

Dimitrije Ignjatović, Politecnico di Milano, dimitrije.ignjatovic@mail.polimi.it

## REASSESSING MODERNISM THROUGH THE YUGOSLAV LENS

### ***Abstract:***

Postwar modernist urbanism remains labelled by dominant narratives that frame modernism primarily through failure and postmodern rejection. While critiques of modernist planning have largely emerged from Western European and North American contexts, this study argues that such interpretations cannot be universally applied. The paper provides new argumentation for the critical reassessments and contributes to a more nuanced understanding of modernism as a context-dependent and adaptable urban project. New Belgrade residential blocks, conceived and designed in former Yugoslavia show that approach that transcends common downfalls can offer valuable input for contemporary reassessment of modernism and lessons for new developments.

*Keywords: modernism, urbanism, critique, Yugoslavia, New Belgrade*

## ПРЕИСПИТИВАЊЕ МОДЕРНИЗМА КРОЗ ЈУГОСЛОВЕНСКУ ПРИЗМУ

### ***Сажетак:***

Постратни модернистички урбанизам често је означен доминантним наративима који га приказују кроз неуспех и постмодерно одбацивање. Иако су критике модернистичког планирања углавном настале у западноевропском и северноамеричком контексту, ова студија тврди да таква тумачења нису универзално применљива. Рад нуди нову аргументацију за критичко преиспитивање и доприноси нијансиранијем разумевању модернизма као контекстуално зависног и прилагодљивог урбаног пројекта. Стамбени блокови Новог Београда, осмишљени и пројектовани у бившој Југославији, показују да приступ који превазилази уобичајене слабости може пружити вредан увид за савремено преиспитивање модернизма и поуке за нове урбане развоје.

*Кључне речи: модернизам, урбанизам, Нови Београд, критика модернизма, Југославија*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The historiography of modernist urbanism has long been dominated by a narrative of rise, crisis, and postmodern repudiation. In this arc, 20th-century mass-housing megastructures, conceived as rational, progressive, socially oriented environments, were later (in many cases rightfully so) reframed as failures: dehumanized landscapes, bureaucratic artifacts, or symbols of coercive state power. Yet this narrative, largely shaped by Western European and North American critiques, obscures the heterogeneity of modernist practices globally [1], [2]. Non-aligned, socialist, but open to Western influences, Yugoslavia represents a crucial counterpoint. Its unique political, economic, and cultural position, produced an architectural milieu that at once absorbed, challenged, and reinterpreted the universalizing ethos of modernism [3].

This paper aims to reassess modernism through the Yugoslav lens, focusing on New Belgrade, its major flagship project, as both an exemplary and anomalous case. Rather than examining Yugoslav modernism in isolation, the argument situates it as part of a dialogue within broader mid-century debates about the city, mass housing, postwar reconstruction, and the later critiques of modernist urbanism that culminated in the postmodern turn [1], [4]. By comparing the 1960s development of New Belgrade with contemporaneous projects such as Toulouse-Le Mirail, Berlin's Hauptstadt competitions, the Bijlmermeer, Pruitt-Igoe, Soviet microrayon experiments, and East German Plattenbau districts, this paper demonstrates that Yugoslav modernism, particularly in its urban form, cannot be subsumed under simplistic narratives of modernist failure.

Moreover, the paper argues that the so-called "critique of modernism" promulgated through the writings of Jane Jacobs (1961), Team 10 (Smithson and Smithson 1967), Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi (1972), and later Charles Jencks (1977) has itself often been insufficiently contextualized when applied to Yugoslav cases [5], [6], [4]. Many of the failures associated with Western megastructures did not manifest in the same way in Yugoslavia, precisely because the political economy, cultural norms, and collective spatial practices were fundamentally different. As recent academic work shows, Yugoslav modernism operated "in-between": between East and West, between state planning and market pragmatism, and between ideological representation and everyday spatial negotiation [3], [7], [8].

Thus, this paper seeks to critique the critique, to reassess both modernism and its postmodern detractors by reframing New Belgrade not as a derivative of Western functionalist doctrine but as a site where modernist principles were selectively appropriated, contested, and transformed.

## 2. MODERNIST URBANISM IN THE POSTWAR CONDITION - UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES, DIVERGENT REALITIES

The Postwar Europe was shaped by unprecedented material devastation, demographic displacement, and housing shortages. Modernist urbanism, already articulated through CIAM discourse and the Athens Charter before the Second World War, gained renewed urgency as both a technical solution and an ideological project [1]. Across political systems, modernist planning principles (functional zoning, separation of circulation, standardized construction, and the use of open space as a structuring device) were mobilized to address the scale and speed required for reconstruction.

Despite these shared formal strategies, postwar modernism manifested unevenly. In Western Europe and North America, it was embedded within welfare-state frameworks and often tied to urban renewal programs that displaced existing communities. In Eastern Europe, modernism became the spatial arm of socialist modernization, instrumentalized through centralized planning and industrialized construction systems [9]. The superficial similarity of forms has often encouraged retrospective homogenization. Yet, as this paper argues, such homogenization obscures fundamental differences in intention, governance, and lived experience.

### 2.1. MODERNISM AS A GLOBAL PLANNING PARADIGM

By the late 1940s and 1950s, modernism had consolidated itself as the dominant paradigm of large-scale urban planning. The promise of rational organization, hygienic living conditions, and technological efficiency resonated across ideological divides. High-rise slabs set within green open space, the segregation of traffic systems, and the standardization of housing typologies became near-universal responses to the housing crisis. These principles were not merely architectural preferences but expressions of broader faith in scientific planning and social progress [1], [10].

However, the rapid implementation of these ideas soon exposed their limits. In Western contexts, the abstraction of space from social practices, combined with economic restructuring and racial segregation, contributed to the deterioration of many modernist estates. By the 1960s, these failures

provided fertile ground for critique, culminating in the intellectual shift toward postmodern urbanism. [4], [5], [6]. Importantly, this critique emerged not from the formal qualities of modernism alone, but from its entanglement with specific political and economic conditions.

## **2.2. YUGOSLAVIA'S POSITION WITHIN THE POSTWAR LANDSCAPE**

Yugoslavia's postwar trajectory diverged significantly from both Western welfare capitalism and Soviet-style central planning. Following the 1948 split with the USSR, Yugoslavia pursued a model of self-management socialism that emphasized decentralization, workers' participation, and relative cultural openness. This political framework profoundly shaped architectural production. Yugoslav architects were deeply engaged with international debates, participating in CIAM and later Team 10 discussions, while maintaining institutional autonomy at home [3], [8].

Modernism in Yugoslavia thus functioned neither as an imposed ideological style nor as a purely technocratic tool. Instead, it became a flexible language through which competing values (collectivism and individuality, standardization and experimentation) were negotiated. New Belgrade emerged as the most ambitious spatial manifestation of this condition, embodying the aspirations and contradictions of Yugoslav modernity [11].

## **2.3. POSTWAR RECONSTRUCTION AND THE SHARED LOGIC OF MODERNIST URBANISM**

Large-scale modernist urban projects across the postwar world emerged from a shared constellation of material devastation, demographic pressure, and ideological faith in planning. In the aftermath of the Second World War, cities across Europe and beyond faced acute housing shortages, infrastructural collapse, and rapidly expanding urban populations. These conditions fostered a widespread conviction that traditional, incremental urban growth was insufficient to address the scale of the crisis. Instead, comprehensive planning, supported by industrialized construction techniques and technocratic governance, was embraced as both a pragmatic and progressive response [1].

Across differing political systems, this belief produced a remarkably consistent urban vocabulary. Functional zoning, standardized housing typologies, the separation of pedestrian and vehicular circulation, and the deployment of open green space as a structuring element became near-universal planning devices. These principles were institutionalized through international forums such as CIAM and disseminated through professional networks, competitions, and publications. As a result, postwar urbanism developed as a transnational project whose formal coherence often masked significant differences in political economy, governance, and everyday use.

Within this framework, New Belgrade should be understood not as a peripheral or belated adoption of Western modernism, but as an integral participant in a shared postwar epistemology of planning. Similar principles underpinned Western European grands ensembles, British New Towns, and Scandinavian satellite cities, all of which sought to rationalize urban growth through comprehensive spatial order. As Blagojević argues, the planning logic of New Belgrade was grounded less in ideological symbolism than in a widespread postwar belief in scientific planning as a socially progressive instrument capable of producing equitable living conditions at scale [11]. This epistemological foundation cut across political systems, complicating later attempts to interpret modernist urban form primarily through ideological lenses.

Crucially, Yugoslav modernism developed at a moment when the promises of modernist planning had not yet been fully undermined by critique. New Belgrade's early phases coincided with what might be described as the "optimistic phase" of postwar modernism, when large-scale planning was still widely associated with social advancement, collective welfare, and national reconstruction. This temporal positioning is essential for understanding why its urban form cannot be evaluated solely through the lens of later disillusionment.

## **3. COMPARATIVE MODERNISMS: SITUATING NEW BELGRADE WITHIN POSTWAR URBAN DISCOURSE**

This section positions New Belgrade within a set of comparative postwar urban projects developed in similar temporal and ideological conditions, in order to evaluate how shared modernist principles produced divergent spatial and social outcomes.

### 3.1. NEW BELGRADE AS AN EVOLVING MODERNIST PROJECT

Within this comparative context, New Belgrade cannot be understood as a single modernist model replicated at scale, but rather as an evolving urban project developed through successive phases. The early postwar Pavilion blocks were followed by the Central Blocks and later by more refined ensembles such as Blocks 45 and 70, which consolidated earlier experiments into a mature urban form [11], [12]. This gradual transformation produced a heterogeneous urban fabric shaped by changing social and institutional conditions rather than rigid adherence to a fixed doctrine.

A key factor in New Belgrade's resilience was the integration of social mixing and functional diversity. Residential blocks combined housing with schools, kindergartens, local commerce, and community facilities, enabling everyday life to unfold within walking distance [13], [14]. The system of social ownership further limited socio-spatial segregation, allowing residents of varied professional and social backgrounds to share the same buildings and collective spaces [11].

While adhering to common modernist principles (open ground planes, pedestrian prioritization, and extensive green space), each block introduced typological and spatial variations that generated distinct local identities [15], [16]. Positioned between the scale of traditional perimeter blocks and Western superblocks, many New Belgrade blocks functioned as early precursors to proximity-based urbanism, often associated today with the "15-minute city" [13], [17], [18]. Although some planned amenities were only partially realized due to financial constraints, New Belgrade nonetheless resists dominant narratives of modernist failure, emerging instead as a context-specific reinterpretation of postwar urban modernism (that is still continuously thriving 60 years later)

*Table 1. Comparison of New Belgrade with contemporaneous urban cases*

| Case                   | Political economy                  | Design logic                            | Later reputation                    |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Pruitt-Igoe (US)       | Public housing, racial segregation | Slab blocks; minimal amenities          | Icon of failure                     |
| Bijlmermeer (NL)       | Welfare-state mass housing         | Modernist superblock; monofunctional    | Failure, partial demolition         |
| Le Mirail (FR)         | Postwar welfare state              | Megastructure                           | Social issues, stigmatization       |
| East German Plattenbau | Socialist state production         | Industrialized repetition               | Monotony & decline narratives       |
| New Belgrade (YU)      | Self-management socialism          | Adapted modernism; extensive open space | Mixed reputation, later rediscovery |

### 3.2. WESTERN CASE STUDIES: FAILURE NARRATIVES AND STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS

The American case of Pruitt-Igoe (Figure 1) remains the most frequently cited emblem of modernist "failure." Designed by Minoru Yamasaki and completed in the mid-1950s, the project embodied CIAM principles through high-rise slab blocks set within expanses of open space. Its demolition in 1972 was famously framed by Charles Jencks as the symbolic "death of modernism" [4]. This interpretation, however, has since been widely contested. Subsequent studies have demonstrated that Pruitt-Igoe's collapse resulted less from architectural form than from entrenched racial segregation, disinvestment, declining municipal support, and broader processes of urban economic restructuring.



*Figure 1. Pruitt-Igoe development [19].*

The relevance of Pruitt-Igoe to New Belgrade lies precisely in this contrast. Yugoslav housing operated within a fundamentally different social and economic framework, one not marked by racialized exclusion, suburban flight, or the systematic abandonment of inner-city populations. Whereas American public housing was residualized and stigmatized almost from its inception, modernist housing in Yugoslavia was broadly perceived as desirable, modern, and socially prestigious. The projection of Pruitt-Igoe's narrative onto New Belgrade thus obscures the structural conditions that made such outcomes possible in the first place.

A European counterpart often invoked in similar debates is the Bijlmermeer in Amsterdam (Figure 2). Conceived as a utopian welfare-state district in the 1960s, the Bijlmermeer extended CIAM principles through hexagonal slab blocks, strict functional zoning, and the radical separation of traffic systems. Despite generous funding and infrastructural provision, the district soon experienced social isolation, demographic concentration of marginalized populations, and eventual stigmatization, leading to partial demolition and restructuring. The Bijlmermeer illustrates how spatial abstraction, when decoupled from evolving social realities and economic shifts, could undermine even well-intentioned modernist projects [7], [12].



*Figure 2. Bijlmermeer [20].*

In comparison, New Belgrade exhibited stronger institutional integration and social continuity. Its housing was embedded within a system of social ownership and workplace-based allocation that fostered long-term residency and collective responsibility for space. Moreover, the presence of everyday social infrastructure such as schools, childcare facilities, local centers, and expansive semi-public spaces helped sustain social life within the superblock framework. As Prokopljević notes, these conditions mitigated the forms of social disintegration observed in Western estates [18].



Figure 3. *Le Mirail neighborhood in Toulouse [21].*

Toulouse-Le Mirail (Figure 3) represents perhaps the most theoretically ambitious Western attempt to reform modernist planning from within. Designed by Candilis, Josic, and Woods, the project sought to reconcile megastructural scale with human-scale adaptability, drawing explicitly on critiques emerging within CIAM and Team 10 [21], [22], [23]. Yet despite its architectural sophistication, Le Mirail eventually became associated with social marginalization and urban decline. Its inclusion in this comparative framework underscores a recurring pattern: architectural innovation alone cannot compensate for broader socio-economic transformations. Yugoslav projects, while often less formally radical, benefited from a planning environment in which housing retained positive social value and symbolic capital [5], [18].

### 3.3. SOCIALIST URBANISM BEYOND YUGOSLAVIA: SIMILAR FORMS, DIFFERENT LOGICS

Modernist housing estates across Eastern Europe developed under political conditions distinct from those of Western welfare states, yet they shared many technical and spatial characteristics with Western counterparts. Soviet microrayons (Figure 4) and East German Plattenbau districts relied on industrialized construction, standardized dwelling types, and superblock planning to address massive housing deficits. Retrospectively, these environments have often been framed as monotonous, alienating, and emblematic of socialist technocracy [3], [7].



Figure 4. *Mikrorayon development example from Bucharest [26].*

However, such interpretations risk flattening significant internal differences within socialist urbanism. Recent articles have emphasized the diversity of socialist modernisms and their entanglement with international architectural discourse [19].

While Yugoslav housing employed industrialized methods similar to those used elsewhere in Eastern Europe, it allowed for greater architectural variation, spatial generosity, and local adaptation. Differences in governance also mattered. Unlike centralized Soviet planning, Yugoslavia's system of self-management introduced a hybrid form of decision-making that mediated between state

planning and local institutions [3]. This produced urban environments that, while formally modernist, were more open to negotiation and incremental change over time.

New Belgrade thus occupies an intermediate position between Western welfare-state urbanism and Eastern Bloc state socialism. Its modernism cannot be reduced to either model, nor can it be evaluated through a singular ideological lens. Instead, it exemplifies what Stierli and Kulić describe as a “mediatory architecture,” operating across geopolitical, cultural, and professional boundaries [8].

### **3.4. THE 1960S TURNING POINT AND THE LIMITS OF POSTMODERN CRITIQUES**

The 1960s marked both the high point of modernist realization and the emergence of sustained critique. Across Europe and North America, dissatisfaction with large-scale planning began to surface from multiple directions: grassroots activism, social science research, and architectural theory. In Yugoslavia, New Belgrade’s most intensive construction phase coincided with this broader moment of contestation, placing it at the intersection of realization and critique.

Internal critiques articulated by Team 10 challenged the abstraction and universalism of early CIAM doctrine, emphasizing instead social patterns, human scale, and everyday experience. These debates resonated within Yugoslav architectural culture, where later New Belgrade blocks exhibited increased formal differentiation, attention to spatial sequences, and programmatic layering [16]. Rather than rejecting modernism outright, Yugoslav architects engaged in its reformulation.

Postmodern theory later consolidated these critiques into a generalized narrative of modernist failure. By framing modernism as a totalizing and authoritarian project, postmodern discourse often overlooked its experimental, provisional, and context-dependent character [20]. As Kulić argues, this produced a misreading that privileged symbolic interpretation over material and social analysis, particularly in socialist contexts. In comparative perspective, this misreading becomes especially evident: projects sharing similar spatial logics were judged differently depending on geopolitical narratives, with socialist examples subjected to heightened ideological scrutiny [24].

Reintegrating New Belgrade into its contemporaneous European context reveals that many critiques leveled against it are not unique to Yugoslav modernism but symptomatic of broader tensions inherent in postwar urbanization. Rather than confirming the failure of modernism, such comparisons expose the limits of universalizing critiques that neglect historical contingency, political economy, and everyday practice. In this sense, New Belgrade functions not as an exception, but as a critical lens through which the historiography of modern urbanism itself can be reassessed.

## **4. REASSESSING MODERNISM TODAY: SYNTHESIS AND CRITICAL REFRAMING**

The comparative analysis of postwar modernist housing models reveals that neither architectural form nor planning doctrine alone can account for the long-term success or failure of modernist urban environments. Rather than reiterating critiques already articulated in earlier sections, this concluding reassessment distills the key structural characteristics that differentiate the Yugoslav approach, particularly New Belgrade, from both Western welfare-state models and Eastern Bloc socialist urbanism.

One defining characteristic of New Belgrade lies in the scale of its urban blocks, which occupy an intermediate position between the traditional perimeter block and the large-scale superblock [11]. This dimensional calibration proved critical: blocks were large enough to accommodate significant open space, social infrastructure, and internal circulation systems, yet sufficiently compact to sustain walkability and everyday social interaction. Unlike Western superblocks such as the Bijlmermeer, whose scale often exceeded residents’ capacity for spatial appropriation, New Belgrade’s blocks maintained a legible internal structure that supported orientation and use over time.

Equally important is the typological and spatial diversity across individual blocks [7]. While unified by shared planning principles, New Belgrade was not conceived as a monotonous repetition of a single model. Instead, successive phases introduced variations in building typology, spatial configuration, and programmatic emphasis, producing a heterogeneous urban fabric with distinct local identities. This diversity stands in contrast to the industrial repetition characteristic of many Plattenbau and microrayon developments, where uniformity at the district scale often reinforced perceptions of monotony and alienation [3].

A third critical factor is the absence of pronounced socio-spatial segregation [18]. The Yugoslav system of social ownership and workplace-based housing allocation enabled residents of differing social status, from maintenance workers to professionals and academics, to inhabit the same buildings and share collective spaces. This social mixing sharply distinguishes New Belgrade from

Western public housing estates, where processes of residualization and class concentration contributed decisively to stigmatization and decline. In New Belgrade, housing retained symbolic and material value, reinforcing long-term residency and collective identification with place (Prokopljević 2015).

The systematic inclusion of complementary functions further differentiates the Yugoslav model [13], [25]. Schools, kindergartens, health services, cultural centers, local retail, and recreational facilities were conceived as integral components of each block rather than as external additions. This programmatic layering supported everyday life within walking distance and anticipated contemporary proximity-based planning models. While not all planned facilities were realized immediately or fully, the structural provision for such functions enabled incremental completion over time rather than irreversible functional deficit.

Central to the lived success of these environments were the extensive open and recreational spaces, conceived not as residual voids but as active social terrains. Semi-public green areas, playgrounds, and pedestrian networks fostered informal socialization and everyday appropriation, contributing to the durability of collective life within the blocks [17]. In contrast to critiques that interpret open space as inherently alienating, the New Belgrade case demonstrates that its performance depends on scale, accessibility, and social embedding rather than formal presence alone.

These strengths coexist with clear structural limitations. The urban vision of New Belgrade remained partially unfinished, as economic constraints delayed or prevented the realization of some planned educational and cultural facilities [25]. Complementary functions were often introduced unevenly, producing temporal imbalances between housing provision and social infrastructure. Additionally, while diversity existed between blocks, internal uniformity within larger blocks sometimes complicated orientation for non-residents and reinforced perceptions of repetitiveness at the micro scale [7].

Crucially, however, these limitations should not be interpreted as evidence of systemic failure. New Belgrade did not collapse, empty out, or require large-scale demolition. Instead, it has undergone gradual transformation and consolidation, shaped largely by its long-term residents [18]. Today, Belgrade's population remains comparable to late socialist levels, while the overall building stock has expanded significantly elsewhere in the metropolitan region. This demographic stability redirected growth pressures beyond New Belgrade, allowing it to evolve through adaptation rather than displacement. Contemporary conditions, particularly technological change and shifts in work and mobility patterns accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, have further reinforced the viability of proximity-based urban structures embedded in the original plan [9], [13].

In this light, New Belgrade challenges narratives that frame modernist urbanism as a closed historical episode. Rather than a failed project superseded by postmodern alternatives, it emerges as a living urban framework capable of reinterpretation, supplementation, and continued use. The Yugoslav case thus supports a critique of the critique: not a defense of modernism as dogma, but a reassertion of its contextual, open-ended, and socially contingent character [8].

More than half a century after its construction, Block 45 offers a particularly revealing example of the long-term performance of New Belgrade's modernist planning framework. Originally completed during the mature phase of the city's development in the early 1970s, the block was designed according to principles that combined high-density housing with generous open space, pedestrian circulation networks, and a comprehensive system of local social infrastructure [2]. Over time, the extensive green areas originally conceived in the urban plan have matured into dense urban vegetation, creating a spatial environment characterized by shaded pedestrian paths, playgrounds, and recreational areas embedded directly within the residential fabric.

Today the block is frequently perceived by residents as one of the most livable parts of New Belgrade, particularly valued for its accessibility to schools, kindergartens, local commerce, and public transport, as well as for the relative safety of its internal pedestrian zones. The separation of vehicular traffic from internal open spaces has allowed large portions of the block to function as semi-public social landscapes in which children's play, everyday social interaction, and informal community life continue to take place. These qualities stand in contrast to many recent market-driven urban developments in Belgrade, where increased building density and the reduction of open space have produced more fragmented and less socially integrated environments. In this sense, Block 45 demonstrates how modernist planning principles, which were often criticized for producing abstract and socially alienating urban spaces can, under different institutional and social conditions, generate durable and adaptable urban environments that remain functional and socially valued decades after their construction [2], [13], [25].



Figure 5. Lazaro Kardenas walkway in block 45 [26].

## 5. CONCLUSION

Reframing New Belgrade as part of a broader dialogue on modernism allows for a more nuanced understanding of both modernist ambition and postmodern critique. Rather than opposing modernism and postmodernism as successive and mutually exclusive paradigms, the Yugoslav case suggests a more continuous process of negotiation, adaptation, and reinterpretation. In this light, the “critique of the critique” does not seek to rehabilitate modernism unconditionally, but to expose the limits of narratives that reduce complex urban environments to ideological symbols. By foregrounding context, contingency, and everyday practice, New Belgrade offers a productive lens through which modernist urbanism can be re-evaluated as a heterogeneous and still-relevant project [32].

Building on the findings of this research the case of original block of New Belgrade demonstrates the long-term viability of modernist-inspired urban form when its spatial, social, and infrastructural principles are coherently implemented and maintained [2], [5], [13], [7], [25], [18]. More than sixty years after its construction, one of the blocks which remained true to the ideas of New Belgrade, Block 45, continues to function as a socially integrated and highly livable neighborhood, characterized by accessible green spaces (Figure 5), clearly structured internal circulation, and a dense network of everyday amenities. The disposition of housing, public facilities, schools, local commerce, and recreational spaces within the block enables a high degree of functional autonomy, aligning closely with contemporary urban concepts such as the “15-minute city.” Crucially, the block’s spatial openness and collective spaces have supported sustained patterns of social interaction and a strong sense of local identity, challenging dominant narratives that associate modernist housing with social alienation.

At the same time, the deterioration of New Belgrade’s broader planning framework through later, market-driven developments underscores the relevance of this case as a cautionary and instructive reference for future urban practice. The erosion of open green spaces, the increase in building density, and the prioritization of short-term economic gain over spatial and social quality stand in sharp contrast to the principles that underpin New Belgrade’s success. This research therefore positions the block not as an isolated exception, but as evidence of the latent potential embedded within postwar modernist planning when evaluated beyond ideological critique and understood through long-term use. As cities today confront pressures of densification, housing shortages, and environmental sustainability, the lessons drawn from New Belgrade suggest that revisiting and adapting modernist urban frameworks, rather than discarding them, can meaningfully inform more equitable, resilient, and socially grounded urban development strategies.

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