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URBANIZATION POLICY IN ROMANIA DURING

1948-1989

CASE STUDY: MIERCUREA-CIUC CITY

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INTRODUCTION

After 1989, liberalization of document research has created the possibility of approaching the history of the communist era. This aspect has been observed from the large number of research documents on this topic. Research did not focus equally on all aspects of communism's history. As research shows, the focus was not equal among the various aspects. One of such area is urbanization during communism ruling.

Choosing the topic, "The urbanization policy in Romania during 1948-1989 - Case study: Miercurea-Ciuc city" is motivated by the importance of the urban movement during the communism era, as well as of the multiple influences on urban structures, from architectural, demographic, social and cultural perspectives.

Before 1989, critical history documents on general city evolution after 1945 in Romania did not exist. Research focused on this topic especially in fields like geography, architecture and scarcely in general history research that was mainly focused on industrialization. Even though urbanism as a topic represented an interesting point during the last few years, disregarded, or scarcely approached issues, unfinished studies and unexplored files still exist.

This research analyzes *the urban aspect in communist vision, legal perspective on urbanization, identification of policy implementation, as well as the impact of urban development* during 1948-1989.

The case study was chosen to present a good understanding of urban policy during the communist regime and of law implementation through specific system mechanisms. The case study will focus on the urbanization of the Miercurea-Ciuc City. This Transylvanian city, with a unique architectural legacy has followed the stages of urbanization imposed at national level, while, as all other cities in Romania, has suffered the consequences of this urbanization policy.

Considering the purpose of this PhD thesis, the research capitalizes aside the historical contributions, on exquisite documents from the National Archives database: the Romanian Communist Party (R.C.P.) Central Committee's archives – sections like Chancellor, Economics, Propaganda, Party Management, and Minister Council. These sections contain important documents issued or received from the central management system, R.C.P Central Committee and Minister Council's orders, documents presented within the urbanization meetings, memos of the State Committee for Architecture and Constructions, as well as of the Construction Ministry. Moreover, these sections provide access to tables, statistics, and construction studies for housing and socio-cultural buildings, demographic studies, as well as memos for approvals on political-administrative centers in certain cities.

For the purpose of this study during the given period, research has investigated several archive databases, some of them from the County Services of the National Archives in Harghita and Mureș, and some of the from the original institutions that issued them. The research has also capitalized on documents from the archive available at Ciuc County Prefect's Office – structural parts of the Temporary Committee and County Council. These archives have provided documents focused on important moments from the territorial development of the city. Moreover, the research has used documents from the Harghita County Popular Council, such as construction authorization records – the socialist sector for the industrial, commercial, and cultural objectives of all county areas.

Moreover, the researcher has used the database of the Miercurea Ciuc Townhouse to study the minute books of Temporary Committee's regular meetings, and the justificatory memos of water projects. Other documents and archives analyzed and used in this research were the ones available from the *R.C.P. Municipal Committee of Miercurea-Ciuc*, containing mainly memos from administrative institutions to the local party organization. The Popular Council of Miercurea-Ciuc archives contain the Popular Advisory's Executive Committee decisions regarding urban activity, construction permits, and reports regarding height of buildings standards based on geographical areas. Moreover, the researcher had access to other types of documents, as well as archives that reveal information about the economic activity of the city during the communist period.

Some of the important sources that were used in this research that are worth mentioning are the documents published by the Romanian National Archives, especially the "Minute books of the Political Bureau and Central Committee Secretary of the P.M.R.", vol. III-IV (part I), 1950-1952.

The sources used for subchapters discussing population, residential spaces, migration movements, and natural population movement were found in Romania's Census documents published by the General Directorate of Statistics, but also in other documents discussing the numerical development of Miercurea-Ciuc population¹.

The directions of the urbanism policies during the communist period have been identified in the reports of the party congresses and R.C.P. programs that define explicitly the party's ideology.

¹Ioan Lăcătușu, *Structuri etnice și confesionale în județele Covasna și Harghita*, Editura Universității „Petru Maior”, Târgu-Mureș, 2008; Varga, Árpád E., *Erdély etnikai és felekezeti statisztikája. I. Kovászna, Hargita és Maros megye. Népszámlálási adatok 1850–1992 között (Statistica etnică și confesională a Transilvaniei. I. Județele Covasna, Harghita, Mureș. Datele recensămintelor din anii 1850-2002)*, Editura Pro-print, Miercurea Ciuc, 2008, [www. kia. Hu / konyvtar / erdely / erd2002 / hretnl02.pdf](http://www.kia.hu/konyvtar/erdely/erd2002/hretnl02.pdf).

The research has analyzed a series of legal norms to underline the way the communist vision has been implemented in regarding urbanism. For example, the “Law collections, decrees, decision and other norms”, “The R.S.R Official Bulletin,” the “Judgments and Decisions of the P.R.R. Ministry Council,” and the “Official Bulletin of the Popular Council of the Harghita County.” The research has also used the newspaper articles of the time, such as the ones published in “The Spark,” “Harghita Information,” and “Red Star” to highlight the way in which policy and “success” of the regime were promoted to the public opinion.

The current paper is structured in three large chapters. The appendices contain documents obtained from the C.C. of the R.C.P. database, which are relevant for the activities conducted according to the party’s instructions and statistic documents. Additionally, the database provides images of important buildings in Miercurea-Ciuc that belong to its architectural patrimony, as well as images of the buildings finalized during this historical period.

CHAPTER I

URBANISM CONCEPTS IN THE VISION OF THE ROMANIAN COMMUNIST PARTY. LEGAL REFLECTION

This first chapter proposes to analyze the urban approach in the communist vision and the reflection of this vision in the legislation, which have been the base of the communist transformations in the Romanian urban areas.

The research analyzes the entire communist period (1948-1989), focusing on the evolution of the topic in three stages.

The first stage is the period during the Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej’s ruling, in which the officials have built and implemented based on the main mechanisms and concepts of the new soviet regime.

Urban analysis extended over the first period of the communist regime allows a better evaluation of the historical development and an accurate understanding of the urban policy development in the next two stages. These two stages are corresponding to the period from 1965 to 1989, when Nicolae Ceausescu was the head of the state and of the party.

The second stage is the one starting in the mid 1960s until the March 1977 earthquake. This moment is of great importance in the history of Romanian urbanism because the destructions caused after the earthquake have neutralized the hope that architectural patrimony could be protected.

The third stage started after the March 1977 earthquake and ended in 1989, when the communist regime ended. This stage is characterized by the implementation of an urban policy that aimed to change almost entirely the Romanian urban space.

1.1. „CITY MODERNIZATION” IN THE COMMUNIST VISION

This subchapter discusses the vision regarding urban modernization as historical documents show because the effects of its implementation had a major influence on population development.

In the vision of the regime, the modernization of the urban space meant the creation of new cities and transformation of the existing ones in such a way that they would match the new needs of the socialist society. As other fields, modernizing the urban space would demonstrate the way “the great ideas of the era” would be implemented.

During the early stages of the communist era, the main idea in the political speech about the urban transformation was **the reduction of the differences between the suburbs and city center** or **the building of no-suburbs cities**. This was the main aspect of the social transformations that the urban areas would have to adopt. The main directions that had to be followed referred to the annulment of the bourgeois urban style and the imitation of a new model, inspired from Stalinism.

The great ideological gap between Bucharest and Moscow took place in 1964. Ceausescu’s election as head of the state meant the implementation of the communist-nationalist regime, whose characteristics are easy to identify in urban policy too. Architecture was supposed to reflect the victory of socialism and lead to the creation of a new modern city that would represent this type of society. In the same time, the new architecture was supposed to implement the idea of national identity.

The creation of the legal environment such as decrees, resolutions, and laws regarding the urban reconstructions, organization of the architectural activity, territory, and transportation ways’ systematization guidelines that were necessary to implement the new urban policy has been evidenced from a detailed research on the communist legal environment. Of the legal norms that have imposed the directions for the urban policies during this period, one is especially important because it is the main legal document that has guided the urban construction implemented during the communist period: *Decision no. 2447/1952 of the Central Committee of the Romanian Working Party and of the Ministry Council of the R.P.R. regarding city constructions and reconstruction and the architectural activity organization*².

² Colecția de Hotărâri și Dispoziții ale Consiliului de Miniștri, nr.7 din 14 noiembrie 1952, p.96.

The legal system regarding urbanism has been guided by other legal documents that provided guidance for constructions, systematization activity improvements, construction design, organization, and systematization of industrial areas and platforms.

The *58 Law of 1974 regarding the systematization of territory, urban and rural areas*, has provided the legal frame of the entire reorganization of the urban activity³.

Using two other legal instruments⁴, the regime has decided on the frame for organizing and functioning for the Council of Culture and Socialist Education, the suppression of the National Cultural Heritage Department, as well as the establishment of duties for the Central Party Commission for urban and rural territory systematization in the control and management activity. These laws, the “Territory Systematization Act,” and the 1977 earthquake have eased the demolition activity in urban centers that was conducted in the name of modernization.

1.2. “COLLECTIVE RESIDENCE” IN ROMANIAN COMMUNIST PARTY’S VISION

In the second part of the chapter, we approach the development of **the residential space** in the vision of the party because the housing architecture is a significant element of the socialist urban policy, along with public and industrial architecture.

The Marxist idea of the “class conflict” is present in social urbanism policy, as it reflects from party’s documents. This conflict was against the bourgeois “individualistic vision” because the bourgeois were considered exploiters, were accused of “creating optimal circumstances for living in the detriment of the working class that was living in misery.”⁵ Other perspectives agreed on the idea that “the bourgeois cities are specific places for exploiting the proletariat (...), working class having to solve the housing issue on their own, having to live in small, dirty, improvised housing in stables and repositories”.⁶

Consequently, the architecture and general urban development were limited by such concepts and had to connect to the social phenomenon of forced growth of urban population.

One of the priorities of the period was to invest in building residential / collective apartments because it was officially considered of crucial importance. Proletarian housing have benefited from special attention from the party by organizing conferences, reports, official meetings and reviews

³ „Buletinul Oficial al R.S.R.”, nr.135 din 1 noiembrie 1974.

⁴ *Decretul nr. 442 din noiembrie 1977 privind organizarea și funcționarea Consiliului Culturii și Educației Socialiste și Decretul nr. 43 din 3 martie 1978, prevedea stabilirea sarcinilor Comisiei Centrale de Partid și de stat pentru sistematizarea teritorială urbană și rurală în activitatea de conducere și control.*

⁵ A.N.I.C., fond Consiliul de Miniștri, d.52/1949, f. 433.

⁶ *Ibidem*, d.55/1949, f.1,4.

with architects. Through its collective housing, the socialist city has been the promoter of the communist ideology, through which it was meant to implement the homogenization policy of population. The collective block of flats was the ideal surveillance and control tool for citizens.

The two segments of the communist ideology regarding housing were the rejection of the “bourgeois individualism” and the solving of the urban housing. These two issues have been legalized through various laws, decrees, and government decisions that aimed the housing nationalization, space norming, or new building norms.

Some of the legal acts that have guided the path of urban change according to the communist vision are worth mentioning. The *No.92 Decree of 1950 regarding house nationalization*⁷ preceded the *No. 78 Decree of 1952 regarding the norming, distribution and using housing areas and regulation of landlord and tenant relationships*⁸, also known as the *Housing Space Act*.

Some of the laws adopted during this period aimed to solve the urban housing problems, so the regime encouraged the construction of housing based on tenant cooperation, but also the building of housing based on state credits⁹. The communist regime has implemented all the necessary methods for creating a feeling of security among the population that was supposed to replace the feeling of insecurity and instability, with the purpose of fueling a feeling of dependency towards the state.

Housing construction has been the architectural program with the most significant dynamics during the communist period. It sometimes existed a quantitative and qualitative process, if considering the number of constructions, housing surface, or utilities, but the flats were limited due to typification.

Analyzing the two aspects from the communist ideology that were translated into the legal documents has a special significance for understanding the process and mechanisms used by communist authorities in the transformation of the Romanian urban space.

⁷ „Buletinul Oficial al R.P.R.”, nr.36 din 20 aprilie 1950, p.465-466.

⁸ „Buletinul Oficial al R.P.R.”, nr. 17 din 5 aprilie 1952, p.137-142.

⁹ *Hotărârea Comitetului Central al P.C.R. și a Consiliului de Miniștri al R.S.R. nr. 26 din 12 ianuarie 1966 privind sprijinirea de către stat a cetățenilor de la orașe în construirea de locuințe proprietate personală; Decretul nr. 713 din 23 iulie 1967; Legea nr. 4 din 28 martie 1973⁹ reglementa cadrul juridic privind dezvoltarea construcției de locuințe, vânzarea de locuințe din fondul de stat către populație și construirea de case de odihnă proprietate personală; Legea nr. 5 din 1973 privind administrarea fondului locativ și reglementarea raporturilor dintre proprietari și chiriași ș.a.*

CHAPTER II

THE SPECIFIC MECHANISMS FOR THE COMMUNIST REGIME USED IN IMPLEMENTING THE URBAN POLICY

Cities appear as a materialization of the society in which they were created and were in a constant adaptation process. This adaptation was to the qualitative, quantitative, economic, and aesthetical requirements of the regime.

II.1. THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRIALIZATION IN THE COMMUNIST URBANIZATION PROCESS

One of the main objectives of the communist policy was the industrialization of the country, which was considered a complex issue. The development of the industrial sector was considered the only solution to solving the social problems the regime identified: excess agricultural population. The purpose and focus of the regime was to increase the living standards of the population, increase the significance of the working class within the political life of the communist party.

The most significant investment efforts have been directed toward this economic area and the influence on the urban space were crucial. Cities were created near existing industrial centers, but also in new areas because of certain investments that changed dramatically the way the areas looked. These radical changes were due also to the creation of new factories and industrial areas. The changes occurred also because of the workforce migration from rural areas to the new urban areas.

In general, the industrialization and urbanization processes imposed by the Romanian communist regime in a brutal and massive way have destroyed the traditional structures of the Romanian society. The natural development toward a market economy and the modernization of society has been stopped. However, because of this industrialization process implemented in many areas of the country, the discrepancies in the economic development of these areas have been reduced significantly during the period of centralized economy.

II.2. TERRITORIAL SYSTEMATIZATION OF CITIES AND THE BUILDING OF “CIVIC CENTERS”

The purpose of cities systematization was to systematize the physical environment, planning of economic activity, systematization, or social policy. The communist regime, just as other regimes, has developed its own methods and systems for organization that have reflected in the way cities were constructed and designed.

The policy of urbanization and systematization of Romanian territory implemented during the communist period has two main directions: **transforming villages into cities** and **the development and the restructure of existing cities**.

II.2.1 Urban changes: administrative transformation of villages into cities

Urban development has been one of the main objectives of the Communist Party and a proper environment for the development of the working class, which was representative for the regime. This objective has reflected onto the administrative reorganization occurred after World War II. The reorganization has translated through laws such as *The 5th Law of 1950*¹⁰ that aimed the administrative and territorial division of the Popular Republic of Romania, according to which Romanian territory was divided into districts, cities, and villages. Another law was *The 55th Law of December 19 1968*¹¹ through which the Romanian territory was divided into counties, municipality, cities, localities as part of municipalities or cities, villages and towns. Additionally, several decrees have established the transformation by name of some villages into cities.

Because the communist regime was concerned with the reduction of rural population in Romania, many villages were declared cities, despite the fact these establishments were far from meeting the minimum standards of a city.

Therefore, the guiding vision of the party regarding the population development space has lead to irreversible changes. Until 1989, the communist regime has reached one of its most important objectives of radically transforming the map of urban areas in Romania.

II.2.2. Systematization and reconstruction of cities

The suppression of the differences between downtowns and suburbs of cities and the balanced development of the country have been some of the communist party's ideas that have been supported by the economic and social planning. This kind of planning was achieved through territorial systematization.

The systematization plans has been designed as a large-scale operation, without precedent in our history, but equally difficult to implement. To implement these complex plans, the system required urban specialists, topographers, equipments and many other elements that most locations were lacking. Consequently, numerous systematization plans for urban areas were not created until

¹⁰ „Buletinul Oficial”, nr.77 din 1950.

¹¹ „Buletinul Oficial”, nr.163-165 din 20 decembrie 1968.

the mid 1960s, when the modernization of cities began to be implemented, without coherence between regions and areas.

As the transcripts of the R.C.P Executive Committee meetings reveal, since the mid 1960s, state and party officials have showed a special attention to territorial systematization. Beginning with this period, systematization plans have been designed as mandatory urban documents for establishing development strategy of each city. These plans allowed an overall perspective on areas and an evaluation of all city area through the communist vision of the time.

In the 1970s, after legislative and institutional preparations that were required for massive interventions in the cities' structure, the communist power has begun the actual urban change they have planned. The regime began the urban demolition and reconstruction at the same time with the 5-year plan 1976-1980. The 58 Law of November 1, 1974¹² regarding the territorial systematization of urban and rural areas had a significant role in this action because it was implemented systematically after the 1977 earthquake, opening a new stage in the reorganization and reconstruction process of the old cities areas.

The systematization aimed to remodel the cities. Within this purpose was the building of civic centers as the headquarters of the political and administrative headquarters of the county, the territorial communist symbol. The best example for building a city civic centre is the Bucharest civic centre.

The implementation of the civic centre project has been possible because of a unique focus for such an objective of resources of all kinds (financial, energy, space, and workforce). This focus was imposed by the regime and was controlled by the political power. All the works have required huge sacrifice, among which one can mention the demolition of the historical downtown in Bucharest, the chasing of thousands of inhabitants from these areas and economic prejudice.

II.3. THE EVOLUTION OF THE URBAN DEMOGRAPHY AND OF RESIDENTIAL SUPPLY

II.3.1 The urban demographic development

One of the most important phenomena that occurred during the communist regime was the increase of population number at country level, especially in the urban areas. The main factor of the urban population increases was the internal migration that was determined in most cases by economic issues.

¹² „Buletinul Oficial”, nr. 135 din 1974.

While the accelerated industrialization created jobs in the cities, the collectivization process has led to deprivation of farmers of their main existence source. Farmers lost their source of income and they transformed into a large class of unemployed. Creating industrial factories, schools, and hospitals in cities has led to a certain development rhythm that eventually has led to increased migration fluxes from rural to urban areas.

Youth was the most dynamic age segment that was attracted to cities because they offered jobs, housing and professional development opportunities.

Considering the social studies regarding urban population, differential population growth is obvious, considering the size of the cities as well as the period, the migratory maximum of population from village to city has been reached in the eighth decade. The migration during the communist regime has implied the redistribution of inhabitants between counties, from less industrialized counties to counties with more developed industries.

According to the *Yearly Statistics*, the urban population growth has increased from 33% in 1965 to 53% in 1990. The cities could not maintain a development rhythm to support population growth, especially large cities that faced high imbalances. Therefore, these cities were declared closed cities. A direct consequence of such policies was the change of balance between social and demographics in a relatively short period, with significant and long-term impact.

II.3.2 Construction of the residential space

Cities were not ready to face this population mass departure and one of the major problems caused by the demographic large increase during the communist regime was the lack of housing facilities. While aiming for a communist society, the communist state has completely assumed the responsibility of providing housing for the urban population. The immediate consequence was large investments in solving this problem that soon became a priority of the time. The activity in the building field had an unprecedented development. Individual housing was not used as a solution to the housing problem, being replaced with collective housing facilities: blocks of flats.

Along the communist era, building of blocks of flats was adapted to the visions of the communist party: **height standards** were increased to improve the efficiency of the land used and other industrial technologies; **standard projects** were developed to allow the building of standardized housing and use of prefabricates; **living area**; **structural strength** of buildings after 1977 aimed to increase earthquake resistance; **building area** – if during the 1950-1970 period the apartments built for workers were located in peripheral areas, along large boulevards or city main access roads, starting with 1970, the new blocks were built in downtown areas of the cities. The state

was the main investor in this large project, and because it followed the vision of the party, the project was developed in large cities.

Housing demand from the new urban population has changed the perspective on housing. The new perspective saw the housing project as the most significant architectural program from a quantitative perspective that was done during the communist regime.

All these transformations have produced a major difference as compared to the way the city was before the housing project, with significant effects on configuration, aspect, and urban ethnology. To the city newcomers, the block flat has become the symbol of life achievement. Later, because of the negative changes and life gaps, perception on urban life has deeply changed.

Through the measures it implemented, the communist regime has changed the Romanian society from a traditional one to a society that provided the needs for the “modern man,” which was representative for the communist society, which was itself built, based on imposed communist doctrine.

CHAPTER III

CASE STUDY: MIERCUREA CIUC

III.1 MIERCUREA-CIUC – FROM HISTORICAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO INSTAURATION OF COMMUNISM

Miercurea-Ciuc city is historically acknowledged through a privilege letter dated August 5th 1558. Miercurea-Ciuc, called *Csikszereda* in Hungarian, is the official residence and the largest city of Harghita County. The first part of its name comes from weekly fairs that used to occur in the city on every Wednesday (Miercuri – in Romanian; *szereda* in Hungarian).

After 1867, Miercurea Ciuc city developed at economic level, and by the beginning of the twentieth century it was an urban center that contained administrative institutions, administrative employees’ and public servants’ housings. The central area was limited by the so-called fair-city, of which the building potential was limited by the natural setting.

During the interwar period, from an administrative point of view, Miercurea Ciuc was the official residence of Ciuc County, which was a beneficial period for the urban activity.

After the war, Miercurea Ciuc lost its administrative significance because regional decision makers that controlled the entire Szeklerland have moved to Târgu-Mureș. Miercurea Ciuc became district capital for the Ciuc Basin area.

III.1.1 Territorial and demographic development of the city until 1948

The initial centre of the settlement was comprised of a single, wide, and spindle shaped street that was oriented on the east-west direction. The fairs were taking place on the central, wider area of the street. Along the street, the officials have built houses with narrow parcels. Older properties that were bigger and had regular shapes were located in the northern area of the street used as fair location. Even after the building of the southern area of the city, the fair remained a rather simple and compact shape, its structure contained regular parcels, long, and narrow, disposed across from an elongated fair square. The church was located at the western end of the street.¹³

The lack of development potential of the city was obvious because it did not have enough territory for economic and social growth. In time, the settlement has extended its surface by adding a group of properties called „**Csütörtökfalva**,” which belonged to the Toplița-Ciuc village. The city transformed into a structure with two main streets that were perpendicular on each other. At the middle of the twentieth century, **Martonfalva** settlement united with Miercurea-Ciuc. **Martonfalva** had separate jurisdiction even though it was located very close to the city. In 1931, **Jigodin** village also united with Miercurea-Ciuc city.

The statistics for the area demographics present the image of a settlement with a small number of inhabitants. The 1567 census reported approximately 150 inhabitants. The 1850 census reported 924 inhabitants, while the 1930 census reported a steady population of 1195 inhabitants. Statistics shows an extremely slow increase in population, but in correspondence with its economic development.

III.1.2 Economic activity

Miercurea-Ciuc city started its activity as a weakly fair held on every Wednesday. From later historical data, the city seems to have become the provincial center for local animal breeders.

During the middle of the nineteenth century, there were 100 to 200 artisans¹⁴ living in Miercurea-Ciuc, which reveals a low industrial activity, specific to a small city. Most frequent crafts were related to the basic living needs.

Dramatic changes in the city's development have occurred at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, when the Brasov-Miercurea-Ciuc railway was built.

¹³ G. Vámszer, *Csik vármegye településtörténete, Helyörténeti adatok a hajdani Csik vármegye (Csik, Gyergyó és Kászón) településtörténetéhez*, (Date referitoare la istoricul aşezărilor din fostul comitat al Ciucului), Miercurea Ciuc, 2000, p.36.

¹⁴ Judit Pál, *Meşteşugurile în oraşele din Transilvania în prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea*, în „Historia Urbana”, Tom VI nr. 1-2, 1998, p. 85-94.

The railway was first used on April 5 1897. The electrical grid started in 1911 was another significant starting point for the development of the city.

The city began to develop. The city began to develop industrial units for wood manufacturing, light industry, and car building. Despite all these changes, Miercurea-Ciuc cannot be considered an economic developed settlement.

III.1.3 Historical buildings and spiritual life in the Ciuc area

The history of the Miercurea-Ciuc city is rich and contains some of the most authentic architectural legacy, which is representative for the area. Some of the spiritual icons of the city and of the area are the *Vizita Fecioarei Maria la Elisabeta* Monastery (*Visit of the Virgin Mary at Elisabeth Monastery*), the early development of the *Șumuleu education*, or the *Franciscan printing house*. Șumuleu has been historically acknowledged in 1332, and it has become a neighborhood of the city.

An important moment for the history and architecture of the city was the building of *Mikó Citadel* in 1661. The *Mikó Citadel* is the oldest building in Miercurea-Ciuc. Other important historical buildings are the City hall building, Palace of Justice – built in eclectic style, and the prison, both built in 1904. Other buildings are the Old County General Hospital, the „Pál Gábor” house, old beer factory – build in the last few centuries of the seventeenth century it was the city’s first important industrial point of interest.

III.2 CITY DEVELOPMENT DURING THE COMMUNIST REGIME

During the communist era, the city followed the stages the communist party policy imposed at national level, following the industrialization and urbanization direction. This development has reflected in the demographic and urban development too.

III.2.1.Territorial development of the city

This development has begun in the early 1948, as a preliminary phase of the future administrative reform, and it had several stages. Through the *Order of the Internal Affairs Ministry* nearby settlements like **Toplița-Ciuc, Șumuleu and Cioboteni** had the option of merging with Miercurea-Ciuc city. After this merger, the city boundary has increased with a significant area, which created the option of extending the surfaces designed to construction and extension of the city. In 1965, the small villages **Harghita-Băi, Csiba and Cormoș** were also incorporated into the Miercurea-Ciuc city.

Territorial extension of the city had the purpose of adapting it to the requirements of the communist regime at political, social, and economic levels. The consequences of this extension were visible in the later development of the city.

III.2.2 Economic development

The communist regime had a similar negative impact on the Miercurea-Ciuc city's development as it had on all other settlements: it destroyed the traditional structures of the capitalist society.

The most important process that occurred in the industry of the Miercurea-Ciuc city was the merger of the small industrial units and of artisan manufacturing units that existed in a large number during the first two communism decades. This merger resulted in large and oversized enterprises that contributed to the creation of the state industry.

Starting with the seventh decade the regime started a massive investment program aimed at the industrial structure of the city, in the two industrial areas. The eastern industrial area developed toward the light industry, while the western industrial area developed toward the wood processing, car manufacturing, mining, beer processing, and others.

The city experienced an industrial jumpstart because companies that developed here represented a significant interest to the population living in the Ciuc area, but also other nearby settlements, especially after 1965.

III.2.3 Demographic of the Miercurea-Ciuc city

The development of the industrialization and urbanization has reflected also in the increase of population in Miercurea-Ciuc.

In 1948, according to statistic documents, Ciuc was among the small cities of the country, with a population a little over six thousand citizens. In the next period, the number increased due to the territorial increase and less due to the migration from rural to urban area. This shows a slower jumpstart of industrialization and urbanization of Miercurea-Ciuc as compared to other cities of the country.

Starting with the 1970s, forced industrialization has lead to the doubling of city's population and to a change in its structure. By 1989, the number of the population increased ten times as compared to the 1950s.

The most intense period of migration in terms of city newcomers, was between 1966 and 1980, when rural inhabitants have come to Miercurea-Ciuc from nearby and faraway areas, even from Moldavia. These migrates were attracted by the development level of the industry and services

in the city. Similarly, many Hungarians that left the city for other industrialized areas during 1948 and 1968 have returned to the city.

The problems created by the phenomenon were diverse and complex, ranging from the need for housing to the need for daycare facilities, schools and medical facilities.

III.2.4 Measures for ensuring housing for city's population

Through the law for building nationalization of 1950, private property over certain buildings was eliminated. These buildings became the headquarters of certain public institutions or housing facilities for newcomers to Miercurea-Ciuc.

Building nationalization did not solve the housing issue in the city, but along with the forced industrial development of the city, the building of housing facilities was also accelerated. Massive investments in housing began at the end of the seventh decade, when the first communist-build neighborhood (***Cartierul Patinoarului – The Skating Rink Neighborhood***) was given for use to its tenants.

At the beginning of the 1970s, in the southeastern side of the city, the northern side of the **Tudor Vladimirescu Neighborhood** was built. Later, the neighborhood was developed toward south, on the two sides of the Brotherhood Boulevard. The Spicului Neighborhood was built in the northeastern side of the city, and starting with the mid 1980s, buildings have developed in the Lunca Mare area and onto the Flowers Street. The size of the buildings followed the pattern used in the rest of the country: ground floor with four to ten stories.

III.2.5 Systematization of the city and city buildings

Starting with 1948, county officials have attempted to regulate systematization and the building activity, by obliging each city to design its own systematization and development plan. However, by the mid of the next decade, Miercurea-Ciuc city did not have a systematization plan, it only had placement studies for the points of interest that were about to be built.

The period between 1948 and 1965 was slower in the building area as compared to other cities in the country. However, some objectives of public interest have been built: the city's sewerage network, aqueduct, bridge repairs, sidewalks and street restructuring and reconditioning, Jigodin public bath construction, green areas, electrical power plant and Cultural Centre.

Once the systematization design was ready, the year 1965 was rich in large-sized construction works in Miercurea-Ciuc. Officials desired to build a flourishing city, therefore, they started with huge enthusiasm and corresponding financial expenses. The swampy soil of the city required a special restructuring work, which involved significant human workforce and equipment

costs. Starting with the seventh decade, the city lost its characteristics because of the systematization plans designed by the regime.

After the systematization and reconstruction works, the old city plan had left only a few elements: Petőfi Street, part of the old shape, while most of the old buildings on Flowers Street were demolished during 1980 and 1989. Replacing the private houses, the blocks of flats occupied a large portion of the city, making it similar to many other rebuilt cities of the country that followed the party's vision. The old buildings were replaced by new buildings like the County General Hospital, Postal Palace, „Nagy Imre” Gallery, the cinema for five hundred visitors, an 8-story hotel, the artificial skating rink of Miercurea-Ciuc – a symbol of the city, numerous schools, daycare facilities, city's civic centre – composed of a market, political and administrative headquarters of the county, Cultural Centre and the Harghita Hotel.

The changes occurred in Miercurea-Ciuc were radical and it did not occur in other cities of the country. The changes affected the architecture, population, and economic focus of the city.

CONCLUSIONS

Started after the overthrow of Antonescu's dictatorship, the rising of the communists to the power (1944-1945) has changed the development of Romania, which has adopted the Stalinist model, has distanced itself from the democratic Europe.

Nationalization and the beginning of the collectivization process in agriculture (March 1949) have transformed the state into the single owner of resources that could this way be directed toward **the industrial development**. The results were the electrification of the country, building of the great industrial objectives and the development of complex industries – organized in several branches and sub-branches. Industrialization has influenced cities' architecture too because the buildings and large-sized structures have determined major changes in the natural setting, radical changes of territory. On the other side, industrialization has changed the looks of the traditional Romanian cities.

Urbanization was one of the deep and ample transformations that Romania experienced during communism, with numerous effects and consequences on social and economic layers. The urbanization process incorporated communist ideas that through their structure expressed “the needs of the working class.”

The communist vision was materialized using the law, which was repeatedly modified to meet the needs and difficulties that appeared along the process of organizing the urban development

within the communist state. The city became the symbol of the working class and was, in the vision of the communist regime, the representation of a society that was irremediably separating itself from the capitalist past.

The mechanisms representative for the communist regime for imposing its own urbanization policy were: the territorial systematization of Romania, the policy of reducing the number of villages by transforming them into cities, demolition of existing historical buildings in the cities, excessive typification of buildings designed for housing. The victims of implementing communist measures in the urban areas were the architectural legacy of the country, which encountered incommensurable losses due to planned urbanization and territorial systematization. Moreover, the victims of these measures were also the citizens, whose living conditions were determined and imposed by the party policy.

Moreover, the rural traditional Romanian space has also suffered significant changes because many of the villages have been declared cities, despite the fact that they did not meet the architectural and development standards required for cities.

Cities attracted workforce from the rural areas and have determined a significant increase in the number of urban population, which reached to account for half of the country's population by the end of the last decade of communist regime. Consequently, the solution used was the promotion of collective housing facilities – blocks of flats, in the disadvantage of traditional forms of living, the individual private houses.

The consequences of this urban policy were irreversible, many historical centers and neighborhoods from the urban areas have been demolished and replaced with typical blocks of flats, with civic centers for political and administrative headquarters, designed based on the same model: one central market for meetings, surrounded by buildings of the state institutions.

Considering the case study a city with an undeniable authenticity in terms of history, area and design of buildings, the Miercurea-Ciuc city has followed during the communist regime the same stages of development as the rest of the cities in the country did. The communist ideology imposed these stages and finalized them through the mechanisms of the communist system. In the place of a city where most buildings were private houses with one or two stories, the regime built large neighborhoods with blocks of flats for the large number of citizens hired in the industry. Similarly, numerous buildings of public interest have been built, but many traditional buildings have been demolished before that. These buildings had an incontestable architectural and historical value. The surface of the city was increased and altered to correspond to the new image of the “modern city.” One cannot deny the economic and social development of the area, but the Miercurea-Ciuc city has become similar to the other cities of the country that were rebuilt and re-organized.

What is representative for the communist regime in its urban activity is uniformity because the city was not built before. The state was the one that imposed the design, quantity, and quality of constructions, delimitation of urban areas, while it was the only investor, designer, and constructor.

This research reveals the development of the ideological message of the communist party, the changes it imposed through its content and its realization through the laws adopted. Moreover, the research discusses the consequences of the implementation of urban policy of the communist regime.

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