aspect (Dumitru, 1978).

CONCLUSIONS

The project's complexity must satisfy the lucrative component (which brings profit) as well as the social component (usually subsidized from the local, county, and/or national budgets) and try to create a representative social and cultural pole in the area (Velescu, 1993).

As an urban complex, the territory of the city at hand comprises both cultural landscapes of national value like "*Calea Eroilor*" and the central pedestrian area, as well as other elements such as vast functional and abandoned industrial areas (Cocean, 2010). The residential component of this urban context is extended across the entire territory and, independently of the street network, it was constructed as an effect of the city's development, both historically and spatially (Petrișor, 2016).



Figure 4. Disused industrial building in the study area

Source: photo Tudorache Claudia Elena (2015)

Potential partners: Local Council, City Hall, the Regional Development Agency.

Target groups: civil society representatives, entrepreneurial groups, cultural foundations and organizations.

The City of Târgu Jiu has a regional polarization role from a demographic perspective due to its population boom during the 1980-1990 period. The area polarized by this regional urban center is still marked by outward migration towards the rural areas located in close proximity.

By analyzing the city from an economic standpoint, we see that the surrounding rural areas are still poorly developed in comparison to the urban center (Zamfir et al., 2011). The few exceptions are Bălești (rural) and Bumbăști Jiu (urban) where many entrepreneurial activities have sprouted in the last few years, leading to a certain growth and development of these areas.

Unfortunately, the situation regarding the demographic component can only be changed through a strong economic and demographic policy, involving a series of measures which will help in creating an attractive economic and social environment (Bănică & Istrate 2012).

The building shown in (figure 4) was once a productive space that generated real growth and development in the area. After 1989 however, once the industry entered a general decline, this once proud industrial-use building became derelict, the only element of value being the land beneath it (Oktay, 2015). Therefore a transformation of this space, which is close to the urban centre, is necessary for the entire city, potentially leading to a more pleasing environment and even to economic development to the area and its populace (Gavrilișida & Ciocănea, 2016).

General objectives:

- fixing disparities and discrepancies compared to the city's central areas;
- increasing the real estate interest in the implementation area;
- entrepreneurial activities for a sustainable development.

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