Ideology and Demography in Romanian urban centres (1945-1989)

Cristian Culiciu*

Abstract: Our research among urban development and society in the communist period begins at the reality of actual Romanian cities. The idea of living in apartment blocks was not new at the beginning of communism. It began in western, industrial developed countries, but socialism included some ideological patterns to it. Socialists say that the „new man” should live in the city, where his workplace is. Also, everybody should live in the same conditions, even if they were, in some cases, poor and claustrophobic. In this paper we proposed a short analysis on how socialism influenced shaping cities in Romania. The ideological pattern is general, as seen in every socialist country, like the Soviet Union, but we also managed to give some local examples, as identified in political speech. Also, statistics show how investments in housing increased in these years and how Transylvanian cities transformed because of the Romanian migratory.

Keywords: socialist ideology, shaping cities, political influence, rural-urban migration

Introduction

After the end of World War II, east-European, Soviet and central and east-Asian cities faced a unique phenomenon to the politically

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centralized societies they functioned in: forced urbanization and urban systematization. The phenomenon had its own origins and arguments, but common to all totalitarian states. In this paper we will concentrate our attention on the way of living in Romanian cities, as it was influenced by mass housing ideology and the local attempt to collectivize everyday living, besides the workplace.

Vertical housing was not a product of any totalitarian regime, but of western industrialized societies and engineering. Both architecture and the way of organizing apartment buildings were using the principles of Bauhaus, late art-deco and Le Corbusier’s ideas, some characteristics being the simple lines of the facades, a high number of floors and the simple thing of grouping apartments in so called ”point-blocks” and neighbourhoods (microrayons)\textsuperscript{1}. Corbusier was also referring to the city and apartment with all functional meanings, proposing the concept of ”the living machine”, in which living space fell into standardization. After becoming a worldwide practice\textsuperscript{2}, housing standardization will develop into a basis in all communist regimes, the next step being accomplished by building so called ”housing factories”, an industry of making prefabricated panels for new apartment buildings.

The concept of urban systematization\textsuperscript{3} (it refers to ”designing and organizing urban and rural settlements and territories in a scientific way”,

based on a few coordinates, like: natural landscape, the locality’s shape and population, development possibilities. The concepts were used in developing infrastructure, housing, administrative, medical, educational and cultural settlements. The general idea of urban systematization changed after 1973-1974, when a few laws on these terms were published. This leaded to the demolishing and rebuilding of whole neighbourhoods and towns) wasn’t a product of totalitarianism either. One of the biggest west-European systematization plans was designed in Paris and known as The Haussmann Plan (1853-1870) that included the rethinking of the city’s functional zones and traffic, by geometrically reshaping streets and neighbourhoods. The state intervention in the housing problem increased gradually, with an important step after World War One.

**A Marxist approach**

If in the western countries the *urban explosion*, of shall we call it, *new urban revolution*, had a natural evolution, consequence of industrial development. In totalitarian societies, even though it had the same main source, urbanism became a state policy. But it was not only an attribute of communism. Fascism and Nazism also tried to seize architecture and urbanism and to leave their mark and become eternal. Both Mussolini and

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5 Steven E. Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

Hitler dreamed completely reconstructed capitals, great buildings, administrative and party offices that surpass all imagination. The trend was part of creating the so called totalitarian art. ”Revolution cannot avoid art”, Goebbels used to say, and according to Filonov, it must be organized „just like the heavy industry and Red Army”\(^7\). That is because living is not just linked to social politics, but also to art and culture.

If Marx and Engels opened the mass housing ideology for the socialist system\(^8\), the Kremlin and the Soviet Union Communist Party put it in application. In Engels’ opinion, resolving the housing question (or housing problem) was a component of reducing/eliminating differences between social levels and between rural and urban areas. He thought that living conditions could only get worse in capitalism and get only better in socialism. The first step in providing housing for the proletariat was nationalizing all existing dwellings and giving them to workers. This idea was taken by Lenin in 1917\(^9\). During the eighth Congress of communist Bolsheviks (1919) discussions led to creating a new housing system, on socialist basis, meaning the socialist reconstruction of Russian cities. The housing system, as described then, had to follow the ”work principle”, meaning that living had to be linked to the working place. Lenin believed housing should have scientific principles and that poor, old housing should be demolished so the State could build new dwellings for workers. It is true that most of Soviet people were living then in poor conditions, moving to new houses or even apartments remaining a dream for most of them. But

\(^8\) Oliver Velescu, op. cit., p. 66
\(^9\) Steven E. Harris, op. cit., pp. 38, 43-45.
soviet leaders were looking beyond such a necessity, humanly speaking, transforming it into a control tool.

For the communist world, the new urbanism had the idea of classless society at its basis. Because housing became a standard of social stratification, it had to be eliminated. As socialist construction continued, all workers and their families had to live in similar or mostly identical conditions.

Nikolai Ivanovici Buharin and Yevheni Preobrazhensky wrote, in The ABC of Communism, comparative chapters on the living standards in capitalist and socialist countries. By their point of view, capitalist housing is a form of exploitation which widens social gaps. Their arguments were referring to living conditions in city suburbs and the high rents paid to capitalist owners. They say that „nowhere are the privileges of the bourgeoisie more evident than in housing”\(^\text{10}\).

This dichotomy has been studied by researchers from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. They separated two perspectives: neo-Marxist and neo-Weberian, referring to the tendency to create social classes in socialist states and for some to migrate to the outskirts of cities. Both the mobility of workers and the construction of new urban centres as a consequence, were realities similar to the East and the West\(^\text{11}\). In the East, first hand differences came from the use of coercive methods of influencing demography and population movement throughout the country, the phenomenon gaining valences of a true social engineering process\(^\text{12}\).

\(^{10}\) Ibidem, p. 46.
\(^{12}\) Ibidem, pp. 32-33.
A new architectural pattern for a new regime

The specific architecture used in socialist states, used mostly in administrative or cultural institutions, but also apartment buildings, bear the mark of socialist realism. This cultural and artistic current shaped both imitative arts and literature, but also architecture. The current had two main steps. In the first one, specific to the Stalinist era, buildings borrowed elements from the neoclassic style. After the death of Stalin (1953) and another period in which architects used similar templates to western modernism, in the 70’s and the 80’s, Brutalism took its place. Considered nowadays as an important architectural current, with buildings in need to be preserved, Brutalism marked its presence in socialist states in variable quantities. Its main characteristics are: hard surfaces, unusual (sometimes futuristic) shapes, the heaviness of the materials used, massive forms, poor glazing and the predominance of concrete and precast materials.\(^{13}\)

There are numerous examples: the Novi Beograd housing complex\(^{14}\), some buildings in Bratislava\(^{15}\) or some oversized monuments in Bulgaria\(^{16}\). In some cities, reconstruction, even on socialist bases, was a necessity after the war. A few cases are: Berlin, Dresden, Warsaw,

Stalingrad (Kaliningrad) and so on\textsuperscript{17}. These examples refer to places where Brutalism reached grandeur and spectacular forms. Some of these elements of socialist architecture must be seen through the outbreak of the cold war. Starting from 1945-1950 we can observe also the beginning of an \textit{urban conflict}, through which Stalinism wanted to create some urban ensembles and buildings inspired from the United States. For example, the main building of the Lomonosov University in Moscow, and inspired by American art-deco skyscrapers, is copied at small scale in Bucharest. We also refer here to challenging the capitalist urbanism. In 1930, Stalin issued a decree on combating utopianism in designing cities\textsuperscript{18}.

So the most relevant case is the Soviet Union. Collective housing ideology started here during the New Economical Politic (NEP). Even though it´s bases, mostly referring to concepts like \textit{minimalism} and \textit{Cultural Revolution}, including architecture, were put in this time, the housing problem failed to be solved under the Stalin regime. In fact, these bases were reused in the Khrushchev period, at the same time with the forced urbanization of Romania. The housing policy became rapidly a component of transforming the Soviet Union into a communist state. The 1961 perspective of transforming the USSR into a fully communist state till 1980 offered the illusion of solving the housing problem for all soviet people, thus offering them some hope and increasing their working capacity. This

\begin{footnotesize}
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vision could have been exteriorized into an increasing power of the architect in society or a higher level of the average citizen´s culture\textsuperscript{19}.

Even with all the state investments (some 2.2 million apartments build yearly since 1957), in 1980, the Soviet Union was far from resolving it´s housing problem. We can consider that for the average soviet citizen, only his living quality grew. By the end of the 1970´s, most families were living in separate apartments, by law every person having 8 square meters of living space, instead of 5 square meters or less in the 1940´s\textsuperscript{20}. Khrushchev´s will was to finish all the \textit{unfinished projects of the Russian Revolution}.

The reality is that in the Soviet Union and in the other socialist countries housing typification in order to standardize social life, has failed. Not only that soviet citizens were unsatisfied by the living conditions\textsuperscript{21}, but the quality of new buildings and the failure of offering proper housing conditions for specific needs also contributed to an alarmingly rising gap between social levels. Ivan Szeleny (Hungarian sociologist) quotes Scott Greer in a thematic study he did in a couple of cities in Hungary between 1969 and 1972. Greer argued about the vicious circle that was being created by the lack of quality and satisfaction of individuals in their new apartments. He says that if a person was labelled as inferior, he would

\textsuperscript{19} Stephen E. Harris, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{21} Henry W. Morton, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 236.
receive poor housing, thus reducing his social opportunities even more, and from here less daily yield and continuous reduction of his social rewards\textsuperscript{22}.

The transformation of mass housing as a component of the Marxist vision of creating the \textit{new human}, in which private space, even if it theoretically existed, continued to be faulted, with adapting each and every family to the only needs of \textit{the Party and the State}\textsuperscript{23}.

\textbf{New urbanism in communist Romania}

The Romanian case is also interesting. All of what means the ”mix” of ideology, architecture and social mechanisms introduced in the other socialist states can be found here also. Even if the phenomenon was not a mass reality at the beginning, it became a source of social manipulation a few years after the war.

After the seizure of power, the Romanian Communist Party (1945; renamed into the Romanian Workers Party in 1948) and the proclamation of the Republic (30\textsuperscript{th} of December 1947), urbanization became a well debated subject among the political leaders and official propaganda. In today’s historiography, it is known as \textit{urban restructuring ideology}. The way that the Romanian communist regime understood to reshape its cities must be treated by the perspective of communization, or by the tendency of centralizing the entire society. If collectivization (1948-1949 in industry and agriculture) assaulted on the citizens way of work, the concept, along

\textsuperscript{22} Ivan Szelenyi, \textit{Urban Inequalities under State Socialism}, Oxford University Press, New York, 1983, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{23} Silviu Aldea, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 12; Steven E. Harris, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 197-198.
with nationalization, would be applied also to their way of living. On the other hand, reshaping cities, as an expression of popular democracy, meant, first of all, eliminating individualism (a bourgeoisie heritage), step objectified in 1950, when many urban dwellings were nationalized. Even if the communist State maintained the idea of building individual living space for workers in houses, most of new investments were concentrated in common dormitories and, later, in apartment buildings. One of the main ideological reasons for this approach is to offer a model of conviviality between proletarians, respectively between proletarians and peasants (some of them brought to cities to work). The process of urbanization in communist Romania was the result of ideological restructuration of the population and forced industrialization and also the regime’s need to create its own mass bases – the proletariat. The proletariat could be created in factories and also by changing living conditions.

Romania was not always a highly urbanized country. In the interwar period, the huge majority of Romanian cities were organized by the garden-city principle, with big public spaces and numerous green zones. Population distribution was radiant, from the wealthy class living in the city centres, to the poor, residing in purlieus. The difference between the terms city and urban centre is that the urban centre gathers both the main city and it’s

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24 Oliver Velescu, “Ideologia restructurării urbane 1944-1972”, in Arhivele totalitarismului, year V, no. 17, p. 64.
suburban towns. In the last decade and a half before the proclaiming of the republic, Romania’s urban population varied like so:

Table 1: Rural vs. Urban population in Romania before communism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total population*</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>urban</td>
<td>rural</td>
<td>urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29th Dec. 1930</td>
<td>14,3</td>
<td>3,05</td>
<td>11,2</td>
<td>21,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Apr. 1941</td>
<td>16,1</td>
<td>3,8</td>
<td>12,3</td>
<td>23,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th Jan. 1948</td>
<td>15,9</td>
<td>3,7</td>
<td>12,1</td>
<td>23,4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*millions of people; the numbers refer only to the provinces existing in the country in 1948

The concept of urban systematization was not new for the Romanian city either. In the interwar period, architects proposed a few systematization projects for Bucharest and for other cities, but unapplied.

In the fall of 1945, Scînteia (the Romanian Communist Party’s official newspaper) was publishing a series of articles on urban systematization. Chaotic expansion, irregular placement of buildings and public spaces (including schools, green spaces, even houses) had to be resolved, authorities said, together with the process of rebuilding damaged zones after the war. Also, they suggested, urban development must be designed long-term. In particular, „architects must face the housing problem, especially those for workers that need to be solved in residential complexes made by the State”28. Besides housing, the central government was anticipating the construction of public buildings such as schools,

28 Scînteia, series III, year XVI, no. 347, 8th of October 1945, p. 2.
dispensaries, hostels, bathhouses, government buildings, theatres and museums. But for these plans to have any chance of being applied, a reorganization of urban property was needed. Thus, both land and constructions could gain social functions.

As suggested, the ideological impact on Romania’s post-war way of living had a slight origin or motivation in the destruction caused by bombardments and after the 1940th earthquake, both responsible for the destruction of thousands of homes29.

In the communist period, urbanization was seen through the perspective of increasing the way of living. Sometimes, the process was ideologically linked to the similar one from roman times. From this point of view, the authorities´ wish seemed normal30. At the beginning, the tendency did not produce many results, or the results were not as expected.

Ideologically, everything that socialism would produce had to be totally different from similar things made by the West. From durable objects to cultural products, everything was ideologically controlled. Romanian communist leaders, like Leonte Rătu (chief of the Propaganda Section in the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers Party), were Against bourgeois cosmopolitanism and objectivism in social sciences (including social protection), pleading against „the obsequious contempt and kowtow to imperialist culture”31.

31 Mara Mărginean, op. cit., pp. 77-78.
New investments in housing began slowly, rather because one of the first measures of ensuring housing for the workers was by nationalizing urban residences (1950) and placing whole families into them. We will now have in view total investments, in Romanian lei, made by the State in housing between 1950 and 1989. The highest amount of money was invested in the last decade of the socialist regime, with a small fall after Romania lost the Most Favoured Nation clause. New apartment buildings were designed according to the soviet cvartal system, with blade-blocks and point-blocks – short buildings with Neoclassic - Stalinist and socialist architecture. According to Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (leader of Romania between 1948 and 1965), all construction projects needed to be approved by the soviet comrades. Even so, housing construction was chaotic, every ministry proposing it’s very own projects, some silly building assemblies relieving into gipsy tents as they were called, because of their promiscuity.

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33 Mara Mărginean, op. cit., p. 98.
34 Ibidem, pp. 102-103.
Chart 1: The evolution of housing investments during communism in Romania$^{35}$

We can compare this data to the number of new apartments built in the whole country in the same period, both by the State and citizens with the help of loans:

The evolution in housing investments wasn’t constant. The numbers cited above show an interesting situation. It is clear that the amount of money allocated, mostly by the State, for constructing new apartments and houses had a significant increase, especially after 1970. The number of homes built by ordinary people with the help of loans was higher than the number of apartments built by the State, but only till 1965-1967. From that moment, State investments in housing significantly increased, till a peak of 200,000 apartments per year around 1980 and little after that. It is interesting that, even if sums allocated toward building new homes grew, the total number of new settlements decreased.

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A possible explanation is that construction costs grew, housing became more expensive. We also admit that this is the period when new administrative centres were built in many cities, especially in Bucharest, that needed high amounts of money. Also, in the 80´s, the rhythm of individual building dropped, under legislative changes and less encouragement from the local/national authorities. They strongly suggested that living in an apartment building was more civilized that living in a house, many old neighbourhoods being demolished to make way for new apartments. The economical crisis and the poor usage of local building materials also kept construction costs high.

Generally speaking, there are three main periods in Romania´s after war urban development. The first one, specific to the late 40´s, was the so called garden-city that managed to integrate new worker houses into its characteristics. The 50´s were the years of the cvartal. After a small period when Romanian urbanism managed to link to western architectural characteristics, after 1960, the microrayon and new neighbourhoods crammed with buildings were to be found in every small or major city.

**Rural towards urban migration**

These investments were made at the same time with the expansion of a national phenomenon: massive movement from the rural areas to the cities. Between 1948 and 1989 both Romania´s total population and urban population grew so rapidly, that new housing did not offer sufficient space for every new citizen. Jobs and new apartments were distributed according

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to a methodology. Even so, the demolition of old housing and the way apartments were offered to workers became a huge source of abuse.

The official data on the increasing of Romania’s urban population, compared to rural population, are as follows:

**Table 2: The evolution of Romania’s population (in urban vs. rural areas) between 1948 and 1989**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total population*</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th Jan 1948</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st Feb 1956</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st July 1960</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st July 1970</td>
<td>20.25</td>
<td>8.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st July 1975</td>
<td>21.24</td>
<td>9.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st July 1979</td>
<td>22.04</td>
<td>10.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st July 1985</td>
<td>22.72</td>
<td>11.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st July 1989</td>
<td>23.15</td>
<td>12.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*millions of people

The growing rhythm of urbanization was stimulated by the industrialization policy. Heavy industry, with a large number of workers, had its main role. In the Stalinist period, the government put an accent on heavy industry, so the rhythm of urbanization was higher. After de-Stalinization, urbanization decreased in intensity, but it increased again in

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the last two socialist decades. The balance between urban and rural population was reached in 1985. Even though these are national averages, there were some differences, sometimes sensible, between urban population from different regions and counties. The highest number of urban population was in industrialized countries. For instance, before the adoption of Law 58/1974, also known as The Law of Systematization and Territorial Improvement, that changed the way urban systematization was understood, there were some big differences between counties on the percentage of urban population. For example, in Alba County, 44% of the population lived in urban areas and in Hunedoara County the percentage was 74%. In the same manner, if Buzău County had an urban population of 22%, Prahova County had 56%.

The increase of the proportion of urban population was influenced by the process of transforming existing rural localities in cities. The number of newly declared cities varied as so:

- 1948-1956…………………………19 new cities
- 1956-1966…………………………65 new cities
- 1966-1977…………………………0 new cities
- 1977-1992…………………………24 new cities

and 77 villages incorporated in the administrative organization of nearby cities.

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40 Ibidem.
Referring to the number of existing cities at a specific moment, we can point out first of all that Romania had, in 1956, 171 cities. In 1992 there were 260 cities. Constantly, most of the cities had between 10,000 and 19,000 inhabitants, respectively between 5000 and 9000 inhabitants. The number of cities having over 100,000 inhabitants grew from 7 in 1956 to 12 in 1966, but dropping to 10 in 1977 (because of the growth of cities having over 200,000 inhabitants) and 13 in 1992, when there were 7 cities with 300,000 to 399,999 inhabitants.\footnote{Ibidem, pp. 104-105.}

The migration phenomenon had new valences in the communist period, compared to the interwar period, mostly because of the higher number of people that left the rural areas, to move into cities. By concept, \textit{internal migration} refers to the displacement and change of normal residence from a \textit{locality or area of origin} to the \textit{locality or area of destination}, both being in the same country, these movements creating \textit{migration flows}.\footnote{I. Measnicov, I. Hristache, Vl. Trebici, \textit{Demografia orașelor României}, Bucharest, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing, 1977, p. 26.}

Movement to urban centres is influenced by their type (dimensionally and economically speaking), these differences creating a few categories – from 1\textsuperscript{st} rank centres to 5\textsuperscript{th} rank centres and polarizing centres, all of which have higher or lower absorbing capacity. They are also categorized by their main area of activity. In communist Romania, some cities had a high level of occupation in the construction domain, some in industry, and others in public services. There were cities (with less than 20,000 inhabitants) were most of the population was working in agriculture. The annual growth rate of cities, by sector, increased, between 1956 and
1974, as follows: agricultural cities: 1,5%, industrial cities: 2,9%, cities with a highly developed tertiary sector: 3,1%. The fastest growing cities were those having between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants (3.4% per year)\(^{44}\).

Over the sixth, seventh and eighth decades of the last century, the majority of migrants that became citizens chose highly industrialized cities, in most cases over 60% of the population originating from other localities. In average, after the *enactment of systematization* (Law 58, 1974), some 58% of Romania’s urban dwellers came from other places\(^{45}\).

People were flowing not just from rural towards urban areas, but also between urban centres, from those with small possibilities towards big industrial centres. We have in mind two regularities: the bigger the city, the more it will attract population, respectively, the bigger the city, the greater the distance that immigrants would come from\(^{46}\). Of course, there were some exceptions. For instance, the small cities built in Jiu Valley during the communist period, that which attracted population from great distances, some 80% of their population being born in other places.

But both the causes and rhythm of rural-urban migration and the growing of Romanian cities were depending on the region and the type and level of their industry. Urban centres located near ports, or in the Sibiu-Brașov-Ploiești-Bucharest area, being already well industrialized before the war, had the biggest attracting rate.

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\(^{45}\) *Ibidem*, pp. 40-41, 46.

\(^{46}\) *Ibidem*, p. 65
Demographic consequences

The migration phenomenon, together with some legislative decisions, the evolution of economy and standard of living, influenced some demographic processes: birth and death rates, marriages and divorces.

In the first half of the communist period, birth rates dropped constantly in the urban areas, even by 50% from 1950 to 1966. After the abortion ban (Decree 770, 1966), birth rates exploded by 27.4‰ in one year. Even so, in the 70’s and the 80’s, the rhythm fell again, till a percentage of 16‰.47

The same economic and migration causes, together with the impact of birth and death rates, influenced marriages, that evolved differently by decade. Because of the lower average age, the number of marriages in urban areas was higher than the ones in rural places. The sharp increase in marriages after 1948 is explained by the recovery of delayed marriages during the war or the remarriage of widows. Interesting is that immediately after the abortion ban the number of marriages dropped significantly, growing again in a few years, but affected by the economical crisis in the 80’s.48 Another consequence of the urbanization process is the ethnic proportionality, mostly in Transylvanian cities.

The share of citizens of Romanian nationality increased not just because of a higher fertility, but also because of immigration and the ethnic assimilation of Hungarians, Germans, and Jews etc. among the majority. There were not any spectacular differences between the beginning and the

48 Ibidem, pp. 227-228.
final years of the communist period, in most cases just a few percent. For instance, throughout Romania, the total percentage of Romanians was 85.7% in 1956 and 89.5% in 1992. The number of Hungarians dropped from 9.1% in 1956 to 7.1% in 1992 and the number of Germans decreased from 2.2% in 1956 to 0.5% in 1992.\(^{49}\)

We cannot say exactly if the authorities planned a process of growing the Romanian population in Transylvania’s major cities. We can ensure that the process of urban systematization led to the demolition of many ordinary or symbolic buildings built by former Hungarian authorities as a symbol of their beliefs and culture. In this part we will exemplify the situation explained above with the case of some of the most important cities in Transylvania. Most of them were inhabited by Hungarians in majority and other nationalities in minority, in the interwar period or immediately after WWII. Firstly, we have the case of Oradea:

Table 3: Demographic and ethnic changes in Oradea during communism.\(^{50}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oradea year</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Population and percentage Romanians</th>
<th>Population and percentage Hungarians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>83,991</td>
<td>20,914 → 25,3%</td>
<td>42,630 → 51,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>170,531</td>
<td>91,925 → 53,9%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>222,741</td>
<td>144,244 → 64,7%</td>
<td>74,185 → 33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{49}\) Cornelia Mureșan, *op. cit.*, p. 94.
The equal percentage between Romanians and Hungarians was reached in 1973-1974, from that moment on the majority inclining towards Romanians.

A similar situation was in Cluj-Napoca, city with a rapidly increasing population. Here, the Romanian population had a rapid growth, overtaking the Hungarian population somewhere around 1960:

**Table 3: Demographic and ethnic changes in Cluj-Napoca during communism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluj-Napoca Year</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Population and percentage Romanians</th>
<th>Population and percentage Hungarians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>114,984</td>
<td>11,255 → 9,79%</td>
<td>98,502 → 85,67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>154,723</td>
<td>74,623 → 48,23%</td>
<td>77,839 → 50,31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>185,663</td>
<td>104,914 → 56,51%</td>
<td>76,934 → 41,44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>328,602</td>
<td>251,697 → 76,59%</td>
<td>74,591 → 22,7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can compare the demographic evolution of the city of Satu Mare in the same terms: the Romanian population grew quickly, in the same manner as in Cluj-Napoca. The difference consists of the further stability of percentages:

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Table 3: Demographic and ethnic changes in Satu Mare during communism\textsuperscript{52}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satu Mare Year</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Population and percentage Romanian</th>
<th>Population and percentage Hungarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>52,096</td>
<td>18,120 → 34,78%</td>
<td>31,204 → 59,9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>68,246</td>
<td>31,696 → 46,44%</td>
<td>34,490 → 50,54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>101,860</td>
<td>51,205 → 50,27%</td>
<td>48,842 → 47,95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>130,584</td>
<td>71,502 → 54,76%</td>
<td>53,917 → 41,29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the city of Târgu Mureș the ratio between the Romanian and Hungarian population remained unchanged during the communist period, a Romanian majority appearing just after 1989. At the 1992 census, the city counted 84,483 ethnic Hungarians, representing 51.37% of the total population\textsuperscript{53}.

Between Transylvanian cities there were, also, some exceptions. Sibiu had a Romanian majority since the beginning of the communist period, second place being occupied by the German population. In 1948, the city had 60,602 Romanians (61,67% of the total) in 1948, for it to


increase to 109,515 in 1966 (71.7% of the total), 151,005 in 1977 (79.1% of the total) and 169,610 in 1992 (93.7% of the total). The German population was at 27% of the total population in 1948, 23.2% in 1966, 16.8% in 1977 and 3.3% in 1992. The phenomenon is explainable not just because of the migration of a large number of Romanians to the city, but also by the emigration of Germans in western countries.

There are a few conclusions to be made. Romanian urbanism was influenced by different political decisions in the 20th century. Even if urban systematization was not a new concept for local architects, the industrialization and forced urbanization policy surely was. Housing ideology led to some interesting social and urban experiments in some cities, especially at the beginning of the 50’s, when the concept of the urban garden was abandoned in favour of the mass housing or apartment block policy. In total, over half of the population moved into new apartments, over four million of them being built in 40 years. In some cases, it was an improvement for those who lived in poor old houses, but for others it meant demolishing their well kept houses in favour of moving into small apartments. For them it was a tragedy.

The housing policy created a new way of life throughout socialist states, but increased social differences instead of eliminating them. Romanian demographics changed from many points of view and local and national migration became an overall reality. But consequences can be seen

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to date, when we can identify many more tendencies, from moving from rural areas to cities to moving from the cities towards villages, by many causes.

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