

Dijana Simonović, University of Banja Luka,
dijana.simonovic@aggf.unibl.org

CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY IN URBAN REGULATION STRATEGIES OF BANJA LUKA

Abstract:

This paper examines continuity and discontinuity in Banja Luka's urban regulation strategies, focusing on the evolution of the open regulation model as a flexible framework for managing the urban landscape. The study highlights its persistence through diverse historical and conceptual approaches and identifies key phases of urban development shaped by socio-political transitions and incomplete planning doctrines. Despite regulatory fragmentation, adaptive strategies have preserved the city's landscape identity, while emphasizing the need to stabilize the normative framework for long-term spatial order. Based on theoretical foundations and literature review, the analysis demonstrates how regulation has influenced urban form and identity. The study enhances understanding of Banja Luka's identity as a landscape city and outlines a framework for adaptive urban development strategies relevant to contemporary conditions.

Keywords: strategies, urban regulation, discontinuity, "open" regulation, Banja Luka

КОНТИНУИТЕТ И ДИСКОНТИНУИТЕТ У СТРАТЕГИЈАМА УРБАНЕ РЕГУЛАЦИЈЕ БАЊАЛУКЕ

Сажетак:

Рад истражује континуитет и дисконтинуитет стратегија урбане регулације у Бањалуци, са нагласком на еволуцију модела отворене регулације као флексибилног оквира за управљање урбаним пејзажом. Истраживање истиче трајност овог модела кроз различите историјске и концептуалне приступе и идентификује фазе урбаног развоја обликоване социо-политичким транзицијама и недовршеним планерским доктринама. Упркос фрагментацији регулаторне праксе, адаптивне стратегије су допринеле очувању пејзажног идентитета града, са нагласком на потреби стабилизације нормативног оквира како би се обезбедио дугорочни просторни поредак. Анализа показује како регулација утиче на урбану форму и идентитет. Студија доприноси разумевању идентитета Бањалуке као пејзажног града и нуди оквир за адаптивне стратегије урбаног развоја у савременим условима.

Кључне речи: стратегије, урбана регулација, дисконтинуитет, 'отворена' регулација, Бањалука

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary context of urban landscape planning and design, it is essential to understand the interests and goals of various actors involved in urban development processes, as well as their relationship to the public interest and the quality of the city's physical structure. The urban landscape does not represent an abstract physical framework of life in the city, but must be aligned with the real needs of urban space users, with its quality conditioned by the economic and social framework of society [1:49]. From the social and economic order, different instruments and strategies of urban space regulation and form emerge, influencing the identity of urban units and potentially encouraging or limiting the development of desirable or undesirable characteristics, forms, relations, visual images, and usage patterns. Actors such as residents, investors, social activists, and government institutions often have different priorities: while residents strive for a functional, safe, and pleasant environment, investors are oriented toward economic profitability. Therefore, urban landscape planning is a process that requires balancing diverse interests and achieving quality in accordance with real social and economic conditions.

The spatial order emerges from the social and economic system, generating instruments and strategies of regulation that shape the identity of urban areas. Such strategies may foster or constrain the development of desirable or undesirable forms, relations, visual patterns, and modes of use. In Republika Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina, spatial order is established through planning regulation, with formal involvement of experts, citizens, politicians, and investors. Yet, opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making remain limited. Alongside planning, legal regulation - derived from the democratic legal framework - also defines spatial order [2:99]. This system is marked by a well-developed planning practice but insufficient regulatory mechanisms. It is not universally applicable, but rather represents one possible model of intervention, functioning as a mechanism for aligning interests in both formal and informal contexts [3:122].

The urban development of Banja Luka has been shaped by a variety of approaches influenced by social, cultural, political, economic, and natural factors. Shifts in spatial ideologies and urban-architectural doctrines have repeatedly redefined the city's landscape, transforming its urban form and repositioning its core [4]. The regulatory models applied were conceptually and practically incomplete, resulting in morphological heterogeneity [5]. Frequent relocations of the urban core, along with the diversity of its forms and meanings, further illustrate this dynamic [4]. These conditions paved the way for the emergence of an adaptive and context-specific model of regulation - the so-called "open" regulation - marked by conceptual incompleteness, the simultaneous or sequential application of diverse strategies and instruments, and inconsistency in implementation.

Against this background, the central research problem addressed in this paper is: how have continuity and discontinuity in regulatory strategies influenced the identity of Banja Luka as a landscape city? The objectives of the study are: (1) to analyze the historical models of urban regulation in Banja Luka and their defining characteristics; (2) to examine the manifestations of continuity and discontinuity across different historical phases; (3) to demonstrate how the landscape concept has functioned as a constant in shaping urban identity; and (4) to propose a framework for adaptive urban development strategies relevant to contemporary conditions.

Accordingly, the research is guided by the following line of inquiry: a) it asks what the historical models of regulation of Banja Luka's urban landscape are and how they can be classified; b) in what ways continuity and discontinuity manifest across different regulatory phases; c) how the landscape concept has contributed to the preservation of urban identity despite regulatory disruptions, and d) what implications these findings hold for contemporary urban development strategies in post-socialist contexts?

2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The primary research method employed in this study is the case study approach, applied to the analysis of continuity and discontinuity in the processes of urban planning and development in Banja Luka, as well as their impact on the shaping of the city's urban form. The paper builds on the interpretation of selected results from a previously conducted, problem-oriented urban morphological study, which focused on the possibilities of restoring and enhancing the spatial identity of Banja Luka as a landscape city through urban regulation [5]. The research was centered on examining the relationships within the triad of urban phenomena: landscape – regulation – identity. Particular attention was devoted to the influence of general regulation on the urban

landscape and the characteristics of spatial identity, positioning Banja Luka among cities with a pronounced landscape character [6].

This study focuses on the normative-regulatory trajectory of Banja Luka's urbanization, interpreting the influence of strategies, instruments, and regulatory mechanisms on the urban landscape. Regulation is considered in a broader sense - as a general framework for guiding the reproduction of accepted civilizational values and established community patterns. Within this context, the role of politics is emphasized as a driving force that directs the choice of spatial development paths and enables an understanding of the relationship between the intentions of normative documents and their actual effects on the city's visual image, urban form, and spatial identity.

The results of previous research [5] are presented through a comparison of formal planning and legal regulatory intentions with the actual effects that historical regulatory models have left on Banja Luka's urban landscape. While regulatory strategies are at the core of this study, regulatory instruments, measures, standards, and urban codes that form part of the existing regulatory practice are also taken into account. Given the broad temporal scope - from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century - the study applies methods of scientific analysis of archival materials and primary sources, as well as critical content analysis of secondary sources. Comparative analysis is employed in the discussion, through the examination of morphological models and regulatory strategies applied in different historical periods, as well as their impact on the urban landscape.

To ensure analytical clarity, the study applies six classification criteria: (1) historical period, (2) regulatory instruments, (3) spatial characteristics, (4) socio-political context, (5) type of continuity/discontinuity, and (6) impact on urban identity. These criteria provide a systematic framework for comparing models across different phases. The classification of models according to these criteria is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification of Regulatory Models of Banja Luka's Urban Landscape

Historical period	Regulatory instruments	Spatial characteristics	Socio-political context	Continuity /Discontinuity	Impact on Urban Identity
Medieval – Ottoman (16th–19th c.)	Customary codes, informal regulation	Organic growth, adaptation to natural features, customary codes	Ottoman provincial system	Continuity through customary codes; discontinuity in formal instruments	Preservation of landscape character; urban–rural symbiosis
Austro-Hungarian (1878–1918)	Imperial plans, orthogonal grid, legal acts	Axial planning, tree-lined avenues, public buildings in “Bosnian style”	Colonial urbanism / imperial modernization	Discontinuity vs. organic growth; continuity through landscape elements	Visual contrasts and fragmented spatial identity
Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia (1918–1941)	Banovina plans, legal norms	Public buildings in “Serbian-orthodox style”; crystallization of urban landscape	National modernization	Discontinuity via new legal norms; continuity through ambient ensembles	Authentic visual sequence as symbol of administrative center
SFRYugoslavia (1945–1990)	Urban plans (1952, 1975), zoning, standards, Athens Charter influence	Functional zoning, decentralization, modernist dispersion	Socialist collectivism	Discontinuity in representativeness of center; continuity via landscape city concept	Transformation of identity through modernist dispersion
Post-socialist period	Investor-driven regulation, fragmented legal framework	Densification, expansion, heterogeneous forms	Transition economy, weak institutions	Discontinuity through erosion of public interest	Loss of authentic landscape identity

The methodological design integrates textual and visual analysis. A classification table systematizes the historical phases of Banja Luka's regulatory models through clearly defined criteria, while schematic diagrams illustrate their morphological characteristics—from the organic development of the market-town, through the orthogonal matrix of Austro-Hungarian administration, the ambient ensembles of the Vrbas Banovina, the modernist zoning of the socialist period, to the densification and expansion of the post-socialist managerial model. Schematic diagrams (Figures 1-5) complement the classification table by visually representing the morphological characteristics of each model. This methodological platform situates the classification of Banja Luka's regulatory models within broader theoretical perspectives (Rossi, Cullen, Corner, Waldheim), ensuring that

local findings contribute to international debates on landscape urbanism and the “city as landscape” [7], [8], [9], [10].

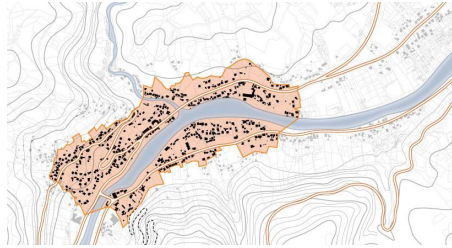


Figure 1. Organic growth of the Ottoman market-town. Depiction of the varoš-grad structure shaped by natural relief and river landscape (illustration by S. Cvijanović) [20].

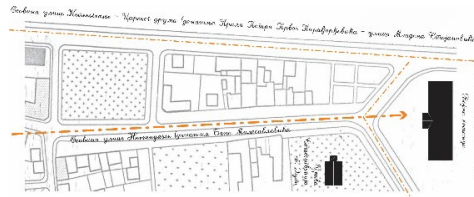


Figure 2. Axial matrix of Austro-Hungarian administration. Representation of imposed axial planning and contrasts between traditional and imperial forms (illustration by D. Simonović) [20].

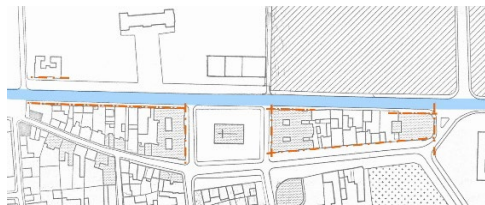


Figure 3. Ambient ensembles of the Vrbas Banovina. Characteristic regulation along the King's Road in the interwar period (illustration by D. Simonović) [20].

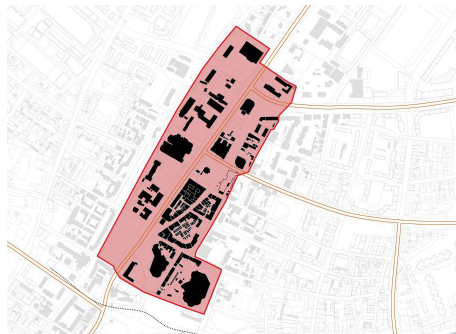


Figure 4. Modernist zoning in the socialist period. Diagram of functional decentralization and dispersion of the urban core (illustration by S. Cvijanović) [20].



Figure 5. Densification and expansion in the post-socialist managerial model. Illustration of heterogeneous forms and fragmentation linked to investor-driven regulation (illustration by S. Cvijanović) [20].

This combined approach enables continuity and discontinuity to be both described and visually compared, providing an additional contribution: the integration of analytical and visual frameworks that demonstrate how the landscape concept has functioned as a constant in shaping the city's urban identity.

3. SOCIAL CONTEXT AND THE CONCEPT OF LANDSCAPE

The historical and political frameworks of Banja Luka's urban development, as well as its spatial regulatory strategies, have been marked by discontinuity. The causes of disruption were most often socio-political changes, shifts in urban planning doctrines, and natural disasters. Key points of discontinuity include: the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary, accompanied by the introduction of administrative governance and new legal regulations; the two World Wars and the economic crisis of the 1930s; changes in the socio-economic order following the First (1918) and Second World War (1945); the catastrophic earthquake of 1969 and the subsequent shift toward a new model of so-called "collectivist" regulation; the transition following the civil war of the 1990s; and the financial crisis of 2008, which marked the shift toward a market-oriented model of spatial management. Each of these turning points led to the adoption of new regulatory paradigms, generally without the successful completion of the preceding ones. This practice resulted in fragmented and inefficient urban planning.

Nevertheless, despite these interruptions, certain elements of the city's spatial identity have been preserved, primarily due to flexible and adaptive regulatory strategies. In this regard, the Urban Plan of Banja Luka from 1975 (UPBL 1975) stands out as the only officially adopted planning document to date. Conceived as a flexible framework, the Plan allowed for adjustments to socio-economic changes and the needs of "self-managing entities." Consequently, a new approach emerged through the implementation of ad hoc or (non-)planned modifications, which were aligned with the dynamics of development and shifting priority goals. Unfortunately, many of the progressive and forward-looking provisions of the UPBL 1975 have not been implemented at the detailed, operational level of planning regulation, even fifty years after its adoption.

Contemporary practice, however, indicates a departure from such an approach. Spatial regulation has been reduced to detailed regulatory plans and their partial amendments, without a valid and up-to-date urban plan. Investor interests are prioritized, leading to the erosion of the public interest and the loss of authentic characteristics of the urban landscape. The absence of general rules and mechanisms for integrating local specificities into the regulatory framework further undermines the city's spatial identity.

Thus, the socio-historical context of Banja Luka's urban development has been dynamic and discontinuous, shaped by diverse concepts and approaches to planning. Within this process, the concept of landscape has represented one of the constant elements in the spatial organization of the city. Although variably applied, the landscape concept has remained recognizable throughout all stages of Banja Luka's urban development, with the exception of the most recent period. Despite frequent changes in the socio-political and normative context, and limitations in the application of regulatory instruments, the landscape concept has retained its relevance and continuity in shaping the city's spatial identity.

Continuity is also reflected in Banja Luka's morphogenetic characteristics, such as linearity and polycentricity in relation to the Vrbas River and the main communication routes, which have been present since the earliest phases of urbanization. Additionally, the persistent presence of rural

elements within the urban fabric—such as the population’s tendency to maintain gardens and orchards - points to a long-standing symbiosis between the urban and the rural. This phenomenon continues in the contemporary context, through the trend of urban residents purchasing rural estates for permanent residence, representing an inversion of the migration flows of the post-war industrialization period (when movement was predominantly from villages to cities). Furthermore, Banja Luka is characterized by low building density and significant spatial resources for future development, which allow for the preservation of spatial dispersal and the potential application of the “landscape city” concept in a broader sense.

The regulation of Banja Luka’s urban landscape thus represents a complex process in which continuities and discontinuities, institutional weaknesses, and social transformations intersect. The role of landscape in shaping the city’s spatial identity has been crucial, long serving as an integral component of urban planning. Contemporary urban trends, however, threaten the relevance of the landscape concept in spatial regulation. This section would benefit from a stronger theoretical grounding, for example by referencing broader perspectives on landscape urbanism (Corner, introduces the concept of landscape urbanism, than Waldheim systematizes the theoretical framework of the ‘city as landscape’ [7], [8]; Rossi and Cullen advances the concept of the city as collective memory and landscape) [9], [10], which emphasizes the visual coherence of urban form and the experiential dimension of landscape in shaping city identity. Such references would situate the local case of Banja Luka within wider academic debates and reinforce the analytical framework. This highlights the urgent need to revitalize the landscape concept through holistic and inclusive planning approaches, supported by regulatory strategies that acknowledge historical layers, integrate local specificities, and respond to the evolving needs of the community. Such an approach would not only preserve spatial identity but also strengthen the relevance of landscape as a guiding principle in contemporary urban regulation.

4. MODELS OF REGULATION OF THE LANDSCAPE CITY

The models and strategies of urban landscape regulation that emerged during Banja Luka’s urban development were often adapted, abandoned, or replaced, resulting in ineffective and unsuccessful urban planning (Figure 6). It has been shown that the decisive influences on the outcomes produced in the urban landscape were primarily social and political factors. Supporting evidence includes the fact that the Proposal of the General Urban Plan of Banja Luka from 1952 was never officially adopted, despite its broad and flexible regulatory framework and its explicit intention to be elastic and implemented in stages [11]. Similarly, the only adopted and still valid plan - the Urban Plan of Banja Luka from 1975 - represented a synthesis of regional and urban interrelations, economic and social needs, spatial opportunities, and the necessity for the city to remain open to its surroundings. It also emphasized flexibility, allowing for continuous adjustments in line with socio-economic development and granting “self-managing entities” the ability to adapt their behavior in construction and urban growth [12]. This decision-making process regarding spatial interventions was thus designed to enable ad hoc modifications of the plan, aligned with specific conditions, development dynamics, shifting goals, and evolving regulatory strategies.



Figure 6. “Historical” models of regulation of urban landscape of Banja Luka (illustration by D. Simonović) [4].

4.1. THE REGULATION MODEL OF THE MARKET-TOWN (VAROŠ-GRAD)

The regulation model of the market-town (varoš-grad) [5] was realized through the medieval concept of Banja Luka's settlement, which was later harmoniously complemented by the Oriental concept of kasaba or šehar. The characteristics of this model were strongly marked by organic, free spatial development, based on adaptation to the natural features of the territory and on customary, experience-based rules. This is a “historical” model of regulation, where the reference instruments were customary-experiential principles and urban-building codes. The term “urban-building” here encompasses both construction rules for individual structures and principles of spatial organization and settlement composition.

The socio-historical context in which this model was applied was characterized by the absence of formal regulatory instruments - legal-normative or planning. Contemporary domestic planning practice often interprets this model merely as *organic urban growth and spontaneous territorial expansion*. However, from the perspective of urban theory of regionalism - which values traditional principles and vernacular architecture - and its representatives (J. Neidhardt, D. Grabrijan, R. Radović, Z. Petrović, Z. Ugljen, among others), these codes are recognized as valuable customary and experiential standards [14]. Beyond the regional context, Andreas Duany refers to them in his review of Eran Ben-Joseph's *The Code of the City* (2005) as “keys to interpreting historical layers of meaning” or the “DNA of our cities,” providing an intelligible and comprehensive explanation of the genetic basis of inhabited places [15].

Analysis of historical-cartographic documentation related to Banja Luka reveals the legacy of these urban codes and their influence on shaping the city's form and landscape. They reflect a natural, logical, and rational relationship to the spatial assets of the settlement and adaptation to the morphological features of the location. From this adaptive relationship emerged flexible rules, contextually grounded, drawing on the positive effects of prior experience and ensuring the protection of the landscape and other communal goods. These rules endured in their essential form, with adaptations to specific cases not altering their core principles. In this way, the codes became embedded in Banja Luka's spatial identity, expressed through its key and enduring characteristics [1:163].

One of the most persistent codes is the “right to a view” (Figure 7). Unique among customary rights and ethical values of Balkan patriarchal communities, it represents a standard guaranteeing high-quality living conditions - today considered an exclusivity. The application of this principle can be observed not only in the settlement of Gornji Šehar in Banja Luka but also in the historic geomorphological cores of Balkan towns such as Ohrid, Prizren, Višegrad, Trebinje, and...

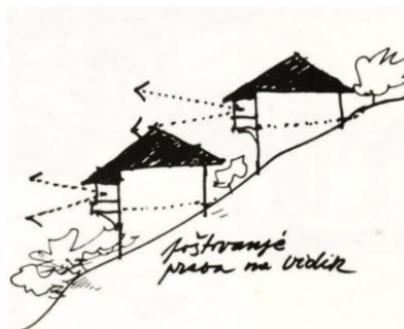


Figure 7. “Right of view” as experience- and tradition-based regulation instrument (Z. Petrović, *Tragajući za arhitekturom (In Search of Architecture)*, 1990).

The regulation process - organization, production, and control of the market-town's space and its center - was based on a simple system of general rules and standards. Through customary and experiential building codes, spatial relations were regulated in accordance with social relations, ownership, and user rights. The same principles governed the relationship with the natural and rural surroundings. These rights were codified in the vakufnamas of Bosnian towns under Ottoman rule. In Banja Luka, two particularly significant vakufnamas were issued - those of Sofi Mehmed Pasha and Ferhad Pasha - concerning the construction of public buildings. They contained “highly centralized building administrations, a clear conception of land ownership and urban order. It is

sufficient to mention the tapija ownership system and the vakuf system, the economic embryo and legal form of urbanization in many towns” [4].

4.2. MODEL OF REGULATION OF THE CITY-LANDSCAPE

The regulatory strategy of Banja Luka’s urban form, recognized as the “city-landscape,” was implemented under Austro-Hungarian administration and involved several targeted tactical interventions in the urban space. These included: the establishment of a distinctive and recognizable regulation of the main linear city thoroughfare - the Imperial Road (Figure 2); the formation of a street network by introducing missing cross streets; the marking of nodes and focal points through the construction of massive structures at key intersections, which together initiated further development within regulated city blocks; the regulation of streets and construction of new building complexes accompanied by the mandatory formation of tree-lined avenues, sidewalks, and landscaped spaces around military camps, factories, and markets; and the creation of landscape-architectural arrangements around significant public buildings (municipal offices, churches, post office, hotels, railway station, hospital, etc.). The Imperial Road served as the axis of the city’s urban development, from which cross streets (Salvatorgasse, Velika Realka, Kolodvorska, and others) extended, branching further into lower-order streets that formed regular blocks within an orthogonal matrix. Streets were regulated by planning documents, and norms for street widths were established [16].

The building of a railway was a major feat. It ran from Predgrađe (the city perimeter) into the city and forked into three spur lines in Banja Luka Field (Figure 8). Two branches served as industrial railways - one for the Tobacco Factory and another leading westward via Paprikovac to the mines at Lauš. The third branch, leading to the new representative railway station in the city, had the greatest impact on the formation of a new urban core in the area between the station and Herrengasse (today Bana Milosavljevića Street). The formation of this core was initiated by the construction of the Military Command building in 1879 (today the building of the Archives of Republika Srpska), considered the first structure built after the occupation and recorded in the geodetic map of 1880–84. Its position at the northern edge of the city, aligned with Herrengasse, marked the regulation of a wide transverse street axis planted with tree rows. The resulting avenue (today Aleja Svetog Save) connected the Military Command to Mali Logor (today the new university campus).



Figure 8. Railway line reaches city core (illustration by D. Papaz & M. Radmanović).

New patterns of social and private life found corresponding spatial expressions. In the city core appeared: closed urban blocks with perimeter construction along the regulatory line, serving residential and commercial purposes; promenades lined with trees and representative villas set back significantly from the regulatory line; and new forms of open spaces such as squares, parks, and small plazas. The implemented regulation emphasized aestheticization, expressed through the construction of public buildings whose spatial capacities, volumetrics, stylistic and aesthetic features, and positions underscored the importance of administrative authority. Their architecture often reflected the deliberately produced “Bosnian style” or “pseudo-Moorish” style, serving as typical examples of constructing an “ordered” urban identity. This had a clear political purpose: to establish the so-called Bosnian (Bosniak) ethnos and its hegemony within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Analysis of legislative content and regulations highlights visual-aesthetic and perceptual principles and rules, primarily articulated as concepts prescribing desired spatial effects: the image of the city or street, harmony, integrity, unified architectural appearance, and architectural cohesion. Rules also addressed the quality of spatial perception and experience, such as vistas and visual perspectives. For example, in first- and second-class streets (where building height was limited to ground floor

plus two stories), construction of a third story was permitted “when such height does not disrupt harmony with neighboring buildings or the architectural effect of the street image, or if other local considerations do not oppose it” (§ 48). This demonstrates a flexible approach to specific local criteria. Regarding public space, there was a prohibition against narrowing streets through construction (§ 62). Relations between new and existing buildings were defined by rights to light and air—the so-called “window rights” [16]. It is noteworthy that the customary “right to a view,” (Figure 7), discussed earlier, ensured a significantly higher standard and quality of living compared to window rights, which were applied under conditions of rational density planning and limited spatial resources [5:177].

1. Landscape town regulation strategy in Vrbas Banovina, Kingdom of Yugoslavia

With the liberation from Austro-Hungarian rule in 1918 and the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929), the status and significance of Banja Luka changed - it became the administrative center of the Vrbas Banovina. The establishment of a new spatial order unfolded gradually, so that until 1931 (with the adoption of the Building Law of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), the construction regulations from the Austro-Hungarian period remained in force. A new regulatory strategy, introduced by the Law and further codified in the Building Ordinance of 1932, applied to all towns and settlements in the Kingdom, but only began to be implemented nearly fifteen years after the founding of the new state [17], [18].

The reasons for this delay stemmed from political circumstances and the intention to represent abstract and metaphorical social space in the physical environment. Through the crystallization of the landscape in the urban core, the new socio-political and administrative significance of Banja Luka - as the seat of the Vrbas Banovina—was emphasized. An authentic spatial complex was constructed around the Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, consisting of the Ban’s Palace and Ban’s Court, later complemented by the Hypothec Bank building. This specific ambient ensemble manifested as a unique and dominant visual sequence in the city’s image, achieving “crystallization” in the urban landscape, with authenticity and recognizability becoming key features of Banja Luka’s spatial identity (Figure 9).

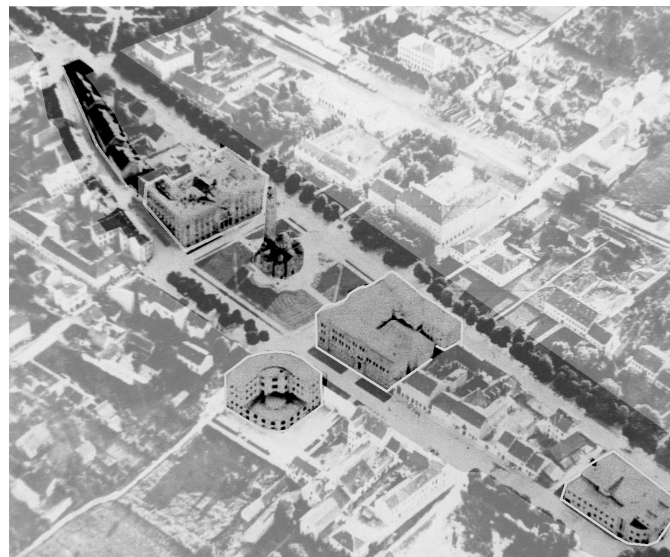


Figure 9. “Crystallization” of the Urban Landscape: Complex of the Cathedral, Ban’s Palace, and Ban’s Court (Illustration by Slaven Cvijanović, Source: Museum of Republika Srpska).

The street fronts of the Main Street were gradually built up, though the horizontal regulatory lines differed. The eastern street front was characterized by minimal distance between the regulatory and building lines, while the western front retained significantly larger setbacks (from Hotel Bosna, through a series of residential and administrative buildings, to Ban Milosavljević Park). The transformation of King Peter Street’s regulation occurred in its central section, where regulatory and building lines overlapped. In this way, closed blocks were formed in the urban core, with massive buildings constructed along the entire width and depth of the blocks (Figure 3) [5:195].

4.3. MODERN CITY REGULATION MODEL

In the spatial organization of Banja Luka during socialist Yugoslavia, planning and normative-regulatory approaches dominated. This was realized as a “collectivist” model of regulation, characteristic of industrial and military cities. Before the 1969 earthquake, strategies were conceived to establish a modern, multifunctional city within the framework of a radical transition to a socialist socio-economic order. Nationalization and expropriation abolished private property, transferring it into social ownership. Spatial planning was thus generated by a new regulatory model - the strategy of the modernist urban landscape.

This approach was based on the urban principles formulated in Le Corbusier’s The Athens Charter, but adapted to the conditions of development in medium-sized cities across the SFRY. The first Proposal of the General Urban Plan of Banja Luka was prepared in 1952 by Anatol Kirjakov. It envisioned a multifunctional city with separated urban functions within the urban structure - functional zoning” [5:56]. The proposal was never formally adopted, but was partially implemented and used in practice as the only available planning document until the adoption of the new Urban Plan in 1975. The proposed compositional axis to the east was never realized, despite being intended as a missing transversal thoroughfare to enable crosswise expansion of Banja Luka’s predominantly linear form. It was planned as a wide boulevard with carriageways separated by a linear park, terminating at a new railway station [4].

What occurred at the level of urban landscape regulation strategy? Unlike earlier models, emphasis was no longer placed on the representativeness of individual or grouped buildings. Instead, all structures were positioned equally within the open urban landscape, and the street network no longer played the initiating role in the distribution of buildings and development. The new spatial order was generated by the decentralization process in the SFRY, which came into effect at the time of the adoption of the 1975 Urban Plan. The city core ceased to be exclusively a place for the representation of authority, ideology, and politics. Instead, decentralization - or more precisely, the dispersion of centrality - became evident. This dispersion diluted the crystallization of the urban landscape, partially eroding the meaning of what had previously been a unified urban center (Figure 4). Consequently, significant changes occurred in the spatial identity of Banja Luka [5:180].

4.4. MANAGERIAL CITY REGULATION MODEL

The influences of general regulation on the urban landscape of contemporary Banja Luka as a **managerial city** (after 1996) unfolded through simultaneous processes of “implosion” - the densification of the urban fabric - and “explosion” - the expansion of the urban fabric into the wider surroundings. In the urban core (Figure 5), the initial tactic was “as representative and as modern as possible,” clearly reflecting the authorities’ intention to demonstrate, through urban-architectural expression, the new managerial role that Banja Luka assumed after the 1990s civil war. At the same time, there were evident aspirations to align the city’s development - now of greater importance - with the trajectory of modern capitalist cities [5].

However, in the following decade (2010s), the previous, unfinished strategy was replaced, resulting in a shift in spatial order and regulatory approach. The outcome of this political turn was a transition from a strategy emphasizing the representativeness of the city center to a “free market” strategy, in which the crystallization of the urban landscape depended on the movement and interests of capital. Spatial order and control, once under state authority, became subject to the monopoly of private entrepreneurial or corporate capital, intertwined with political power. Decision-making regarding space and urban interventions was now based on the distribution of power between government and capital owners. The regulatory strategy thus represented an image of the city with which the ruling social group identified, and since it was founded on individual interests, it shaped the urban landscape as a “free market-landscape” [19].

Prior to this shift in spatial order, the dominant effects were disintegration and fragmentation of the urban fabric, along with processes of upgrading and extending existing physical structures within the inner city. These processes altered established rules of vertical regulation and disrupted the previously coherent image of the city. Banja Luka’s skyline had been characterized by a specific proportional balance between built mass and open sky. With the construction of new typologies of mixed-use residential-commercial structures, however, parcels were fully exploited - typical of market-driven relations. This reflected the adoption and promotion of new value demands, translated into standards of density, greening, and amenities, all defined by economic criteria of efficiency, rationality, and effectiveness. Spatial decisions thus fell within a regulatory strategy based exclusively on the dominance of economic values, interests, and power, without negotiation or reconciliation of differing value demands [20].

Assessing the inefficiency of regulatory strategies applied through formal planning instruments, we considered data from the official website of the City of Banja Luka, which lists more than 150

adopted regulatory plans for the municipality's territory (including numerous amendments and supplements). The regulatory plan represents the planning basis for the city's development and the dominant instrument of regulatory strategy. The reason for this lies in the evident absence of a valid higher-level planning document with which lower-level detailed regulatory decisions should be harmonized. The last valid Urban Plan of Banja Luka was adopted in 1975, while the new plan remains in draft form.

5. DISCUSSION ON THE CONTINUITY OF DISCONTINUITY AND THE STRATEGY OF "OPEN" REGULATION

Research into the urban development of Banja Luka indicates the formation of a specific model of urban landscape regulation, which may be described as an "open" model. As summarized in Table 1 (Methodological framework), the classification of landscape regulation models across historical periods provides a systematic synthesis of defining characteristics and representative schematic illustrations of the urban fabric. This framework explicitly highlights how continuity and discontinuity manifest in Banja Luka's urban identity, enabling the discussion to move beyond descriptive narration toward analytical interpretation. This model evolved from initial customary-experiential principles and codes, which over time proved adaptable to changing contextual conditions. Its foundation lies in medieval principles of harmonizing the built environment with the natural surroundings, from which flexible rules emerged: adaptation to specific spatial conditions, reliance on prior experience, control of landscape disruption, and protection of public goods.

Further development of this model occurred within the incomplete normative-regulatory system of Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Regulation was based on construction orders, selectively supplemented by adapted customary rules. Nevertheless, Banja Luka's urban core was largely shaped by "imported" principles of spatial order, which influenced its morphological structure. In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Vrbas Banovina, modernization was further emphasized, most visibly manifested in the urban core through the "crystallization" of the urban landscape [4]. Within the SFRY, social order and values were transformed into a spatial strategy based on openness, expansion, and the relativization of boundaries. Although innovative, this approach led to irrational consumption of natural and spatial resources, fragmentation of the urban fabric, and a departure from the previous model of crystallization. In the last two decades, contemporary regulatory strategies have resulted in "pseudo-crystallization" of the landscape, loss of continuity in spatial characteristics, and changes in elements of the city's identity. Politically conditioned redistribution of urban space (capitalization of spatial resources) has conflicted with the continuous dispersal and heterogeneity of Banja Luka's urban fabric, within which processes of deconstruction of old and construction of new meanings unfold.

The research has shown that, despite imperfect concepts and unsuccessful strategies, there exists a "free field" for the application of a specific strategy of general regulation. Such a strategy would be based on a synthesis of customary-experiential codes and general legislative-normative principles, enabling flexibility and adaptability in planning. Although the establishment of certain spatial orders was incomplete, one of the key features of Banja Luka's urban identity has been preserved - the complementarity of physical and green structures within the urban landscape [5]. This characteristic, together with the presence of rural patterns and the population's expressed need for agricultural activities on their own plots, represents a potential comparative advantage in the contemporary urban context [13].

What kind of regulatory strategy is this, given the described imperfections and incompleteness in establishing spatial order? It is an adaptive strategy of regulation, balancing between what is legally prescribed, what is directed through planning practice, and what is realized through construction. This strategy is resilient and responsive to the current state of decision-making in spatial matters: the absence of higher-level planning bases is overcome through communication with stakeholders, while the Urban Plan itself is left broad in scope relative to lower-level plans. Such a strategy rapidly developed within the new system of negotiated planning, derived from the political and social concept of socialist self-management, involving a large number of stakeholders and aiming to respond to a wider range of needs and interests. The collective nature of social order was visible in the structure and shaping of the urban landscape, while planning ensured optimal social and spatial standards as a concrete expression of social values. The priority goal of spatial governance and control was initially under state monopoly, but over time gradually devolved to the level of republics (after the adoption of the 1974 Constitution of the SFRY and decentralisation of governance) [20]. Due to inconsistencies between prescribed normative-regulatory intentions and their realized spatial effects, within the free, uncovered field of shifting political and ideological control, a specific,

adaptive, and open model of urban landscape regulation in Banja Luka was simultaneously realized. These imperfections and incompleteness, thanks to flexible landscape strategies, contributed to the formation of Banja Luka's recognizable character with the features of a "landscape city." However, in the last fifteen years, during the application of the regulatory strategy of the contemporary managerial city, the harmonious relationship between built and green structures within the urban landscape has been endangered. This balanced relationship was achieved precisely through the application of the landscape strategy and the inclusion of the landscape concept in the processes of spatial organization, planning, and design. Today, we observe the loss of authentic characteristics in Banja Luka's urban form, changes in spatial meaning, and the introduction of new regulatory practices - non-contextual and disconnected from the enduring features of identity [20].

In contemporary urban planning practice, an inverse procedure is unfolding: without a valid, updated, and adopted Urban Plan, regulation is carried out exclusively through detailed spatial regulation and frequent partial amendments. In this process, investor interests are prioritized, reducing the establishment of spatial order to the accommodation of their demands and successive incorporation into the planning framework. At the same time, there is a lack of general rules or definition of key urban orders, and no instruments exist for integrating regional and local building specificities into the legal-regulatory framework of spatial organization. The priority goal of spatial governance and control, once under state monopoly, has gradually shifted to the monopoly of private and corporate capital.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GENERAL REGULATION

In order to preserve, revitalize, and enhance the qualitative features of the urban landscape, as well as the enduring elements of the identity of the landscape city, the process of establishing spatial order should be guided through the application of appropriate policies, strategies, and various formal and informal planning instruments. This position is based on the confirmed thesis of the interdependence between the identity of Banja Luka as a landscape city and the specific "open" regulation model [14], which evolved through the succession of several incomplete regulatory strategies, within which the concept of landscape was present in various forms until the last two decades.

Analysis of spatial characteristics and morphological traces in Banja Luka's urban fabric has shown that specific social values, continuously transformed into regulatory instruments, have left a lasting imprint on the city's spatial identity. From this arises the possibility that, in reverse, through carefully designed policies and strategies - particularly within informal forms such as strategic planning - the preservation and affirmation of the fundamental features of the landscape and city identity can be achieved. This approach is elaborated further within the concept of strategic urban design.

Nevertheless, the existing legal framework in Republika Srpska treats spatial organization in a fragmented manner, rather than as an integrated whole. The Constitution of Republika Srpska defines "spatial organization" as a central category, which has led to a normative model in which space is not perceived as a unified system but as a composite of individual elements treated in isolation. This conception results in discontinuity in establishing spatial order, particularly regarding the permanence of spatial assets, as well as the continuous variability of interests, approaches, and relations among actors. In this context, revitalization of the urban order at the state and/or republican level is necessary. This requires revision and harmonization of existing regulations, i.e., their codification [2]. Accordingly, the recommendation is to develop a Code of Spatial Organization and Settlement Regulation, which would unify general principles and enable continuous and systemic guidance of spatial development.

Codification must be based on the stability, clarity, and maturity of the social, economic, political, and legal order, as well as on the existence of a clearly defined urban system [2:94]. Within this framework, certain rules must remain permanent and immutable to ensure stability and long-term sustainability of spatial order. Past practice, in which flexible rules were often subject to interpretation according to the interests of powerful actors, highlights the need for caution when adapting regulation to local conditions.

As a possible mechanism for improving the regulatory framework, classification of rules according to their degree of specificity is proposed, along with the definition of criteria for different components of spatial order. These criteria should be based on the essential characteristics of the socio-economic system, as well as on community values and standards that remain unchanged over longer periods [2].

However, in the context of Republika Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is no stable, shared, and universally accepted system of values, goals, and standards (around which social consensus exists). Instead, the value system is heterogeneous and complex, with several different, often conflicting subsystems. Moreover, the positions and interests of actors involved in spatial decision-making are highly variable. Under conditions of democratization and the free influence of market mechanisms, contemporary urban interventions increasingly move toward socio-economic policies and architectural-construction practices. The local level of spatial governance is gaining importance, but it is characterized by a high degree of heterogeneity among actors, interests, and standards.

Therefore, recommendations include the application of the concept of an asymmetric decision-making system - a model that involves governance across multiple spatial levels, as well as continuous reassessment and adaptation of policies, strategies, and goals defined in accordance with those levels [3:124]. To implement recommendations for the general regulation of Banja Luka's urban landscape in practice, it is necessary to translate them into local strategies and policies, enabling concrete action aligned with the city's specific conditions and identity.

6.1. IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL REGULATION STRATEGIES

The implementation of local regulation strategies represents a key mechanism for translating general recommendations into concrete interventions aimed at preserving and enhancing the identity of the urban landscape of a specific city. These strategies are developed through informal planning forms, local strategic planning, and strategic urban design, which combine a vision of development with principles of spatial shaping.

The primary goal of local strategic planning is the achievement of defined objectives and the resolution of specific problems, with full awareness of local development conditions, the socio-political structure of the community, clearly defined priorities and resources, as well as an understanding of causes and consequences, trends, opportunities, and constraints of development. Local integrative regulation strategies should be innovative and creative, enabling the establishment of spatial order and the regeneration of neglected values. Their application requires interaction among different social groups in formulating visions and making decisions, thereby overcoming the limitations of formal planning.

Furthermore, through the development of appropriate policies and strategies based on criteria of urban landscape quality - focused on preservation, renewal, and enhancement of qualitative features of the urban landscape - it becomes possible to safeguard the enduring elements of city identity and rehabilitate neglected spatial values. In this way, the shortcomings of formal planning in the decision-making system are overcome, and continuity in the development of the specific open regulation model is ensured. Such a model possesses flexibility, allowing adaptation of policies and procedures in accordance with contextual changes and monitoring of achieved results.

Ultimately, local regulation strategies have the capacity to ensure continuity in preserving the identity of a specific city, while simultaneously introducing discontinuity through new values and innovative approaches. In this way, they become the foundation of a dynamic and resilient model of urban development, balancing the aspiration to preserve heritage and continuity with the need for change.

6.2. PRINCIPLES OF REGULATION OF THE LANDSCAPE CITY

In the context of contemporary challenges of shaping the built environment and regulating settlements, general principles of urban landscape regulation have been formulated with the aim of preserving, renewing, and enhancing the identity of Banja Luka as a landscape city. These principles represent a synthesis of the previously analyzed regulation models (Chapter 4), which demonstrated different historical and conceptual approaches—from the Market-Town model, through the City-Landscape and Modern City models, to the Managerial City model. Through the integration of these experiences and their critical evaluation, the following universal principles have been defined:

- **Codification** – harmonization of state, regional, and local spatial order through a Code of Spatial Organization.
- **Quality** – establishment of regulatory standards based on the features of spatial identity.
- **Integrity** – ensuring unity between individual ambiances and the total urban landscape.
- **Identity** – respect for specificity and context in every intervention.
- **Continuity** – reliance on previous regulation models to preserve enduring values.
- **Contextual Consistency** – adaptation to spatial-functional and ambient-structural characteristics of the context.

- **Adaptability** – development of an adaptive regulation model through integration of normative and experiential rules.
- **Values and Meanings** – restoring meaning to spatial elements through regulation.
- **Diversity** – ensuring morphological and functional variety of urban ambiances as socio-spatial patterns of the urban landscape with identity.

The proposed principles of regulation of the landscape city constitute a universal framework derived from the analysis of historical regulation models. They enable continuity with Banja Luka's previous regulatory practices while simultaneously introducing necessary discontinuity through innovative and adaptive approaches.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study of Banja Luka's urban development highlights the persistence of a distinctive model of "open regulation" of the urban landscape, which evolved through diverse historical and conceptual approaches. Despite the incomplete application of certain strategies and the partial establishment of spatial orders, a key feature of the city's identity has endured - the complementarity of physical and green structures within the urban fabric. This continuity, together with the dispersed urban form and lower population density, represents a potential comparative advantage in contemporary urbanization processes.

As shown in Table 1 (Chapter 2), the classification of landscape regulation models across historical periods already provides a concise synthesis of defining characteristics and their manifestations of continuity and discontinuity. This reference underlines the methodological contribution of the study and supports the concluding recommendations for adaptive strategies in contemporary urban planning. The research also demonstrates the methodological contribution of integrating textual and visual analysis, classification tables, and schematic diagrams. This combined approach enables continuity and discontinuity to be both described and visually compared, showing how the landscape concept has functioned as a constant in shaping the city's urban identity, while situating local findings within broader theoretical perspectives.

Beyond its analytical dimension, the study formulates recommendations for contemporary urban planning, emphasizing regulatory instruments that integrate ecological and cultural dimensions and strengthen public participation. These recommendations confirm that the landscape concept can serve as a practical instrument for resilient urban planning and identity preservation.

NOTE

The translation of the text into English, as well as the final proofreading, was completed with the assistance of Microsoft Copilot.

LITERATURE

- [1] V. A. Milić, „Regulacija urbane forme u urbanističkom planiranju.” [Urban form's regulation into urban planning]. M.A. thesis, Fac. Arch., Univ. Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia, 1993.
- [2] D. Pajović and M. Ralević, „Zakon kao regulator pravnog reda u urbanom poretku“ [Law as a regulator of legal order in urban order], in *Proc. LŠU Šipovo*, Banja Luka, 2002, pp. 87–101.
- [3] N. Lazarević Bajec and M. Maruna, *Strateški urbani dizajn i kulturna raznolikost* [Strategic urban design and cultural diversity]. Belgrade, Serbia: Fac. Arch., Univ. Belgrade, 2009.
- [4] D. Simonović, „Changes in the location and meaning of Banjaluka's urban core: recommendations for urban landscape regeneration“ [Promene pozicije i značenja urbanog jezgra Banjaluke: preporuke za regeneraciju urbanog pejzaža], *AGG+ J. Archit. Civ. Eng. Geod.*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 015–028, 2023.
- [5] D. Simonović, „Istraživanje mogućnosti obnove i unapređenja urbanog identiteta pejzažnog grada Banjaluke putem urbanističke regulacije“ [Research into the possibility of rehabilitation and upgrade of the urban identity of Banja Luka as a landscape city through urban regulation]. Ph.D. dissertation, Fac. Arch. Civ. Eng. Geod., Univ. Banja Luka, Banja Luka, 2014.
- [6] D. Simonović, *Pejzažni gradovi: poređenje razvoja urbanog identiteta gradova Banjaluke i Graca* [Landscape cities: comparison of urban identity development of Banja Luka and Graz]. Banja Luka: Univ. Banja Luka, Fac. Arch. Civ. Eng. Geod., 2010.
- [7] A. Rossi, *Arhitektura grada*. Beograd, Srbija: Građevinska knjiga i Premis, 1996.

- [8] G. Cullen, *Gradski pejzaž*. Beograd, Srbija: Građevinska knjiga, 2007
- [9] J. Corner, *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Theory*. New York, NY, USA: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999.
- [10] C. Waldheim, *Landscape Urbanism Reader*. New York, NY, USA: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006.
- [11] UZSA, *Generalni urbanistički plan*. Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Urbanistički zavod Glavne uprave za komunalne poslove, 1952.
- [12] UZBL, *Banja Luka: Urbanistički plan. Sinteza*. Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Urbanistički zavod Banja Luka, 1975.
- [13] D. Simonović, „Interweaving of Banjaluka’s urban and rural landscapes,“ in *Proc. 2nd Int. Acad. Conf. Places and Technologies*, A. Fikfak et al., Eds., Nova Gorica – Ljubljana, 2015, pp. 194–201.
- [14] D. Simonović, „Neidhardt’s vernacular-modernist glossary of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s architecture and urbanism,“ in *Proc. STEPGRAD 2022, XV Int. Conf. Contemp. Theory Pract. Constr.*, S. Maksimović et al., Eds., Banja Luka, 2022, pp. 256–266.
- [15] E. Ben-Joseph, *The Code of the City: Standards and the Hidden Language of Place Making*. Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press, 2005.
- [16] „Građevinski red za Zemaljski glavni grad Sarajevo“ [Building order for the provincial capital Sarajevo], *Glasnik zakona i naredaba za BiH*, no. 75, 1893, pp. 543–581.
- [17] J. I. Obradović, *Građevinski zakon sa objašnjenjima i uputstvima za rad opštinskih iupravnih vlasti, inženjera, arhitekata, geometara, građevinara-graditelja i vlasnika zemljišta i zgrada* [Building law with explanations and instructions...]. Ministarstvo građevina Kraljevine Jugoslavije, 1931.
- [18] „Građevinski pravilnik za gradove, varoši i varošice Vrbaske banovine iz 1936/37. godine“ [Building regulations for cities, towns and small towns of the Vrbas Banovina from 1936/37]. Ministarstvo građevina Kraljevine Jugoslavije, 1936.
- [19] LJ. Blagojević, „Pejzaž slobodnog tržišta,“ *Forum*, vol. 53, pp. 58-60, 2008.
- [20] D. Simonović, *Strategije regulacije pejzažnog grada: preporuke za regeneraciju urbanog pejzaža*. Banja Luka: Univ. Banja Luka, Fac. Arch. Civ. Eng. Geod., 2024