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'The city in our hands': urban management and contested modernity in nineteenth-century Belgrade

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the image of the city and notions of urban management in the discourse of elite groups in Belgrade between 1830 and the late 1860s. It focuses on the negotiation of modernity in heterogeneous cultural spaces, particularly looking at the textual interplay of power, orientalized exoticism and notions of backwardness. These discourses were integral to the processes of managing urban populations and homogenizing the cityscape. The city's specific political situation as a site of dual authority, however, left room for minor acts of contestation which questioned the primacy of exclusion and dispossession as bases for modern urban transformation. This dynamic interplay framed the city as a site of conflict between mutually defining forces of 'Europeanization' and 'backwardness'.

The past 200 years of city life have largely been analysed through the transformative powers of modern progress. Consequently, analyses of Balkan cities have focused on the concept of backwardness in relation to the advent of modernity. As part of a larger trend in scholarship, scholars have approached urbanization in the Balkans during the transitional nineteenth century as a marker of a lag in development. Dobrinka Parusheva has clarified the process of transformation into ethnically homogeneous towns by suggesting that intervention in urban affairs went hand in hand with the formation of national elites.[1] This process is further explicated in the work of Alexandra Yerolympos, who stresses 'Westernization' as a

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[1] D. Parusheva, 'Running "modern" cities in a patriarchal milieu: perspectives from the nineteenth-century Balkans', in R. Roth and R. Beachy (eds.), *Who Ran the Cities? City*

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vehicle for national consolidation in the urban sphere. She notes that national elites brought sanitation, order and functionality to the new city in order to 'defy the past' and serve as a 'reflection of a new society for free people'.[2] Finally, scholarship on Belgrade by Dubravka Stojanović has further complicated the role of elites, describing a specific political culture of arrested development as the origin of a 'vicious circle of [failed] modernization'.[3] The work of Parusheva, Yerolympos and Stojanović significantly contributes to our understanding of urban transformation in the post-Ottoman Balkans. Not only does it identify a direct link between nation-state formation and the development of modern city life, but it also traces the problematic development of civic culture.

However, these works also demonstrate the difficulty of relying on models of development borrowed from studies of West European and American cities. Specifically, if we are to take the model of Balkan 'arrested development' at face value, we must still account for its origins. If modern urban life was translated or adopted in the region through a process of 'Europeanization', then what dominant characteristics of that process can explicate the ways in which urban elites saw their position vis-à-vis the city? Furthermore, would the deconstruction of that very process offer better explanations of why and how paths to modernity differed in such ethnically and religiously heterogeneous urban spaces?

To divorce our understanding of the modern from the 'West' is, therefore, a necessary precaution, particularly if we view cities as heterotopic spaces which always instantiate novel forms of social relations.[4] Simultaneously, a diffusive model should not be ignored – the material particularities of local development cannot be decoupled from their discursive relationship to centres of power.[5] Technology is central to this process, both as an 'apparatus for rendering reality thinkable',[6] and a method of constructing power by mapping, naturalizing and constructing the city. [7] In order to deconstruct unidirectional narratives of development, it seems we must first restore their contestation as an inseparable facet of the advent of modernity. Our focus, thus, must lie firmly within the 'interface of liberal governmentality and its reception'.[8]

Elites and Urban Power Structures in Europe and North America, 1750–1940 (Aldershot and Burlington, VT, 2007), 190–1.

[2] A. Yerolympos, 'Urbanism as social engineering in the Balkans: reform prospects and implementation problems in Thessaloniki', in J. Nasr and M. Volait (eds.), *Urbanism: Imported or Exported? Native Aspirations and Foreign Plans* (Chichester, 2003), 109, 111.

[3] D. Stojanović, *Kaldrma i Asfalt: urbanizacija i evropeizacija Beograda 1890–1914* (Beograd, 2008), 363.

[4] J. Robinson, *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development* (New York, 2006), 7.

[5] D. Harvey, 'Contested cities: social process and spatial form', in R.T. LeGates and F. Stout (eds.), *The City Reader* (London and New York, 2007), 229, and D. Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York, 2003), 18–19.

[6] N. Rose and P. Miller, 'Political power beyond the state: problematics of government', *British Journal of Sociology*, 43 (1992), 179.

[7] P. Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London, 2003).

[8] *Ibid.*, 240.

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This article will explore ideas of the city in nineteenth-century Belgrade, particularly focusing on discourses of management, progress and urban identity. I will discuss the construction of a specific model of modernity, its appropriation by Serbian elites associated with the governmental apparatus and its physical manifestation in the cityscape. Conceptualizing Belgrade as a city involved the development or adoption of specific ideas about progress, order and one's role in their establishment. From those ideas stemmed policies framed by the language of nation, backwardness and the orientalized 'Other'. Ultimately, they resulted in a physical transformation of the city, so that Belgrade's buildings, streets and squares became sites of multiple contestations. Their compounding nature propagated new processes which interpreted urban modernity within the confines of a constructed 'European' model, based on the marginalization of typified denizens, cultural practices and spatial forms. By analysing this interplay of indigenous development and appropriated discourse, I seek to understand the role which exclusion plays in the formation of modern Balkan urbanity.

As a local genealogy of urbanism, this article examines the impetus which lay behind modern city management in Belgrade between the 1830s and 1870s. I am interested in certain characteristics of this practice – perceptions of backwardness, the desire to achieve legitimacy through urban transformation, the role of exclusionary practices in its execution. While framed by local elites, these issues were constructed through an asymmetrical dialogue with the 'West'. French, German and British travellers to Belgrade commented frequently on the appearance of the city itself, utilizing its spatial components as building blocks for the construction of a categorized worldview informed by Orientalism, ideas of ethno-religious distinction and gendered exoticism.[9] The conversation between local elites and foreign visitors was multi-layered, but its discursive properties contextualized development within a particular set of values. The concept of 'deficiency' was a frequent attribute, requiring progressive reform of the heritage of 'spiritual and intellectual decay' left by Islam.[10] Literary tropes provided the language with which to articulate city management – the ability to describe the city in its entirety was intrinsically related to ideas of how it could be governed.[11] Who might govern it, however, was a question directly related to processes of homogenization, exclusion, and categorization of subjects.

Belgrade's entrance into the nineteenth century was very turbulent. The city had endured occupation by Habsburg forces between 1789 and 1791, skirmishes between Ottoman regulars and rebel janissaries and a military occupation between 1807 and 1812 during the First Serbian

[9] On the role of travellers in imagining the 'Balkan city', see B. Jezernik, 'Western perceptions of Turkish towns in the Balkans', *Urban History*, 25 (1998), 211–30.
[10] *Ibid.*, 212.
[11] See R. Lehan, *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History* (Berkeley, 1998).

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Uprising. The restoration of Ottoman authority over the province of Belgrade in 1813, however, ushered in a period of stability, and the Second Serbian Uprising of 1815 mostly did not affect the city. An oral agreement between the uprising's leader, Miloš Obrenović, and the governor Maraşlı Ali Paşa legitimized the status quo which existed between the rebels and the imperial government. Ottoman civil and military authority was maintained in the cities, while the authority of Knez Miloš' state project extended to rural areas.[12] This agreement became the basis for the sultan's decrees (*hatt-ı şerıf*) of 1830 and 1833 which granted autonomy to the newly formed Serbian Principality, excluding six of the largest cities which remained under direct governorship of the Porte.[13] Effectively, a system of dual authority was put into place which mimicked the situation that had hitherto existed on the ground. Knez Miloš was granted hereditary authority over the internal affairs of the Serbian Orthodox population, a prescription which was later extended to foreigners, Jews and Roma. Members of the Muslim population, on the other hand, were advised to sell their property and relocate to the cities where they were to figure as 'guardians' (*huffaz*).[14]

Records of the city government suggest that the transition to dual authority was not clear-cut. Muslims maintained ownership over land near town borders, and leased it out to Christians who built houses and inns, or planted produce to sell on the green markets. These informal arrangements also challenged the monopoly of Serbian authorities on land usage. On 1 April 1831, the Belgrade Magistrate wrote with concern to the office of Knez Miloš that Muslims had hired Christians to till their land in Vračar, on the outskirts of the city.[15] Miloš' authority attempted to ban transactions between Muslims and Christians, particularly emphasizing that it would not guarantee rights over land, but only ownership of buildings situated on it.[16] By appealing both to the Serbian authorities and the Ottoman courts, Belgraders of different faiths utilized the dual legal status of cities to their benefit. This practice had developed prior to the autonomy decree of 1830, when Orthodox Christians made use of Knez Miloš' bureaucracy in order to challenge decisions made by Ottoman officials and broker better deals on the lease of plots and buildings.[17] Furthermore, they used the decisions of the Ottoman courts (*qadi*) as leverage to argue for property rights and construction privileges in front of Serbian administrative courts.[18]

[12] Here and elsewhere I refer to Miloš Obrenović using only his title, Knez (Prince), and first name.

[13] Besides Belgrade, these cities included Smederevo (*Semenderi*), Šabac, Kladovo (*Feth ul-Islam*), Užice and Soko.

[14] R. Belgradi, *Istorija Čudnovatih događaja u Beogradu i Srbiji – I knjiga*, trans. D.S. Čohadžić (Beograd, 1894), 31.

[15] Beogradski Sud knezu Milošu, 1 Apr. 1831, Arhiv Srbije (Archive of Serbia) (AS), Kneževa Kancelarija (Prince's Office) (KK) VIII, no. 323.

[16] AS, KK VIII, 6 May 1831, no. 341(1).

[17] AS, KK III, 5 May 1823, no. 37.

[18] AS, KK III, 18 Sep. 1826, no. 42.

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Muslims appealed to Knez Miloš' authority when the decisions of the *qadi* were not in their favour.[19] The level of complaints and interactions, particularly derived from the letters of Belgrade Muslims, suggests that the leasing and real-estate market in the city functioned across religious lines. These practices directly challenged the authority of both the imperial administration and the Serbian proto-state in the area of property rights. Furthermore, they circumvented the monopoly on the granting of land as an instrument of political power.

This last issue was particularly precarious for Knez Miloš, who sought to compensate the new bureaucratic class through the assignment of plots for the construction of family homes in the outskirts of Belgrade. The practice of granting buildable plots had begun with the establishment of the Prince's Office (*Kneževa Kancelarija*) in the aftermath of the Second Serbian Uprising.[20] Miloš' quest to solidify temporal authority over the Serbian Orthodox required judicial and financial institutions to replace those of the Ottoman state. In the 1830s, this process resulted in the construction of new government edifices on the edge of Belgrade's entrenchments, near the predominantly Christian *Savamala* neighbourhood. Several administrative buildings, the prince's residence (*konak*) and the new customs house (*Đumrukana*) were erected in close vicinity to one another. They were built by local craftsmen working under the supervision of a local expert mason (*bina-emin*) Hadži-Nikola Živković, under direct contract from the Office of the Knez.[21] The architectural style of these buildings was typical of nineteenth-century Ottoman urban edifices, and the guidelines for their construction did not include any specific visual or spatial requirements. However, specific financial appraisals, periodical reports and strict budgeting were newly introduced measures. There was some difficulty in keeping track of the budget – Živković reports being arrested and beaten at least twice due to missing construction material.[22]

The primary duty of the autonomous government towards the Porte was financial – the collection of taxes. Besides the privilege of collecting customs duties, Knez Miloš' government was also funded through the granting of annual permits (*arenda*) on taverns, greengrocers and taxes on cloth-makers (*abadžije*). As late as 1841, a large portion of the city's budget was derived from *arendas*.[23] The process of cataloguing the urban population was inherently related to tax collection. The first official census of all Christian and Jewish guild members in the town was executed with

[19] Ismail birakčija Knezu Milošu, 6 Feb. 1832, AS, KK XXIX, no. 140, etc. These letters are situated in the *Kneževa Kancelarija* (Prince's Office) fund of the Archives of Serbia, section no. XXIX *Domaći Turci knezu Milošu* (Local Turks to Prince Miloš).

[20] AS, KK III, 1 Jul. 1825, nos. 592–5 This practice continued well into the 1830s and 1840s.

[21] AS, KK III, 12 Jan. 1830, no. 415, also AS, KK III, no. 413.

[22] AS, KK III, 1 Mar. 1830, etc. – nos. 419–30.

[23] *Arenda*-based incomes represented 55% of the City Magistrate's income in 1839. See: Raport primiritelnog suda varoši Beograda, 3 Oct. 1840, Istorijski Arhiv Beograda (Historical Archive of Belgrade) (IAB), Uprava grada Beograda (Belgrade City Management) (UGB), K 10, F IV 529.

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the intention of determining their tax rates with regard to their average expense level.[24] This was a logical follow-up to earlier attempts during the late 1820s to catalogue tavern owners in the *Savamala* quarter,[25] but was unprecedented in scope. The guilds were mapped not only as tax subjects, but also as inhabitants of particular spaces. This information was immediately put to use in an 1834 tax edict which distinguished between urban and rural taverns, putting a heavier burden on the former.[26] However, tax regulation was not the only way to divert commerce away from Ottoman-policed areas where monitoring was difficult. That same year, two new streets were created in the *Savamala* quarter, stretching out of the complex of public buildings on the periphery. The marked plots facing the Sava river had a dual purpose – to provide housing for the employees of the administration and to provide the basis for the formation of a cloth-makers' quarter.[27] The *abadžije* living in the old town trading quarters of Bit Pazar and Zerek were instructed to relocate to the new area. The plots were marked with wider, straight streets, designed in a manner which facilitated government supervision.

The move seemed economically sensible to administrators – the stores in the old town areas were mostly rented, while these plots were being given free of charge. In reality, the relocation of cloth-makers was greatly contested, and the majority refused to move. As late as the 1840s, 23 *abadžije* were still ignoring the government's orders and remained in the centre of the city.[28] Those who moved petitioned the guild and the government several times for restitution due to losses accrued by the remoteness of the area from daily commerce.[29] The protests required a harsh response from the Principality's Ministry of Internal Affairs: 'those who were not akin to these obligations are always free to give up their trade and find themselves another method of sustenance'.[30] Attempts to relocate certain business practices were not exclusive to the cloth-makers, as a similar bill was introduced in 1835 to regulate butchers shops.[31] In this case, spatial redistribution was not solely related to taxation, but was also influenced by the discourse of public health. In 1841, two Muslim butchers, Eyup and Murat, were accused of polluting the town with their slaughter.[32] That same year, another edict moved such practices outside the city limits.[33] It

24 AS, KK VIII, 1 Apr. 1831, no. 308.
25 B. Peruničić, *Beogradski Sud 1819–1839* (Beograd, 1964), 151.
26 *Ibid.*, 597.
27 B. Maksimović, 'Borba Za Održavanje Abadžijske Čaršije Kao Privrednog Elementa Novog Beograda Van Šanca', *Godišnjak Muzeja grada Beograda*, 2 (1955), 237–46.
28 *Ibid.*, 240.
29 *Ibid.*, 241.
30 IAB, UGB, 12 Nov. 1847, no. 5519.
31 Ukaz o kasapnicama, 14 Feb. 1835, in *Zbornik zakona i uredaba u Knjaževstvu Srbiji u dosadašnjim zbornicima neštampanih a izdanih od 2 februara 1835 do 23 oktobra 1875 godine*, XXX (Beograd, 1877), 51.
32 IAB, UGB, 24 Oct. 1841, K 15, V 759.
33 *Ibid.*, document no. 1776.

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is difficult to assess the effectiveness of these policies, particularly in a city where two different police forces enforced the law, the Serbian *pandurs* and the Ottoman *nizams*.[34] The example of the cloth-makers' protests seems to indicate that the process was contested, taking years to leave a lasting imprint on the layout of the city.

Lack of economic incentives and a fragile enforcement apparatus were not the only reasons for the difficulty of executing municipal plans. In many cases, new streets and spaces were created on previously established property-lines, or required the demolition of existing structures. The legal system became the basis for the necessary process of dispossession that followed, as plots of land were confiscated and marked off with picket fences. In July 1839, several regulations were enacted pertaining to land. They instituted the right of first purchase which effectively limited the sale of Muslim land on the outskirts of the city to either the municipal government or a few Serbian Orthodox landowners.[35] Furthermore, Muslim land that was deemed deserted was to be nationalized, while plots that were not cultivated or built on were taxed with an extra 10 per cent until sale.[36] There is at least one report from May 1840 of Muslim opposition to this process, which describes the tearing down of newly erected border fences near the town entrenchments.[37] While the fences represented an important physical reminder of the new hierarchy of power, the legal and categorical manner in which dispossession was conceptualized was just as significant.

The Serbian Orthodox population was only marginally better off. In theory, proprietors of houses which violated new demarcation lines were to be given restitution in land and financial assistance for resettlement. In practice, this was rarely the case. In 1838, for example, several locals who were removed from the Sava bank petitioned to settle in unregulated areas near the new administrative centre.[38] The petition was denied in a very sarcastic tone, suggesting that the new 'Mala' (*mahala*, neighbourhood) cannot be 'closed off by some humble cottages', but that the petitioners should resettle somewhere near the (deserted) Batal Mosque where 'the water, that they claim to enjoy so much, won't be so far either'.[39] Plots of land confiscated for new administrative buildings were also not compensated for. Local resident, Nikola Leko, was informed in 1842, 'several years' after his house was torn down, to forget about the promised financial support, and 'settle with the plot and place that, in place of the

[34] The distinction between the duties of the Magistrate and the police force was made early in the 1830s. See: IAB, UGB, 18 Jun. 1837, K 1, 240.
[35] Rešenje o pravu otkupa zemljišta, 3 Jul. 1839, in *Zbornik*, 252.
[36] *Ibid.*, 255–6, 267.
[37] IAB, UGB, 22 May 1840, K 7, F 177.
[38] AS, KK VIII, 16 Apr. 1838, no. 699 (1).
[39] AS, KK VIII, 21 Apr. 1838, no. 699 (2). The Batal Mosque was near the apex of the Belgrade crag, the furthest spot from both the Sava and the Danube rivers.

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taken, was given to him . . . just as it had happened to others of his kind'.[40] Other reports suggest that this practice was widespread.[41] The ability to map and categorize, coupled with legal and physical instruments of power, enabled new ways of manipulating the movement of the city's population. The emergence of urban planning in the local context was intertwined with an understanding of the 'proper' city as a knowable, technological product, rather than an existing, organic entity.

The first partial planning document for Belgrade utilized a similar, technological approach. Its author was Franz/Franc Janke, a Slovak Habsburg subject who had been hired in 1834 for the newly envisioned post of chief municipal engineer.[42] Unlike his predecessor, the *bina-emin* Hadži-Nikola Živković, Janke was formally educated at the Vienna Imperial-Royal Polytechnic Institute (*k.k. Polytechniscnes Institut*). Among other duties, he oversaw the erection of the baroque-inspired *Saborna* Cathedral (1840) near the Knez's *konak*, the Grand Barracks (1836), and the first industrial plant in the city, the Great Brewery (1839). He also designed several government officials' private residences in the *Savamala* district. In his memoirs, exiled Belgrade Muslim notable Raşid Bey suggests that there had been several complaints by the Muslim population about these new administrative buildings with 'windows that could look into the Turkish yards'.[43] Complaints to the pasha of the town were unanswered and Raşid Bey interprets the construction of tall edifices as a plan by Knez Miloš to disturb the community. While this interpretation may be far-fetched, it illustrates the communicative dissonance between the Janke-led technological elite and the local population.

After the successful completion of these initial activities, Janke proposed a planned expansion of the *Savamala* towards the space of the Batal Mosque in 1842. His layout of the area is the first surviving record of modern urban planning in Belgrade. It features wide streets at right angles and a central square which frames the Barracks and the Prince's Palace.[44] The plan was executed through a five-member Commission which was intended to 'classify and limit' the plots already occupied in the area, and relocate those 'who occupied [spaces] that are not appropriate for them'. The hierarchy of distribution can be inferred from the preceding sentence, which gave preference to clerks employed by the state apparatus. The letter presenting the plan to the Knez and the State Council indicates that at least two professors from the local Lyceé had already begun building houses on the designated plots. There is little comment on the previous inhabitants of the space, in spite of the fact that former *Savamala* residents were relocated

[40] AS, Državni Savet (State Council) (DS), 14 Mar. 1842, no. 541.
[41] AS, DS, 17 Mar. 1842, no. 544.
[42] D. Đurić-Zamolo, *Graditelji Beograda 1815–1914* (Beograd, 1981), 53.
[43] Belgradi, *Istorija Čudnovatih događaja u Beogradu i Srbiji*, 33–4.
[44] Appendix to a letter from Cvetko Rajović to Mihailo M. Obrenović, 20 May 1842, AS, DS, no. 560.

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there four years earlier. The letter only mentions the existence of 'some houses' and a brothel, 'edifices no older than two years'.

A month and a half prior to the publication of the plan, Justice Minister Cvetko Rajović pleaded with the Council on behalf of the Belgrade municipality to determine the exact boundary of its authority.[45] The plea is introduced by a statement that 'our Prince has agreed to finally ban the Turkish land transactions outside the town of Belgrade which they do not have the deed (*tapija*) to'. It is logical that this delineation of municipal property took place prior to the spatial expansion of its regulatory power via the urban plan. However, the mention of Muslims in the letter might indicate that the process of regulation was also motivated by the desire to solidify political and financial control over land. The repeated concern about potential financial speculation (*špekulacija*) in the Rajović letter seems to support this.[46]

The importance of delineating the *varoš*, or the unfortified part of the city under Serbian jurisdiction, was noted by Raşid Bey as well. He argued that a more 'European' arrangement for the town's demarcation line would be beneficial to the Muslim community, as it would remove the division posed by remaining embankments. However, he was sceptical about Janke's new construction project, associating it with the extension of Serbian jurisdiction over Ottoman territory.[47] Raşid Bey's memoirs also assign an important role to the growing real-estate market in changing the balance of power in the city. After the autonomy decree of 1830, the Muslim community had formed a council (*meclis*) to report to the town's pasha in order better to articulate their needs. As a *meclis* member, Raşid testified to a conflict between local Muslims and the Ottoman governor, Afiz Paşa, regarding the profits associated with the sale of Turkish houses to Serb investors.[48] The council members were concerned that short-term profits from the sale of real-estate would lead to their ultimate expulsion from Belgrade.

The development of urban planning was rooted in the establishment of power and its articulation over the cityscape. The emergence of the bureaucratic apparatus of the autonomous Serbian government was also well-suited to the application of modern and technological methods of governing. These changes, however, were not isolated from international developments. As the Treaty of Paris concluded the Crimean War in 1856, it also guaranteed free passage of ships on the Danube, reinvigorating Belgrade's port as a rest-stop en route to Istanbul. The war had sparked a fascination with the Ottoman lands, and an increased number of visitors used modern means of transportation to flock to the city on their way to Constantinople. Their interest increased the readership of previous

[45] AS, DS, 23 Mar. 1842, no. 550.
[46] AS, DS, 20 May 1842, no. 560.
[47] Belgradi, *Istorija Čudnovatih događaja u Beogradu i Srbiji*, 35, 44.
[48] *Ibid.*, 71.

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travel accounts, while producing a large body of original work. These writings universally commented on Belgrade's appearance through an ethnologically framed international language structured by Orientalism and/or Balkanism.

One of the first accounts by travellers on steamers is Andrew Archibald Paton's *Serbia: Youngest Member of the European Family* first published in 1845.[49] An unusual feature of Paton's journey is its direction; it took him from Beirut up the Black Sea to the Danube, rather than downstream like other contemporaneous travelogues. The text begins with an overview of experiences in the Eastern Mediterranean and Danubian ports, while Belgrade figures as a segue into the author's analysis of Serbian society. The idea of the city as a gate or passageway was a recurring theme in traveller narratives. Paton is at first surprised at the dissonance between the literary image of the city and its actual appearance – the 'rickety, red-tiled houses' are not similar at all to 'the magnificent towers in the last scene of the Siege of Belgrade'.[50] Yet, as he moves closer, the author immediately distinguishes the Serbian quarter from the Turkish, as the former is marked by important buildings, such as the customs house, and the cathedral church, a 'large but tasteless structure' of which 'one must not be too critical' for it represents 'a kindling of intellectual energy'.[51] Paton has similar positive impressions of the administrative quarters, where 'large and good houses have been constructed by the wealthiest senators', in contrast with the Muslim end: 'dead old garden walls, with walnut trees and Levantine roofs'. The contrast between the two parts of the city for Paton seems to fit well into an Orientalist gendered division between the masculine Serbian side featuring 'the type of all domestic architecture lying between you and the snow-fenced huts of Lapland', and the feminine and exotic East, a representative of the 'sweet south with its myrtles, citrons, marbled steeps and fragrance bearing gales'. In a chapter tellingly entitled 'Europeanization of Belgrade', he compares the new development of the city to his first visit in 1839. Paton exclaims with joy at the transformation from 'quite an oriental town' to a place where 'the parvenu spire of the cathedral throws into the shade the minarets of the mosques, graceful even in decay'.[52] However, he also comments on the potential for improvement in two areas which continue to make the city 'oriental' – lack of gas lighting and low-quality pavement. Paton's views foreshadowed the words with which later visitors situated the city on a mental map of Europe. The aspiring Serbian elite, dependent on the

[49] Paton was a British diplomat and traveller who authored several books on the Ottoman territories, including *Researches on the Danube and the Adriatic* (London, 1861).
[50] A.A. Paton, *Serbia: Youngest Member of the European Family* (London, 1845), 38. Paton is probably referring to Alaric A. Watts' popular poem 'The siege of Belgrade', published in London's *Literary Gazette* in 1817.
[51] *Ibid.*, 39–40.
[52] *Ibid.*, 42.

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support of the Great Powers, needed to employ a similar language of progress in the process of legitimizing its authority.

The elites had direct contact with other travellers, such as the Habsburg writer Siegfried Kapper.[53] Kapper knew one of the first heads of the Belgrade Magistrate, Serbian language reformer Vuk Karadžić, for whom he wrote a heartfelt obituary.[54] His 1854 travelogue portrays Belgrade as passageway to the Orient, 'the East in miniature'.[55] The distinction between the old, 'Turkish' part of town, and the new, Serbian, part emerges in the juxtaposition of the 'slender minarets' which pierce the clouds and the white roof of the church, which 'flashes in the sun'.[56] The city's popular history as a site of war is recast as a general place of conflict between the East and West, where the 'fierce armies of the Cross and Crescent had planted their banners'. The language which introduces the Christian side of town reflects a progressive understanding of history on Kapper's part. The city is a site where 'history seems to play out its last act', and the revolutionary potential of progress is brought into light with 'the birth of new . . . the purple dawn mingles with the glow of evening'. Belgrade is not just a city of two distinct halves in Kapper's analysis, but rather two cities entirely – one new-born, progressive ('the Cross springing into fresh vigour') and the other decaying, doomed. The importance of the success of the Serbian side, besides its ethno-religious qualities, lies in the technological and rational approach to urban life represented by it. The author stresses the 'broad and regular' streets, unlike the 'narrow, crooked' ones in the Turkish quarter. His inn, the *Zdania*, also shows potential – 'were it not for the universal neglect and waste which prevails in Eastern countries, [it] might compete with the first hotels in Prague or Vienna'.[57] The city remains in its infancy, but through the removal of its 'oriental' heritage it might move forward.

Several other travelogues situated the city on a hierarchy of development, fighting against the material vestiges of the Orient. These narratives played an important role in positioning the city on an international stage and introduced an understanding of 'Europeanness' as a category of local urban development. For example, the writings of French economist and traveller Jérôme-Adolphe Blanqui on the state of affairs in 'European Turkey' were circulated in Belgrade in 1850.[58] Their translator, Danilo Medaković, was a professional historian and publicist who worked as a secretary for both Knez

[53] Siegfried, born Isaac Salomon Kapper, was a Slavophile Bohemian Jew who published several works on Serbia and the Balkans.

[54] S. Kapper, *Vuk Stefanovitsch Karadschitsch. † 8. Februar zu Wien. Allgemeine Zeitung*, Beilage, no. 62, 2–4 Mar. 1864, 1001–2, 1017–18, 1035–6.

[55] S. Kapper, *A Visit to Belgrade* (London, 1854), 5.

[56] *Ibid.*, 15.

[57] *Ibid.*, 16, 23, 20.

[58] J.-A. Blanqui, *Izvestie o stanju naroda u evropskoj Turskoj*, trans. D. Medaković (Novi Sad, 1850).

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Miloš and his successor Knez Mihajlo.[59] Blanqui's text begins with the surprising remark that he must cross the Danube in a boat made of a hollowed-out tree trunk, 'like amongst the savages'.[60] This is due, he states, to the unfortunate union of two incompatible tribes – the Christian Serbs and the Muslim Turks. Luckily, the Christians 'would even exaggerate in law, only so that it would be thought that they are enlightened'. It is for this reason, the quick adoption of the principles of enlightened Europe, that Belgrade 'blooms in the hands of the Serbs' – 'everywhere where the cross shines, new houses are being built, and where the minaret brightens, they crumble'. For Blanqui, civilizational progress is intimately linked with religious status, and Belgrade serves as a 'bridgehead' of Europeanness into the Ottoman lands.[61]

While these narratives were certainly not the only ones available both to Belgraders and to an international readership, they do showcase how certain discourses were appropriated and employed in discussing the city. Belgrade's historicized role as a site of conflict between East and West figured in the romantic imaginings of the past, and allowed the existent cityscape to be framed as part of the same story. The juxtaposition of the cathedral's bell tower and the minarets, the well-ordered streets and the crooked alleys, were utilized as an illustration of political incompatibility. As it expounded a gendered and exoticized view of the Orient, it also projected the need to 'Europeanize' on to rudimentary, primitive Christians in the Balkan city. Just as the city could be rationalized and modernized, so could the population, should it belong to the appropriate ethnic stock and religion. The process of urban modernization was a 'one-way ticket' towards a European identity. Edmund Spencer's 1866 travelogue illustrates the nature of this transformation.[62] He begins his description at 'the frontiers of the Land of the Crescent', looking up at 'the city of mosques and minarets'.[63] Yet, when Spencer overlooks the city he is surprised at the 'rapid strides made in civilization': 'Belgrade is very much improved . . . nearly whole of the abominations have been swept away . . . instead of the paper lantern, there are the usual street lamps.'[64] As he comments on the improvement of pavements on the principal thoroughfare, Spencer concludes that 'the Servian capital may [now] be pronounced a most agreeable residence'.[65]

[59] Milan Đ. Milićević, *Pomenik znamenitih ljudi u srpskog naroda novijega doba* (Beograd, 1888), 335–6.

[60] Blanqui, *Izvestie o stanju naroda u evropskoj Turskoj*, 17–18.

[61] *Ibid.*, 13, 15, 11, 12.

[62] E. Spencer, *Travels in France and Germany in 1865 and 1866 – Including a Steam Voyage down the Danube and a Ride across the Mountains of European Turkey from Belgrade to Montenegro* (London, 1866).

[63] *Ibid.*, 165.

[64] *Ibid.*, 172–3.

[65] *Ibid.*, 174–5. For Spencer, this improvement stems from the 'air of nobility about this tribe [Servian] of the great Slavonian race'.

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The comments of the travellers are not without cause. Belgrade, like many other cities in Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean region, went through a tremendous transformation in the 1850s, both in terms of population growth and the appearance of the cityscape. As increasingly modern techniques of government were being implemented, so the attention of the municipality moved towards regulating life in the city. The new spheres of regulatory activity that were opened up by the administrative growth of 1830–40 represented novel physical articulations of control over nature. Sexuality, ethno-religious purity and flora are just some of these spheres that required the development of modern, urban alternatives to 'oriental' heritage. This polarization would ultimately frame the expulsion of the Muslim population as a liberating 'cleansing' of the obstacles to development. The 'East in miniature' could now be possessed by local 'Western' forces which could mould it to a form that would emphasize their own 'Westerness'. Belgrade's first comprehensive urban planning document, published just before the transfer of sovereignty between the Porte and the Principality in 1867, would undertake that task. The extensive renovation required first a specific form of knowledge, rooted in the process of cataloguing and regulation.

In line with general continental trends, the municipal government of the late 1840s deemed it necessary to regulate time and the human body. This process began with the introduction of working hours in 1848.[66] One year later, taverns were banned from lucrative night-time operations, and were required to display working hours on their outside window.[67] The edict was justified by the fact that drunkenness and gambling prevailed, in spite of earlier prescriptions against such behaviour. Night-time busking was also deemed inappropriate.[68] The Jewish community expressed difficulty in keeping the prescribed hours of operation due to religious reasons, as they would not be able to keep the Sabbath. Their complaint to the Magistrate was denied,[69] at the same time as new Jewish immigrants to the city were being catalogued.[70] The relationship between night and day and the regulation of the flow of time also figured prominently in an 1850 edict, which mandated trash collection to take place one hour after dawn and half an hour before evening.[71] Such new edicts emphasized the role of purity in regulating time, articulating a dialectical relationship between clean and unclean practices.[72]

Indeed, the link between purity and sexuality was another concern of the municipal authorities. Coupled with the drive to count the population was

[66] IAB, UGB, 6 Nov. 1848, K 97, 2988.
[67] IAB, UGB, 20 Dec. 1850, K 147, F XVII 2788.
[68] IAB, UGB, 17 Aug. 1850, K 142, F XII 2094.
[69] IAB, UGB, 11 Jan. 1850, K 124, F I 66.
[70] IAB, UGB, 27 Nov. 1845, K 43, 1125.
[71] IAB, UGB, 25 Jun. 1850, K 124, F XII 1944, no. 2819.
[72] See M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 1984).

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the discourse of its well-being. Regular reports on the health of the city's population started being presented to the municipality, particularly noting the number and spread of venereal diseases.[73] The concern with morality as a 'clean' practice was directly related to the ability to map the spread of illness. In 1849, Belgrade residents Josif and Persa were charged with 'lewd' behaviour, a practice that was virtually unknown earlier, except as justification for divorce.[74] At the same time, medical professionals began to be asked to give testimony on the state and progress of venereal diseases in particular citizens, such as the syphilis of the Tešić couple.[75] In 1850, a case of conversion to Islam of a 13-year-old boy became an issue at the Belgrade Magistracy because of the 'improperness' associated with the process.[76] The Magistrate sought to prevent the conversion by referencing the boy's 'lewd life' with the Turks, a suggestion that the authorities suspected a case of pederasty. These cases represent the onset of prescriptive regulation, an intention of managing the social and biological layout of the city by defining and manipulating sexual behaviour.

The disciplinary process exerted over city life also emerged in the regulation of urban flora. In 1848, the Ministry of Internal Affairs proposed the establishment of a nursery for saplings and the cataloguing of all plants in the urban area.[77] Two years later, citizens were advised to weed any grass on lawns or areas in front of their houses.[78] In addition, the first administratively ordered planting of boulevard trees in the city was justified by the need for 'appropriate beautification' and was claimed to be in line with European developments.[79] The project was so important that the Minister of Internal Affairs had written to the State Council in November 1859 to provide extra funds for the planting. It was conceived as especially necessary for the town of Belgrade, 'the capital of our Fatherland, and at the same time the focus of foreigners'. Special attention was made to distribute evenly the flower colours of the 300 chestnut trees from the sapling nursery. Another report to the Knez of 23 November 1859 suggests that the order went through, but was peculiarly implemented: the owners of the real-estate on tree-lined streets were to plant and care for the plants by themselves, 'so that this small sacrifice might serve to the betterment and the development of better taste'.[80] The focus on the foreign perception of the city, the propagation of 'higher' culture and the manifestation of modern aesthetic principles were at the core of this project. Paradoxically, the city itself was already quite green as many private gardens were located in the courtyards of homes. However, that type

[73] IAB, UGB, 19 Oct. 1849, K 101, F I 106.
[74] IAB, UGB, 11 Jun. 1849, K 113, F VII 1383.
[75] IAB, UGB, 20 Apr. 1843, K 23, 748.
[76] IAB, UGB, 16 Oct. 1850, K 147, F XVII 2760.
[77] IAB, UGB, 24 Feb. 1848, K 89, F III 550.
[78] IAB, UGB, 5 Aug 1850, K 142, F XII 2041.
[79] AS, DS, 18 Nov. 1859, no. 904.
[80] AS, DS, 23 Nov. 1859, no. 904 (2).

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of greenery did not satisfy the criteria of urban management – it did not showcase the powerful ability of municipal management to form wide streets and simultaneously plant 300 identical trees. The technological process was essential to these new capacities of administrative power.

The level of control over the cityscape eluded the old town quarter of Dorćol, which was bordered by the town embankments and remained under direct Ottoman governance. Its very position as a site of dual authority disturbed such applications of political control. There are several examples of Serbian subjects evading the authorities by settling in Dorćol, away from local jurisdiction, which depended on the Ottoman police force to apprehend the fugitives.[81] However, the city was only bifurcated in the administrative sense – the level of trade and mutual interaction was fairly high among the residents, even after governmental regulation had made it difficult. Belgraders of different faiths continued to work together and buy goods from each other, all the while participating in a shared culture of everyday life. As early as 1838, the municipal government banned Muslim purveyors from licensed taverns.[82] Eleven years later, the policy remained difficult to implement, as a tavern owner by the name of Sreten Petrović still had to guarantee that 'Turks' would not enter his establishment under threat of closure.[83] Although real-estate deals with Muslims were not honoured in Serbian courts, the rag-picker Kosta Mišić dared in August 1860 to sell his plot of land to 'whom indeed – a Turk!'[84] The details of the court case suggest that Mišić exploited the state of dual authority in the city, by selling the plot in front of an Ottoman judge, rather than petitioning for a Serbian deed. In fact, Belgraders were so familiar with their 'non-European' neighbours that they used their language to curse at the governmental authorities.[85] The multi-ethnic character of the city, its varied spatial configuration and dual temporal authority challenged the primacy of both the municipal and the state government. The riots and subsequent bombardment of the city in 1862 allowed for the execution of a plan that would rectify that problem.

On 3 June 1862, a conflict took place at the Çukur fountain in Dorćol between Ottoman regulars (*nizams*) and a Serbian apprentice boy over the right of drawing water first from the fountain. The struggle between the two led to the wounding of the boy by the unruly soldiers. As the Serbian police responded to the disturbance, arresting the *nizams* and transferring them to prison, another scuffle ensued over the question of their authority to do so. The scuffle resulted in the shooting of translator Sima Nešić and the mortal wounding of policeman Đorđe Nišlija.[86] While the course of subsequent events remains unclear, the fighting between the *nizams* and the

[81] IAB, UGB, 12 Jun. 1840, K 8, F II 290.
[82] IAB, UGB, 10 Mar. 1838, K 2, F 182.
[83] IAB, UGB, 29 Dec. 1848, K 98, F 3000.
[84] IAB, UGB, 25 Aug. 1860, K 488, F XII 287.
[85] IAB, UGB, 12 Jul. 1840, K 10, F IV 642.
[86] N. Andrić *et al*., *Beograd u XIX veku* (Beograd, 1967), 48.

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Serbian *pandurs* blew up into a large-scale riot, with looting and plundering of the Dorćol area. Apparently, a day prior to the event, some Muslims laid physical claim to their neighbourhoods by erecting structures which had a crescent moon and star on top.[87] During the course of events, however, most of the Muslim population was driven from their homes to seek protection from the Ottoman military garrison in the fortress. While things quieted down during the night, the artillery from the fortress decided to bomb key positions in the city in an attempt by Ottoman *nizams* to re-establish control over a portion of the city. This attempt failed, sparking interest in the matter by the Great Powers. With their brokerage, a peace deal was drawn up that would guarantee the relocation of the Muslims and the surrender of the cities to Serbian jurisdiction.[88] The ultimate legal provisions for the sale of land after the exile of the Muslim population were drawn up in such a manner as to facilitate municipal purchase of the bulk of the plots.[89]

Participation in the riots by the Orthodox population was not as widespread as Serbian historiography has suggested. On the contrary, there were government officials and ordinary Belgraders who refused to participate. At least one city *gendarme* was brought before the court for desertion as he refused to participate in the fighting.[90] The head of the greengrocer's guild, Jovan N. Šišak, publicly criticized shoemaker Jovan Jakovljević's involvement in the riots and the moral frailty of the rioters. Šišak had asked Jakovljević why 'he went around with the worst scoundrels, since over there had not been one honest man, just scoundrels and no-gooders (*lole i pangalozi*)'.[91] However indicative these words may have been of the sentiments of some residents towards the division of the city and the violence of the riots, they were ultimately irrelevant. The municipal government had laid claim to the land, and could thus execute a project of reconstruction that would eliminate the dual nature of the city.

The urban plan which would be implemented in the Dorćol quarter was published first in 1867 by engineer and mathematics professor, Emilijan Josimović. Born in 1823 in Stara Moldava (*Moldava Veche*) in the Habsburg Empire, Josimović, like Janke, studied at the Vienna University of Technology, securing his first job in 1845 as a contractual professor at the Belgrade Lyceé.[92] Soon after his arrival in Serbia, he became involved in cultural and social institutions. Josimović saw an intimate relationship between urban space and national enlightenment. For him, progress

87 IAB, UGB, 2 Jun. 1862, K 631, 88.

88 The agreement was brokered by Serbian Foreign Minister Ilija Garašanin, whose 1844 text, the *Načertanije*, outlined a programme of state expansion. He questioned the political reality of two police forces in the city one year prior to the riots. See AS, DS, Fond Ilije Garašanina, no. 1214, 2587/30.

89 AS, DS, 29 Aug. 1867, no. 277, and AS, DS, 21 Aug. 1868, no. 342.

90 IAB, UGB, 12 Jun. 1862, K 625, F XXIX 164.

91 IAB, UGB, 28 Jun. 1862, K 631, 139.

92 L. Nikić, 'Prelazak Emilijana Josimovića u Srbiju 1845. godine', *Godišnjak grada Beograda*, 24 (1977), 39.

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was dependent on 'breaking away from the dark Asiatic customs and prejudices so that all that is advanced, beautiful and good should cling on to us'.[93] The motto with which he signed his work, 'Number and measurement – my faith', suggests that this process of enlightenment was to be inherently scientific and technological.

His urban plan represents the culmination of a long process of development in the legal and regulatory spheres. In 1842, as Janke's plan for the expansion of the *Savamala* emerged, a bill was introduced banning the construction of new buildings and stores without consulting a licensed engineer.[94] Five years later, an engineer's approval became mandatory for all construction.[95] Street paving by European-style (unilateral) cobblestones, in contrast to irregular Ottoman ones, also became a frequent activity because of the pressures put on the administrative branch by the Commission formed for the execution of Janke's plan.[96] Builders were warned to follow the regulatory plan, the application of which was to be inspected by the town engineer and the police.[97] Mapped conceptualizations of urban space were physically articulated through the numbering of houses and the bifurcation of the city into the old town within the embankments, and the new quarters outside.[98] Streets were officially named for the first time, and informative dark blue boards with white lettering were to be placed on all buildings.[99]

The Josimović plan had paid similar attention to visual detail. Josimović justified his plan for reconstructing the old town within the former embankments by citing the need for 'business benefit, comfort, security, [and] good police supervision'.[100] The '40 or so' cul-de-sacs he intended to do away with due to their 'ugliness' and their 'overall insecurity . . . [as] . . . havens for all kinds of impurities'. However, Josimović maintained the beauty of such spatial arrangements, should they allow for the crown edifice (Prince's Palace) to be beautifully lit.[101] His argument that large parks acted as reservoirs of air is supported by the examples of seemingly novel and certainly much larger American cities – Boston, Philadelphia and New York. The plan also included provisions for converting the remaining embankments into a series of parks devoted to figures in the Serbian national revival movement.[102] The streets, which he deemed too narrow and useless, were intended to be wide, criss-crossing in a right-angled grid. The central market was to be transformed into a large square, preferably

[93] *Ibid.*, 35.
[94] IAB, UGB, 20 Apr. 1842, K 17, F II 422.
[95] IAB, UGB, 16 Jul. 1847, K 77 F VII 2090.
[96] IAB, UGB, 25 Jul. 1847, K 77, F VII 2214.
[97] IAB, UGB, 23 Feb. 1850, K 130, F III 573.
[98] IAB, UGB, 18 Dec. 1843, no. 2068.
[99] IAB, UGB, 19 May 1844, K 30, 216.
[100] E. Josimović, *Objasnenje predloga za regulisanje onoga dela varoši Beograda što leži u šancu* (Beograd, 1997 (orig. 1867)), 7.
[101] *Ibid.*, 13.
[102] *Ibid.*, 10, 28.

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with a monument to the national saint, St Sava, or 'a nice church in the pure Byzantine style'. The town's mosques, however, were 'strictly limited', and left to the government's disposal, while four which violated the plan would have to be demolished. All plots were to be classified according to quality and assessed for value, with the highest property prices near the future square of the national saint, St Sava.[103] The plan, having been written in January 1867, before the transfer of jurisdiction over the cities to the Principality took place, also included a final comment:

> Belgrade is destined, due to its fortuitous position, to be one of the most important trading towns on the eastern Mediterranean coast of Europe. For this to indeed take place, it is inhibited more by the fact that the city is not in our hands than by our tight financial and industrial condition. Should that obstacle be removed, i.e. should the city fall in our hands . . . then it would be so usefully transformed and uplifted in just a decade that it would not even be comparable to now.[104]

In Josimović's final remarks, the personified city is 'inhibited' by its political condition, prevented from realizing the potential of its 'fortuitous position'. In order to receive proper governance, it should fall into the hands of the Serbian Principality because of its unique technological ability to transform urban space. The plan was a modern endeavour which called upon American models to justify its transformative project. The old town of Ottoman heritage, together with its 'crooked-streets and slender minarets' was irrelevant – it was rarely even mentioned. Rather, it figured as a blank canvas for the educated planner, an expert in urban metamorphosis.[105]

On 13 February 1869, Deputy Minister of Construction Colonel Deli-Marković justified the allocation of funds for Josimović's urban reconstruction project by referring to the prospective traffic of railroads and steamships. He appealed to members of the State Council: 'Shall we not be, with quite rightly, told that we have not yet matured for the European family, that we have not adopted the ideas and notions of the advanced, Christian world, if we still preserve in our capital this Asiatic character?'[106] The response of the State Council informed Colonel Marković that, auspiciously, the surplus funds for this project could now be allocated from the sale of former Turkish properties.[107] The development of modern building blocks in Belgrade began with the process of dispossession, a fitting start for a modernity defined as the opposite of barbarity.[108]

[103] *Ibid.*, 13, 23, 31, 36–7.
[104] *Ibid.*, 41.
[105] *Ibid.*, 45.
[106] AS, DS, 13 Feb. 1869, no. 2.
[107] AS, DS, 13 Feb. 1869, no. 2 (fol. 2).
[108] In his letter, Deli-Marković also exclaimed: 'shall not our pride be insulted if our capital should maintain the shape given to her by barbarity? A shape typified by alien custom, alien faith and prejudice, a type of fear and darkness, a type of constrictedness and petty spirit?'

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In many ways, the story of Belgrade's nineteenth-century modernization can be construed as a local genealogy of urban planning, informed by global hierarchies of progress. Certainly, the emergence of city management was conditioned by indigenous political and economic developments. However, its practice also involved a new technological understanding of the governing process. Rooted in the need to maintain and expand power, it was executed through cataloguing, counting and mapping the urban population and the space it occupied. Its material manifestation involved an exertion of biopolitical power through dispossession or spatial resettlement. Any contestation of this unilateral process was framed as an obstacle to development, in tandem with international discourses of Orientalism and rational progress. The discourse of backwardness and the necessity of reuniting with an imagined 'European' community depended on the consistent rejection of values, behaviours and spaces construed as 'oriental'. Thus, the endeavour to reinvigorate society in new, rational terms depended on processes of exclusion and segregation.

Fascination with novelty by planners and city administrators had two characteristics – the desire to join the European family of nations, and the impulse to erase the Ottoman heritage as a material sign of backwardness. The technological advancement of modern government allowed for the physical execution of these ideological plans. However, the expansion of regulation and its incursion into private life was also contested by some Belgraders, who took advantage of the short-lived political framework of dual-authority. Caught 'between East and West', between authority and existence, the city's population could neither accept nor reject the basic tenets of modernity. Rather, it looked for a place between the destruction of the 'old' and 'backward' city and the promise of the 'new'.

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