



# Megablocks

Adaption to new Realities



**Megablocks**  
**Adaptation to new Realities**

Situation





## **Content**

**ETH STUDIO BASEL PROFESSOR ROGER DIENER MARCEL MEILI ASSISTENT SIMON  
HARTMANN CHRISTINA HOLONA BART LOOTSMA CHRISTIAN MÜLLER-INDERBIZIN  
MILICA TOPALOVIC STUDENT JIAJIA ZHANG JOVANKA RAKIC SS 2006**

**1. Thesis**

**2. A new home for 32,000 people**

Design of an Urban Monument  
Construction of the Megablocks  
Idea and Concept of Blocks 45 and 70 in  
New Belgrade  
Elevations/Sections/Plans of the Solitary Structures  
Elevations/Sections/Plans of the Four-story Houses  
Overview of Built Structures

**3. Mono-functions**

The Path to a Sleeper-city  
Camaraderie and Unity: Block 70 in the year 1982

**4. Heterogeneity**

Adaptation to New Realities  
Real estate office Arus 45  
Infostan and resident associations  
Microstructures in Mega block  
Unexpected visit. The Chinese block-journal.  
A survey in 2006

**5. 9 Portraits**

The Identity of the Megablocks

**6. Auspicious, New future**

Delta City. Connection to the World  
Aquapark  
Kiosk New Belgrade



## **Block 45 and Block 70** **“ Adaptation to new Truths’**

In a wider sense, the history of the Block is also the history of Belgrade. There is no guiding line of continuity, the only constant is the river Save. The chronology is wrought with interruptions and overthrows, pauses and new beginnings. The people who live here speak of Serbia as a ‘Land in Transition’: a land in a time of change. No one dares make a prognosis of how the country will be after the transition. Block 45 and Block 70, planned in the 1960s, have adopted this unforeseeable nature of development. The socialism of early times inhibited the development of an urbanized structure, in which shopping centers and social institutions were planned. During this time, the settlement presents itself solely as a sleeper city. The city takes responsibility for the most important infrastructure within the blocks. Children and parents are pleased with the monthly replacement of sand in playgrounds, the clean stairwells, and the charm of maintained exterior spaces. Through the privatization and the inflation of the 1990s, many residents of the Blocks are able to purchase apartments at knock-down prices. As a means of personalization, this new ownership brings about changes to the apartments. Services once taken for granted as provisions of the state, now cost money and residents are newly responsible for the maintenance of order. The demands of a new era, sees the growth of stores on large-scale green belts. However, after construction, these stores stay vacant for a long period of time. For many years, the potential of these easily accessible buildings remained unrealized, until, unexpectedly, 30,000 Chinese claimed Block 70. Within the shortest period of time, Block 70 became synonymous with terms for cheap wares, and weekend upon weekend, droves of people from the entire country traveled by bus to stock up on goods. Step by step, the Blocks react with new rules and structures, to keep up with the new demands of the public and the unexpected reversals, political overthrows, and changing ownership. One laments the loss of erstwhile order, yet is pleased by the bargains offered by the Chinese. Advantages and disadvantages keep each other in balance, and perhaps there is yet one further constant, next to the Save river, to which all residents have such a deep relationship to: the contentedness of the residents themselves.

Jovanka Rakic and Jiajia Zhang



**DRAFT**

© ETH Studio Basel

An aerial photograph of a vast, flat landscape, likely a floodplain or a large-scale agricultural project. The terrain is divided into numerous rectangular plots, suggesting organized land use. A wide, light-colored waterway, possibly a river or canal, flows through the middle ground. In the immediate foreground, there is a dense, dark forest. The sky is a uniform, light grey, indicating an overcast day. The overall image has a grainy, halftone texture.

**A new home for 32,000 poeple**

**1965**

## **Design of an Urban Monument**

During the second half of the 20th century, New Belgrade is built on the marsh land between the Save and the Danube. Urban planners agree that the wide, empty area is to serve the uncontrolled, continuous expansion of Belgrade. In 1948 the construction of the city is begun. Additionally, the city is attributed a new, historically unprecedented meaning as the new capital city of the People's Republic of Yugoslavia. However, the city holds this role only for a short period of time. As Yugoslavia steps out of the Communist Block in the 1950s, and New Belgrade is more or less completed during the 1960s and 70s, the city no longer counts as capital of a Yugoslavian Federation, but only as urban expansion with one, sole dominant function: that of living.

Excerpt from *Novi Beograd or the Capital City from No-Mans Land*,  
Liljana Blagojevic



Development of the Area 1740-1950. The marsh-land is artificially filled.



1965 new residential buildings to be erected



Planers at work on the new residential areas

**“Urban expansion with one sole, dominant function: That of living.”**

Liljana Blagojevic

## **Idea and Concept of Blocks 45 and 70 in New Belgrade**

**Investor**

Baudirektion NBG

**Project Organisation**

urban planning institution  
of city of Belgrade

**Projekt Manager**

Milutin Glavicki

**Architects**

Ivan Tepez

Velimir Gradelj

Jovan Miskovic

**Credit Institute**

Genossenschaftliche

Bank von Belgrad

**Constructor**

Inpros

Ratko Mitrovic

Napred

According to the regulations plan for the borough of New Belgrade, 32,000 residents are projected for Blocks 45 and 70. The total surface area of the Blocks is 173 ha and extends along the Save to the traffic axis 13 in the zone „bezanija“.

A competition for this area is initiated in 1965, and the proposal of architects Ivan Tepez and Velimir Gradelj is selected as the basis for detailed elaboration. Work on the detailed plan is completed by the Urban Planning Institute in 1966.

A surface area of 61.8 ha is allocated for Block 45, of which 56.3 ha is intended for residential complexes, Block 70 consists of an area of 75.3 ha, of which 56.3 ha are also planned for residential use.

The actual number of residents in both blocks finally reaches 15,700 per block, resulting in a total of 8000 apartments and a population density of 280 residents/ha.

The fundamental idea of the urban proposal is to open the settlement towards the Save and to the south. The Save and the green spaces are to act as important elements in the organization of space and are to be used as urban, architectural compositions.



urbanistic suggestion of Tepez

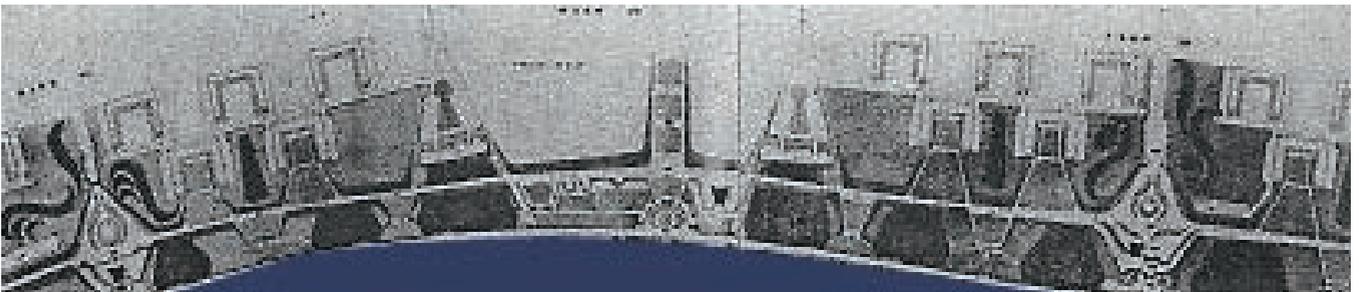


Block 45, 44 and 70



concept of building varying uilding heights to the riverside

The housing complexes of a block are organized as a local administrative centers consisting of four residential groupings connected by free, green spaces on which public objects, such as seating or parking spaces, are planned. The distribution and organization of these objects is arranged in such a way as to optimally meet the demands of the entire society and urban entity. The narrower shoreline in front of the residential blocks is treated, functionally, as a pedestrian promenade. A separate plan is developed with architectural solutions for this prominent riverbank.



plan for the riverbank

## A New Home for 32,000 People

Child friendly objects, sociopolitical and cultural activities, as well as shopping centers and services are planned for the middle of the Blocks. An urban composition is achieved, which results in an elongated pedestrian zone. The green spaces run parallel to the Save and connect the residential complex with the 'Rayon-center'.

### **Residential Buildings**

6 ha

### **Infrastructure**

12 ha

### **primary school**

4,5 ha

### **pre-school**

2,2 ha

### **recreational areas**

27 ha



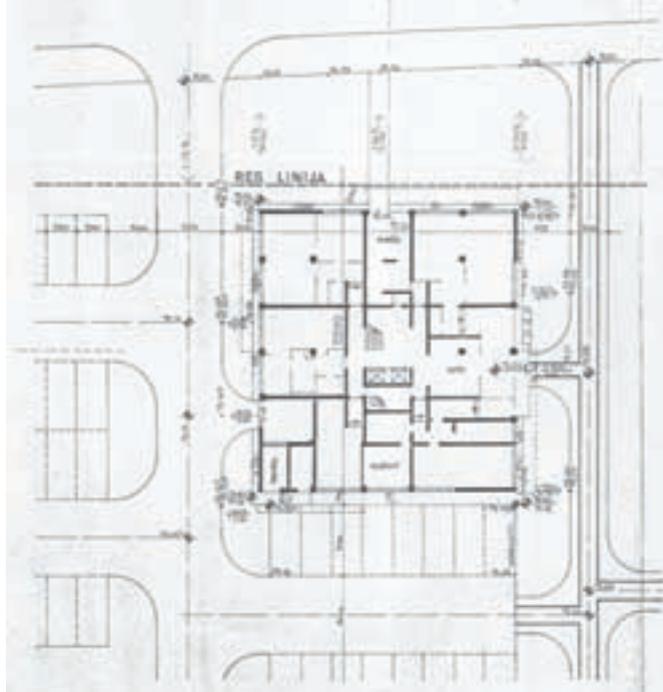
good conditions for children's free space

With the collaboration of all communal businesses and organizations of the city, a schema for all installations is established.



Plan for the System of Waterflows

The primary solution for the direction of traffic within the block is approached in the following way: the separation of pedestrian paths from the driven street. The driven roadways lead from surrounding, primary streets into the block, pedestrian paths proceed within recreation areas through the block. Along the streets, next to residential structures and in garages, a calculated number of parking spaces are made available. A norm of one car per five residents is established.



main floor plan of a residential structure



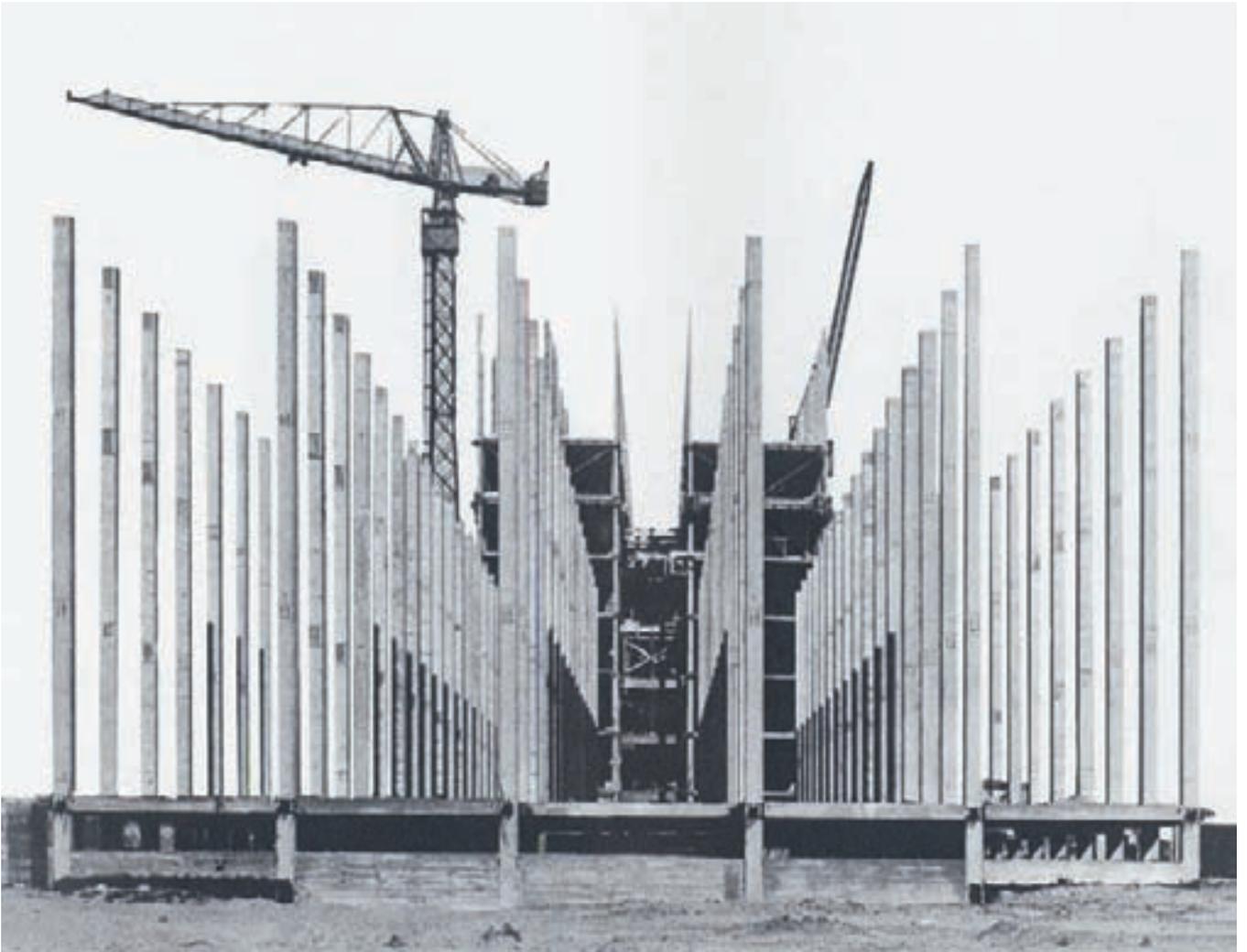
newly finished roads in New Belgrade

## **Construction of the Megablocks**

Before the development, a large part of this area was inundated, with much swamp-land, underbrush, and two canals. Due to high water volumes and the forests along the opposing shore of the Save, the micro-climate of this area is different from that within the urban center. The construction of the shore-line roadway on three levels serves to prevent further floods. 2.2 million cubic meters of sand is taken from the Save and deposited in layers, thereby raising the elevation above sea level by approximately three meters. In 1976, three years after the completion of Block 45, Block 70 is also completed in the record construction time of three years and residents move in successively. In total, 45 solitary and 21 four-storey buildings are constructed.

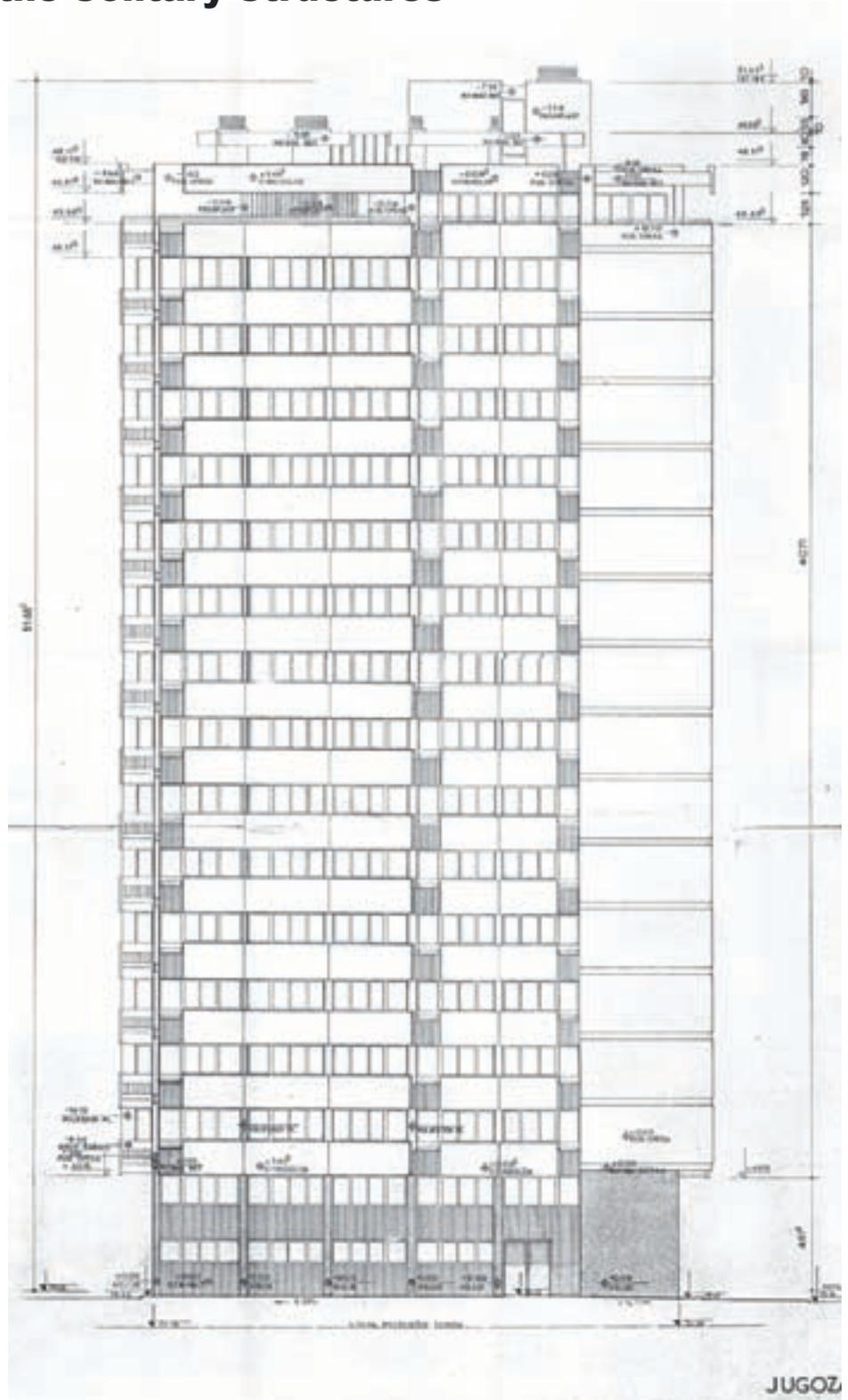


For the construction of New Belgrade thousands of young people from all over Yugoslavia appeared and helped working



**“ Block 70 was completed in the record time of three years.”**

## Elevations/Sections/Plans of the Solitary Structures



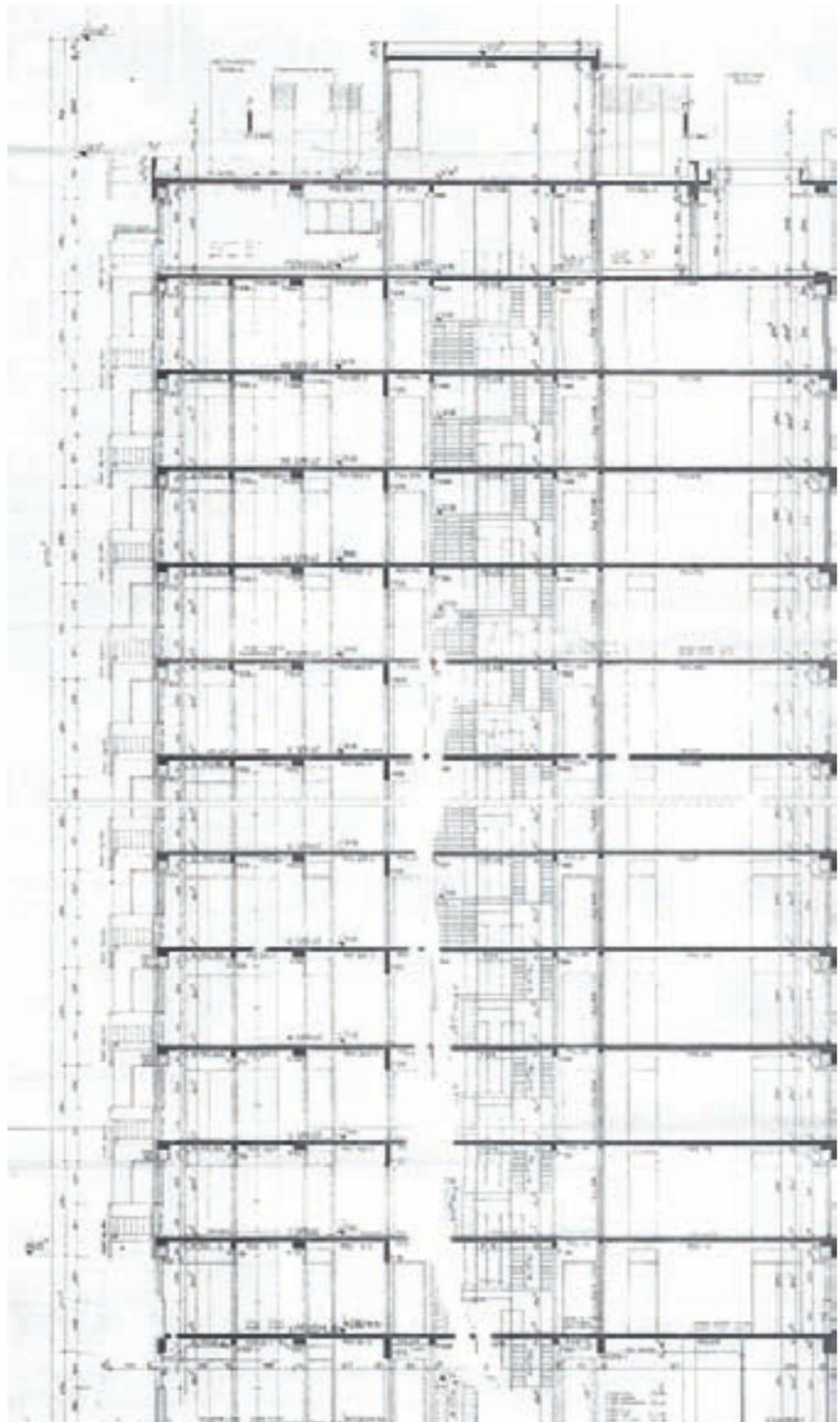
Elevation





Back View

**A new home for 32,000 people**



Section

**Architect**

Grgur Popovic

**Construction**

Napred

Ratko Mitrovic

**Construction System**

Skelett IMS

**Realisation Block 45**

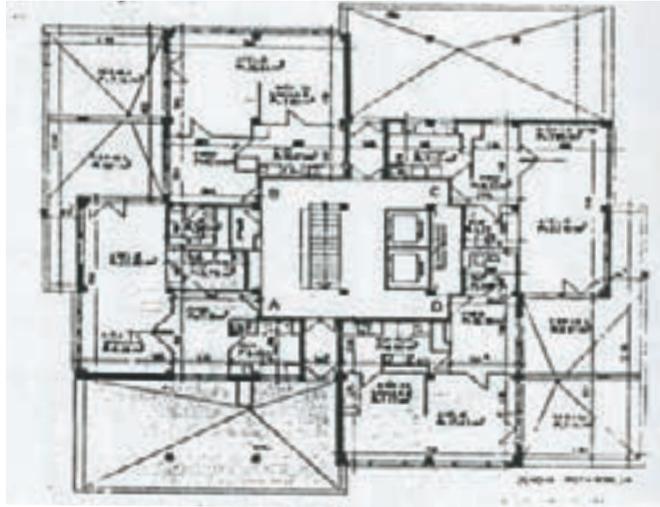
1968-1972

**Realisation Block 70**

1973-1975

**Floor Plan Type**

Ground Floor+10, +12, +14  
Floors



b

**Architect**

Branko Aleksic

**Construction**

Napred

**Construction System**

Skelett IMS

**Realisation Block 45**

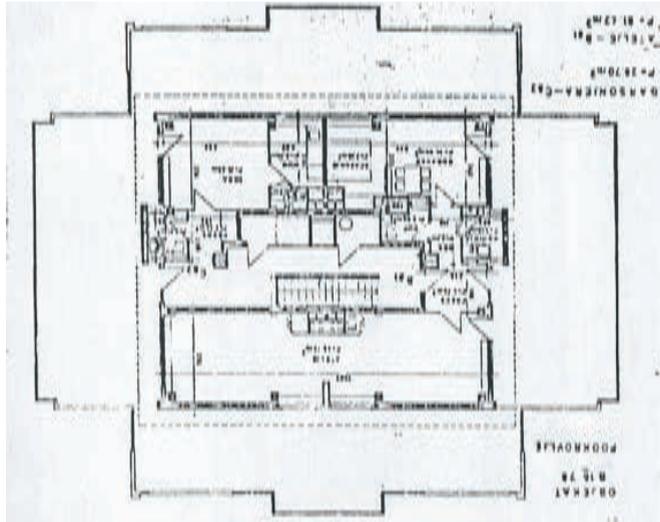
1968-1972

**Realisation Block 70**

1973-1975

**Floor Plan Type**

Ground Floor+ 6 Floors



**Architect**

Mihajlo Canak

**Construction**

Rad

Napred

Ratko Mitrovic

**Construction System**

Skelett IMS

**Realisation Block 45**

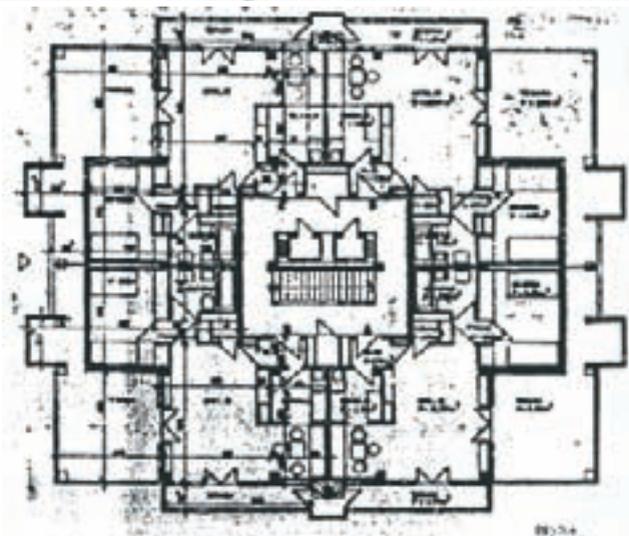
1968-1972

**Realisation Block 70**

1973-1975

**Floor Type**

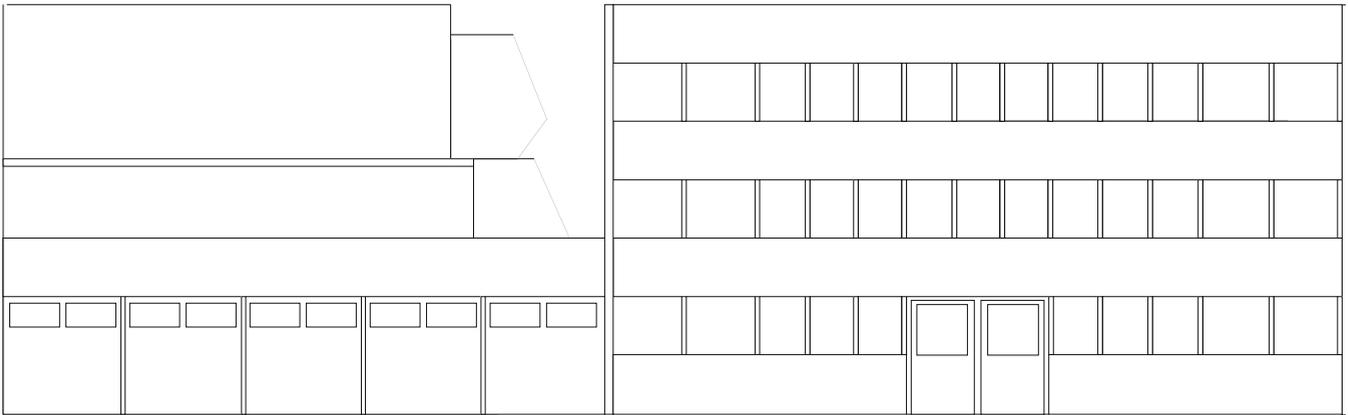
Ground Floor + 8 Floors



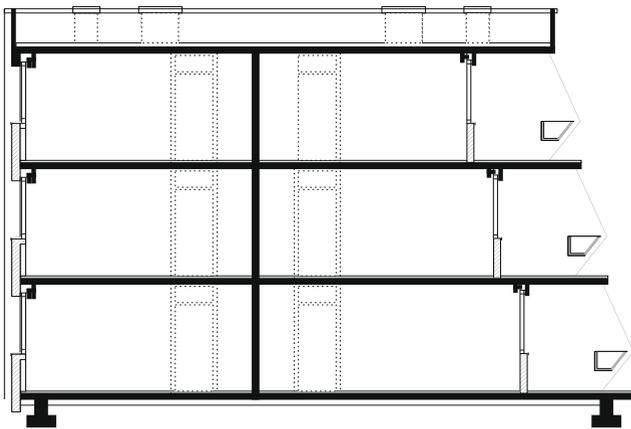
Floor Plans

A new home for 32,000 people

## Elevations/Sections/Plans of the Low Houses



Elevation



Section



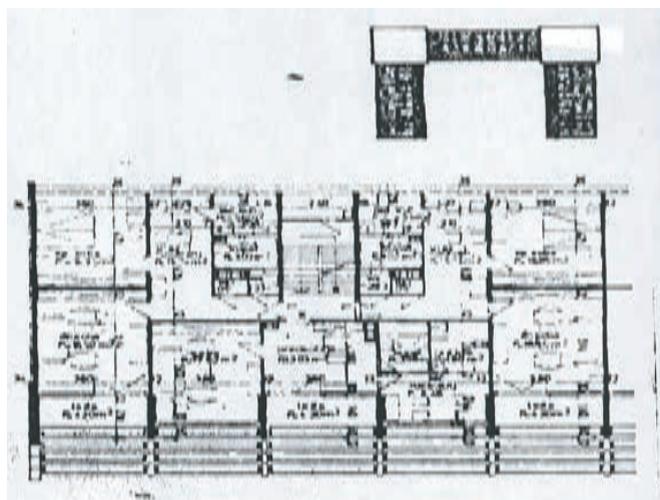
**“ The interesting aspect of the four-storey buildings are the semi-private, interior courtyards.”**

Milica



semi-private courtyard

**Architect**  
Mihailo Canak  
**Construction**  
Rad  
Napred  
Ratko Mitrovic  
**Construction System**  
Skelett IMS  
**Realisation Block 45**  
1968-1972  
**Realisation Block 70**  
1973-1975  
**Ground Floor Type**  
Ground Floor + 8 Floors



Floor Plans

## Overview of the Built Structures

### Building structures

Levels	Buildings	Apartments	m <sup>2</sup>
16	10	940	60.160
14	9	740	47.300
12	9	630	40.300
10	10	590	38.000
8	7	329	21.180
4	17	1.360	88.650
2	4	199	13.000
	66	4.788	308.590

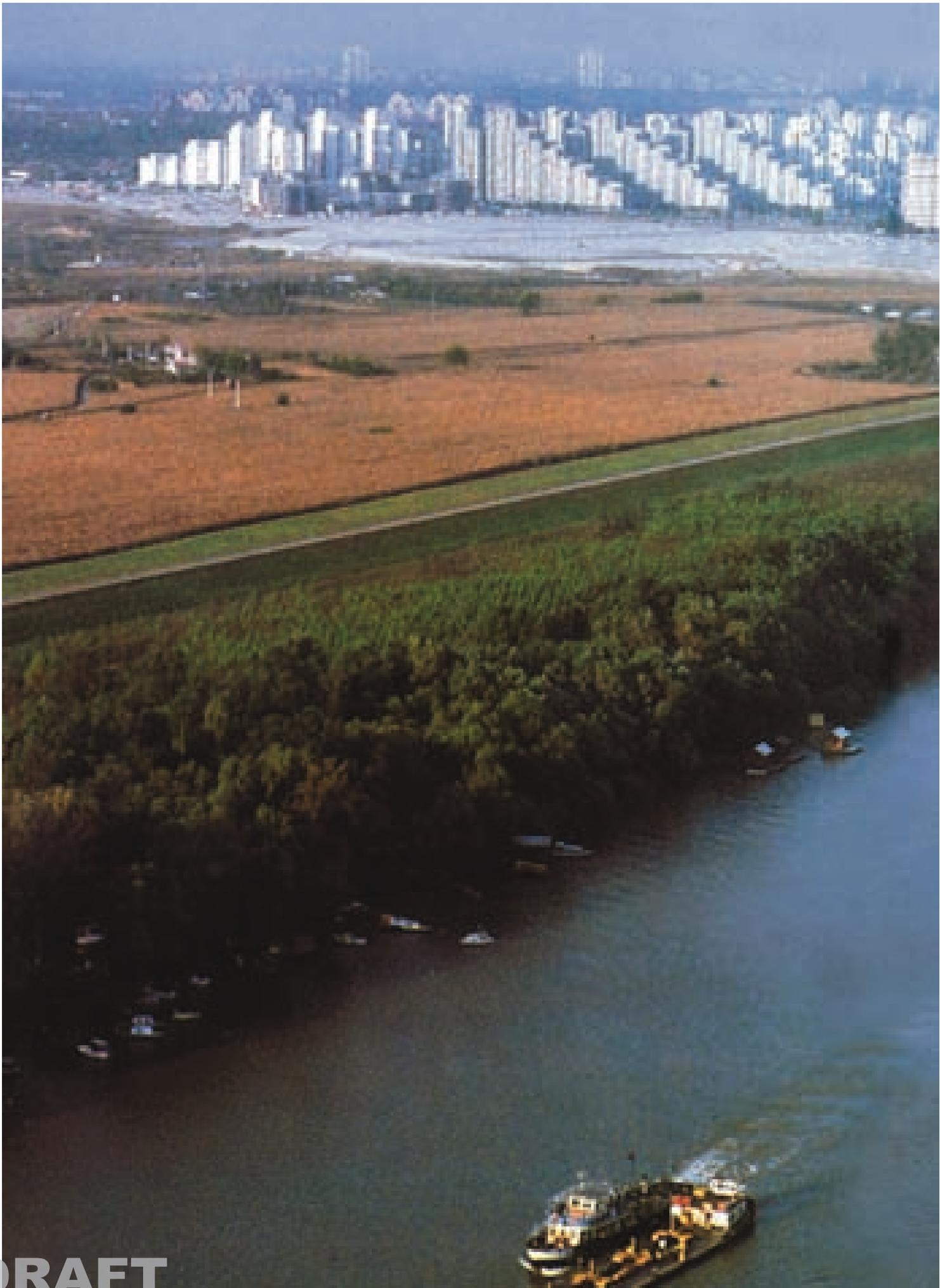
### Apartment structures

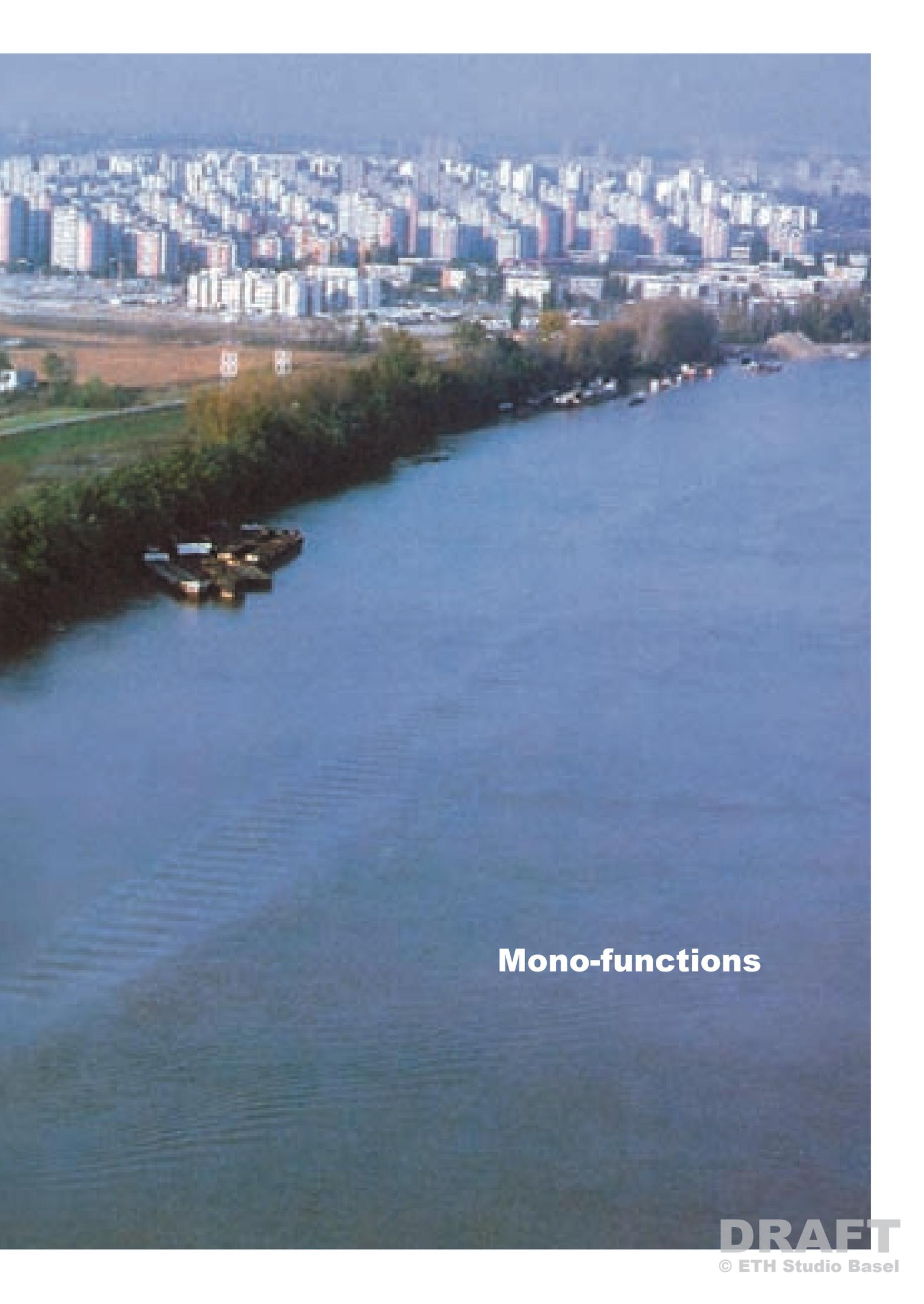
Type	Apartments	Inhabitants	Inhabitants / Apartment	1 m <sup>2</sup> / Inhabitant
single	765	1.889	2.45	16.4
double	2.080	6.916	3.35	18.1
three rooms	1.417	5.583	3.45	23.1
four rooms	299	1.286	4.30	23.5
five rooms	227	951	4.20	28.5
total	4.788	16.625	3.5	19.0

Statistics about the Blocks 45 and 70 from 1982



Interiors of the new built Structures





## Mono-functions

## The Path to a Sleeper-City

**1973**



Block 45 is completed at the end of 1973. Up to this time, school children were taught in the apartments of each teacher and Mr. Slobadan had to travel 12 km for a bottle of mineral water. In 1976, the construction of Block 70 is completed. In its construction, the Block is an improved copy of Block 45.

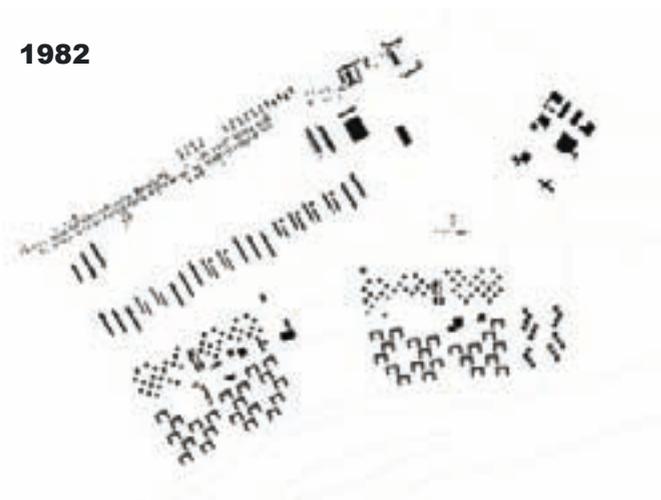
**1978**

The construction of Block 70 is completed in 1976. Over time, additional functions are added to the originally exclusive residential use, for example a school, market, hospital, and individual shops. Not without pride does one speak of the best hospital of the city or the largest school in the country. The housing block crowns the visit of the comrade Tito into an urban moment.



Tito visits the Block 1970

**1982**



As a result of political and economic consequences, both blocks prove themselves to be purely sleeper cities. The community, composed primarily of service personnel, commutes into the central city to work. For families with children and old people the blocks, with their large-scale green surfaces, are paradise, yet teenagers and young adults describe life in the blocks as monotonous solitude with a lack of urban character. Henri Levebvre sees in the “separation and isolation of normally intertwined functions a danger to the individual as well as the collective.”



C-Market, Hospital, Postal Service municipal Administration, School

## Mono-functions

# Camaraderie and Unity, Block 70 in the year 1982

## Geographic Location

The Block is constructed along the Save, in a Northeast direction. Due to the chessboard-like arrangement of houses, no house casts a shadow on another and apartments are therefore very sunny. Nine out of ten apartments are oriented in two directions. No other block in New Belgrade can profit from such a location like Blocks 45 and 70.

## Residential Surface

The surface area of the Blocks is 76 ha (860 m • 900 m • 860 m • 910 m). There are enough parking spaces for any activity:

Unused surface, lawns	30 ha
Streets and Traffic	9 ha
Parking spaces	6 ha
Houses	6 ha
Sport and recreation	2 ha
School and Kindergarten	2 ha
Playgrounds for small children	1 ha
Belt between the Save and four-storey buildings	10 ha
Belt between block and traffic axis	10 ha
Total	76 ha

## Costs

In 1972, the average cost per square meter was 3'710 and 3'880 Dinar. Later the price rose to 5'800 Dinar. The Block was constructed within seven years, a single solitary structure requiring approximately 20 months. To this day many deficiencies within the buildings have still not been eliminated.

## Cost Structure for an Apartment of 74m<sup>2</sup>

1. Rent	1.205 Din.	Infostan:	
2. Ground	122 Din.		
3. Garbage	147 Din.	Electricity	1.100 Din.
4. Water	240 Din.	Telecommunication	350 Din.
5. Light	70 Din.	TV and Radio	220 Din.
6. Heating	1.370 Din.	Repairs	330 Din.

Total : 5154 Din.



Block 45

**“The block is constructed along the Save, in a Northeast direction. Due to the chessboard-like arrangement of houses, no house casts a shadow on another and apartments are therefore very sunny.”**

## Mono-functions

### Age Structure

Age	Residents	Age	Residents
0-10	2.275	40-50	3.354
10-20	2.480	50-60	2.275
20-30	2.377	60-70	584
30-40	2.679	über 70	357
Total			16.483

### Employment Structure

Type of Employment	Amount	In %
Employees	8.159	50 %
Students	770	4 %
Primary School	2.086	12 %
Retirees	1.904	11 %
Housewives	1.371	8 %
Children under 6 years	1.753	12 %
Unemployed	443	3 %
Total	16.483	100 %

### Nationalities

Serbia	11.089	Yugoslavia	2.785	Montenegro	1.032
Croatia	320	Macedonia	259	Muslims	166
Albania	147	Slovenia	86	Roma	29
Hungary	27	Bulgaria	26	Slovakia	24
Romania	16	Russia	10	Germany	10
Others	460				



Jana

**“ I like in it Block 70. There is enough space to play.”**

Jana

## Mono-functions



Food-Store

**“ In comparison with the normal standard, there is five times less variety in shopping facilities.”**

## Provisions and Shopping Facilities

The store in the Block is exclusively intended for the provision of essential goods. Other errands must be made outside the Block. The provision within the Block is distributed over 2400m<sup>2</sup> or 0.15m<sup>2</sup>/resident. Contrary to the norm, shopping facilities are five times smaller. To this day, these provisions are insufficient. In 1979, a market was constructed on Block 44. Located between Blocks 45, 70 and 61, 62, 63, 64, it was expected that 25,000 households would do their shopping in this market.

## Public Transport Services

The Block is well connected with the city center and other urban lines. From almost any urban area, the Block is quickly accessible. The capacity and comfort of buses is constantly decreasing as the resident population of opposing blocks rises rapidly. This problem is to be solved with the construction of a new tramline.

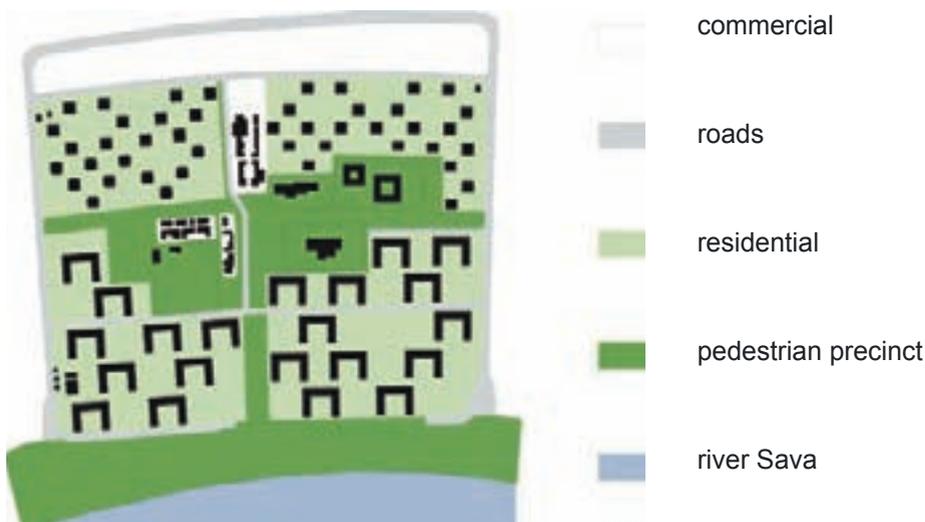
## Kindergartens

On May 25, 1982, for occasion of Tito's birthday, the kindergarten was opened on 2500m<sup>2</sup>, two levels and approximately 450 children.

## Community Association

One of the largest community associations in Belgrade was opened on May 13, 1975. In the interest of all residents, the association conducts diverse cooperative- political actions, such as the design of the Block, communal activities, social protection, education, culture, sport, shopping facilities, female associations, and many more.

## Land Use





**DRAFT**

© ETH Studio Basel

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Basel, showing a mix of urban development. In the foreground, there's a large green area with a few buildings and a road. To the right, there are several tall, modern apartment buildings. The background shows a dense urban area with various building heights and styles, illustrating heterogeneity in urban form.

**Heterogeneity**

1986



### Adaptation to New Realities

“Habitation is a fundamental right through which the working person is endowed with an essential condition of life.”

Because the Megablocks were completely dependant on public management during the time of communism, they had little opportunity to change. With the downfall of the state in 1989, these control mechanisms also came to an end. The free market economy led to the overturn of tenure conditions. In the early 1990s, during one of the worse inflations of Europe, Serbians purchased their apartments from the state at low prices. Through new ownership, renewed questions of maintenance and payment are raised. The demand for consumer goods also increases rapidly. Shopping centers, gas stations, and further residential structures are constructed on the large green belt next to the main street. A village-like structure of businesses develops in the center of Block 45.

1996

The built structure was existent. For the most part, the shopping centers, or “stables” as they are called in local slang, constructed directly in front of the Blocks lie empty. The settlement undergoes a rapid urbanization only after special regulations passed by the former President Milosevic in 1996 facilitate the immigration of 30.000 Chinese into Belgrade. The Chinese discover the profitably located shopping mall of Block 70 and construct a sort of ‘Chinatown’ there. The resulting heterogeneity in population enables, on the one hand, the collaboration of Serbians and Chinese, while on the other leads to many grievances and jealousy.

2006

The urban monument attempts to represent the tumultuous past two decades. The majority of residents have a favorable opinion of their place of residence.



chinese shopping mall, parking lots and cafe

# Institutions of the Free Market Economy

## Real Estate Office Arus 45

Povratak na sadržaj grupe: **Nekretnine**  
 Rubrika: **452** NEKRETNINE - Dvosobni

< 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 > Ukupno: **1422** oglasa / 48 str.

Potražnja  Ponuda  Zemana

BLOK 21, 55m <sup>2</sup> +terasa, III, CG, podrum, tel, lift, interfon, uknjižen, useljiv.	063/304-280
BLOK 21, kod Myatta, 54m <sup>2</sup> , CG, dvostran, sreden, uknjižen, 75.000 EUR.	064/155-9919
BLOK 22, 2.5, 59m <sup>2</sup> , I, interfon, tel, CG, uknjižen, 79.900 EUR.	064/200-7215
BLOK 22, 2.5, 65m <sup>2</sup> , loda, uknjižen, CG, 79.000.	064/110-9269
BLOK 22, 60m <sup>2</sup> , loda, I, CG, 77.900 EUR.	064/117-4615
BLOK 22, kućice, 2.5, 71m <sup>2</sup> +loda, II, 89.000 EUR.	063/874-7096
BLOK 23, 2.5, 65m <sup>2</sup> , terasa, CG, lift, tel, interfon, ugrađena kuhinja i plakar, renoviran, dva mokra čvora, uknjižen, 84.900.	064/153-1107
BLOK 29, 62m <sup>2</sup> +loda, VPR/VI, CG, uknjižen, 70.000.	064/304-8363
BLOK 29, 64m <sup>2</sup> , PR/VI, CG, uknjižen, 64.900 EUR.	064/350-5984
BLOK 29, kod Beogradske arena, 64m <sup>2</sup> +loda, adepatran u 2.5, CG, nova izgradnja.	064/159-4428
BLOK 33, Bulevar AVNOJ-a, 49m <sup>2</sup> +loda, VIII/IX, 58.900.	011/318-7312
BLOK 34, 56m <sup>2</sup> , loda, CG, I, luks, žuta fasadna cigla, useljiv, 80.000.	064/174-8980
BLOK 37, 2.5, 72m <sup>2</sup> , terasa, mokri čvor, CG, XIII/XV, 2 loba, 70.000.	064/257-2152
BLOK 37, 2.5, 73m <sup>2</sup> +loda, VI, CG, uknjižen, 69.900.	063/773-0291
BLOK 37, 56m <sup>2</sup> , salotac, pogodan i za FP, PR/VIII, nov, uknjižen, 54.000.	063/284-706
BLOK 45, 2.5, 71m <sup>2</sup> , uknjižen, useljiv, VPR/XIV, 70.000.	063/241-270
BLOK 45, 2.5, 82+10m <sup>2</sup> , VI, CG, južna strana, 82.000.	064/204-0242
BLOK 45, 56m <sup>2</sup> +loda, iz otpisa, 63.000.	065/895-6243
BLOK 45, Jurija Gagarina, 47+4m <sup>2</sup> , loda, CG, lift, uknjižen, 57.000.	065/383-1122
BLOK 45, Jurina Gagarina, 2.5, 67m <sup>2</sup> +3 loda, CG, 67.900.	064/824-3900
BLOK 61, 2.5, 63m <sup>2</sup> , loda, VI, CG, uknjižen, kuhinja, 67.000 EUR.	064/125-5128
BLOK 64, kod Zrno centra, 2.5, 75m <sup>2</sup> , XIII/XIV, uknjižen, 63.000 EUR.	063/858-8775
BLOK 64, kod ZMO centra, 2.5, 75m <sup>2</sup> +loda, IV, 75.000.	064/287-2094
BLOK 70, 2.5, 68m <sup>2</sup> +loda, CG, sreden, uknjižen, 83.900.	064/135-1055
BLOK 70, 48m <sup>2</sup> +terasa, I/IV, CG, luks, bez posrednika, 55.000 EUR.	064/848-9033
BLOK 70, 61+5m <sup>2</sup> , V, 70.000.	064/231-8013
BLOK 70, Gandjeva, 60+6m <sup>2</sup> , IV/IV, interfon, KATV, lift, 65.900.	064/202-1640
BLOK 70, kod Piramide, 60m <sup>2</sup> , terasa, VI/IX, CG, 62.000 EUR.	064/614-7541
BLOK 70, kod Save, 62+6m <sup>2</sup> , CG, IV, 65.900, hitno.	064/286-6877

< 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 > Ukupno: **1422** oglasa / 48 str.

Povratak na sadržaj grupe: **Nekretnine**

Arus 45 is an apartment rental agency. It has existed for the past 12 years and was founded during the changeover from communism to capitalism. At first, apartments were purchased from the state, thereby opening the real estate market. Today, Arus already maintains three branches, one of which is located in Block 45. There are a total of over 1000 real estate firms in Belgrade.

“Actually, we only establish contact between buyer and seller, overlook the contracts and documents, and offer legal assistance. The price is determined by the seller himself.”



Office Arus 45 im Block 45

## **“ There is no apartment vacancy.”**

Arus 45

“ In Serbia, except in respect to real estate and apartment rent, one still calculates in Dinar and not in Euros. During the conversion from DM to Euro, many, rather wealthy residents of Belgrade were afraid to change their money at the bank, as the origin of the money was no long clear. Instead, they invested in real estate. High demand, coupled with a limited supply led to strong price inflation in the apartment market. Apartments were even sold without documents, and even those people who had constructed illegally were able to sell off their problems along with their apartments.

Today, one square meter in New Belgrade costs between 800 and 1400 Euros. There is no apartment vacancy. In order to purchase a suitable apartment, one must keep the price of the old apartment high. There is no price difference between old and new apartments.

## Management Systems Infostan

Infostan, the system of comprehensive payment of communal services in Belgrade, has existed since January 1, 1977. Infostan aims at the economical and rational processing of resident wishes and the payment of communal and other services, including, among other things:

- Waterworks, canalization
- Electrical power
- Urban cleanliness
- Public enterprises for apartment servicing
- Chimney Sweepers
- Electrical power distribution

Infostan is connected to the state's administration, the parliamentary commission of the City of Belgrade, and the secretary for communal and residential affairs. There is a constant collaboration with the state's resident protection and the communal law over bills and accounts.



communal guide to the city of Belgrade

The communal guide of the City of Belgrade is an administrative aid for the employees of the various communal services, as well as for the residents. On the backside, there is an overview of important telephone numbers.



Resident of Block 45 tries to get into the Building without getting wet.

**“ Today, residents must deal with the problems that arise themselves.”**

Resident Block 45

### Interview with the President of City-housing

“ Here, there are two firms under one roof. Infostan is only responsible for collecting the money. “ Public Housing” is responsible for the provision of services, which includes responsibility for the public grounds of the housing developments. For over 40 years, this was a state enterprise. We have now been divided into four private, separate businesses. In the past, the state was responsible for this settlement. Today, residents care for their own apartment.

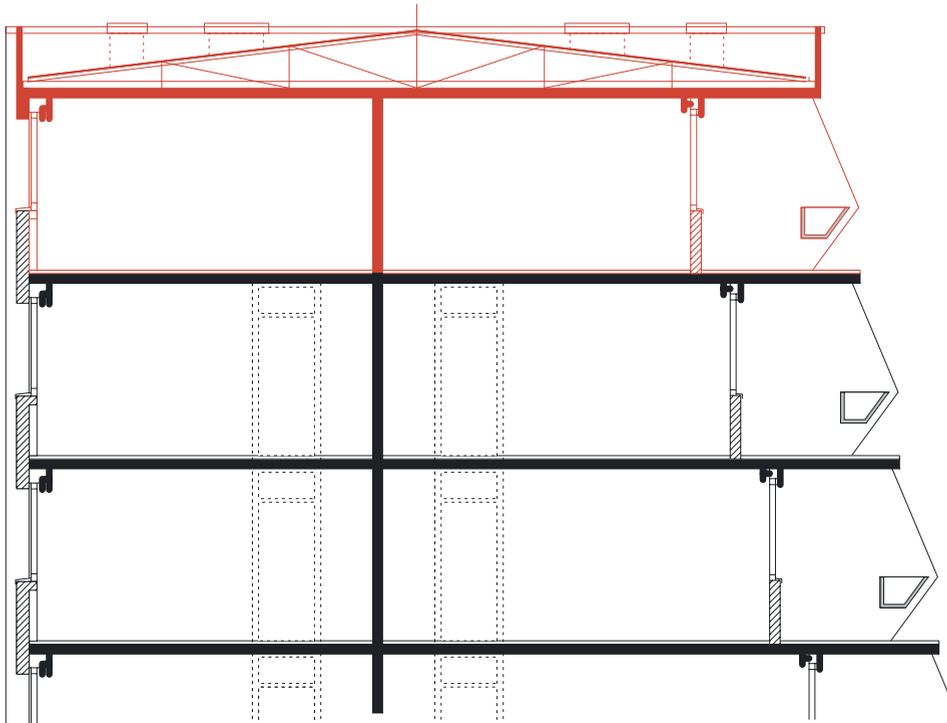
This is actually the greatest difficulty in our profession. People are not accustomed to pay extra, above their monthly fees, when something is broken. We are responsible for public spaces, such as green surfaces, plazas and elevator, as well as for the supply of water, heat, and electricity. At specific intervals, we carry out maintenance checks, for this there is a list.

At the moment, one of our main problems is the establishment of a new law. Our goal is, to strengthen and fix the regulations with each building association. We would like a fixed contract with each solitary structure. When residents are unhappy with our work, then this contract could simply be terminated. We are still in the process of transition. This means a change in the thought process of people must occur. They must begin to take their problems into their own hands and not simply sit and wait for the state to intervene.”

Milos Rakic



**“The residents of the upper floors have an sodden ceilings, eight out of ten of the remaining residents are aware of this, yet no one is prepared to take action against it.” Milos Rakic, CEO of „Public Housing“**



Proposal: Development of a flat Roof into an Apartment.

“ In construction, we fight with the problems presented by the flat roof. The water damage is enormous. Every second apartment leaks when it rains. It would be best to renovate the entire roof. The costs would run to 5000 Dinar/ m<sup>2</sup>, but the means and will of residents is lacking. The majority of residents do not see the construction of extra stories as a solution to the sodden roves, yet those people living in the upper most floors are for it and would offer financial support. Possible suggestions would be the construction of a slanted roof, without further residential space, to which all owners would have to contribute. Another suggestion would be the construction of a slanted roof with residential space, which would be granted to the owners of apartments on the upper floor. In this case the residents of lower floors would not have to pay for the addition. In consideration of the two suggestions, the following procedures are necessary: 1. A unified project for the addition to the four storey structures must be formulated. 2. The Department of City Planning must announce the program publicly. 3. Residents must be involved in the entire organization of the construction process.” Milos Rakic, CEO of „Public Housing“

### **Resident Associations**

Before the Second World War, every house had a guard keeper. This was a profession like any other, one was even given retirement for it. However, this supervision and protective function did not align with communist ideology, which holds all people as equal. A new system of resident organization therefore emerged: the resident association.

Today, every residential structure is obliged by law to form a resident association. In structures with few apartments, this is not a problem. In four storey structures the resident association has a building foreman, or a president so to speak, a vice president, an accountant, and its regular members. The number of members must be higher than half of the total number of residents and they make decisions regarding the maintenance of the building.

### **Maintenance of Residential Blocks from the Viewpoint of the Residents:**

For the most part, the residents are ready to invest in the maintenance of the residential blocks, under the prerequisite of higher control and quality in execution. According to a survey, this problem can be solved by the active involvement of residents. The borough of New Belgrade, as well as responsible institutions such as the City-housing, support new laws over the maintenance of residential structures.

### **Proposals to the establishment of order within the Building:**

The failure of organization structures occurs mostly in buildings with a high number of floors. The proposed solution to this problem is of a legal nature, with the hope that residents would then adhere more to the regulations. The following are two examples of such sanctions in different countries:

New York: All apartment owners must approve new renters. This renter must offer personal information regarding profession, income, family composition etc...

In Slovenia, one can take legal action against a resident who does not adhere to the building rules. In case this resident is found guilty, he must sell his apartment and move out.

The proposal of the resident association would be that, through an initiative, the building rules would be connected to the state, which would regulate these legally, with the goal of an increased quality of life.



cleaning lady Branka

**“ It is easy to sublet public rooms. With the extra money one is able, for instance, to afford a cleaning lady.”**

Mrs. Bjelanovic

### **Communication between Residents:**

The privatized apartments function autonomously. Each owner is individually responsible for maintenance and upkeep. The public spaces are therefore often left to their own devices. The level engagement by the building representative, who is elected by the residents of each building, is evident in the public stairwell. Some rent out the empty, public spaces and thereby earn money, which they invest in a cleaning lady.

## Microstructures Village in the Block

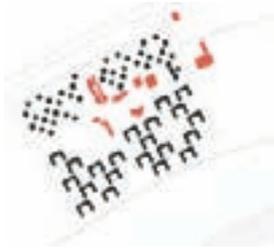
"In 1977 the restaurant "Kafana Sunca" was opened, and the grocery chain C-Market was constructed. Soon after, other small houses followed in the center, with further facilities such as, for instance, a hair salon or stationary store.

The apprentice center was constructed on a vacant lawn of Block 45 in 1985 and 1986. Here, there are further businesses and the soccer club. This accumulation of small houses is almost village-like.

In the beginning of the 1990s, the 'stables' were constructed on the green belt along the main street of Jurija Gagarina. A number of new residential structures were also constructed here. Today, one of these "stables" is named "Block 70", in which the Chinese have their stores. Serbian stores are located primarily in Block 44, the so-called "Pyramid".

"When I was young, Block 45 was a true sleeper city. There was simply nothing. Today one finds everything here. "

The smallest, rented stores in the building entrances take on many functions. There are leather craftsmen and cobblers, driving schools and simple grocery stores, betting agencies, and a refrigerator repair services. Those who do not find what they need here, turn to the stores in the center of the block. These have a village-like character and include any number of businesses.



**" For some time, a kiosk was located in an empty room of our building. We demanded its removal as the store slowly developed into a bar- that attracted many alcoholics."** Mrs Bjelanovic



village-like structures in the center of the block

## Heterogeneity



**“ For some time, a kiosk was located in an empty room of our building. We demanded its removal as the store slowly developed into a bar- that attracted many alcoholics.”** Mrs Bjelanovic





village-like structures in the centre of the block

## Heterogeneity

### Block 70



Panorama. Block 70, Jurija Gagarina Road



Residential



Visitors of the chinese shopping-mall



chinese shopping-mall



new chinese shopping-mall

**“ The Chinese discovered the profitably located shopping mall of Block 70 and established a type of “Chinatown” there.”**

## Heterogeneity

### Block 44



Panorama. Block 44, Jurija Gagarina Road



shopping-centre „Pyramid“



shopping-centre „Beograd“



grocery market along the street



serbian shopping-centre

## Heterogeneity

### Block 45



Panorama. Block 45 Jurija Gagarina Road



Small business along the road



Residential building with 80 apartments



shopping-centre "TC Enjub"



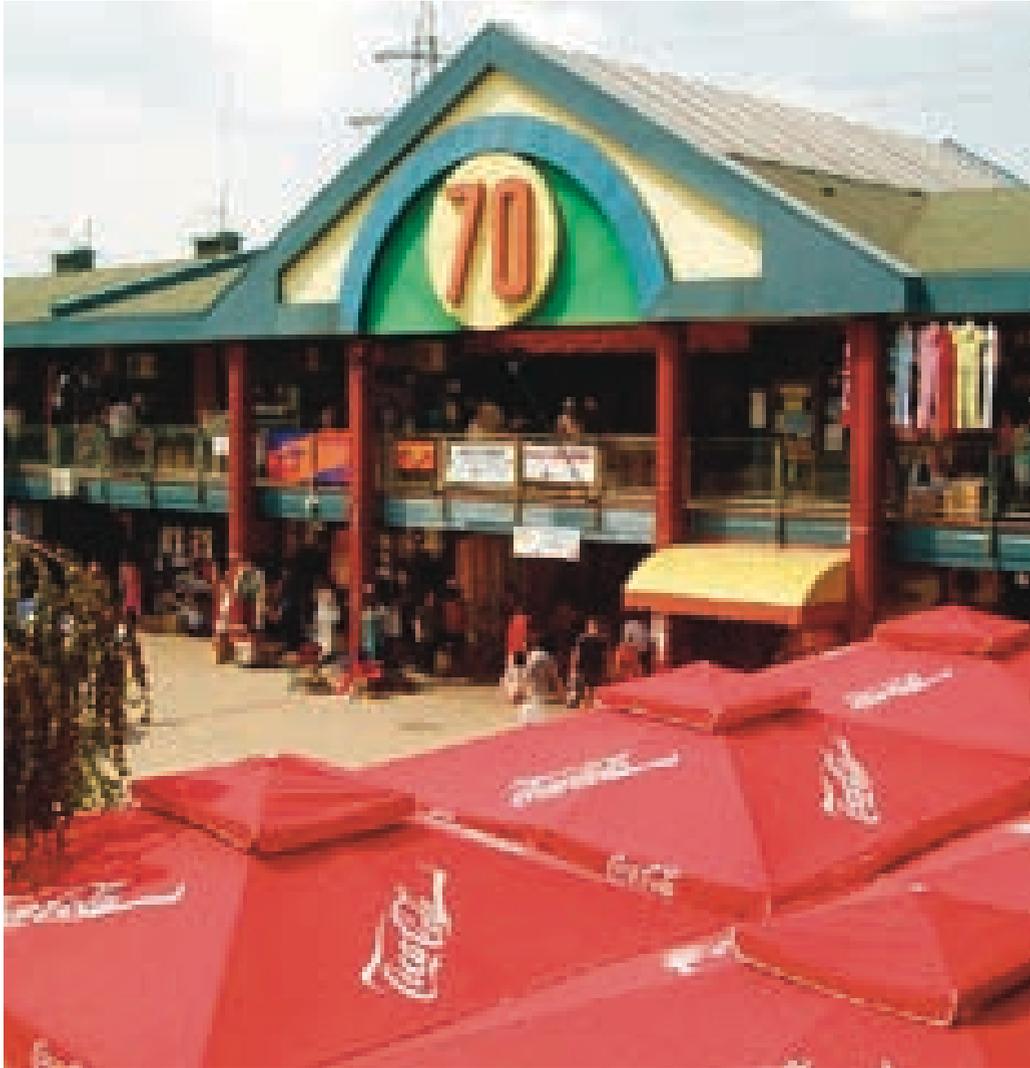
„Cafe - Grill“

## **Unexpected Visit Chinese in the Block**

Under lenient immigration regulations, thanks to a special agreement with the former President Milosevic, 30.000 Chinese immigrate into Belgrade. Here, they try to build a new life as store owners. The majority, originally come from the province of Fujian, while others also originate from the northern city of Hubei, or from Zhejiang in the vicinity of Shanghai. For most, the role of Belgrade as gateway to Europe has little meaning. In the beginning, the starved market and nonexistent land economy offers a profitable base for Chinese businesses. Chinese wares are by far the cheapest in all Serbia, and thereby result in a new form of immigration: calculated immigration.



origin of the migrated chinese people



chinese shopping-centre in block 70

### Conditions of Life

The role of the Chinese in many large cities worldwide is the same: that of the local businessmen. Here, in Belgrade, they have assembled in Block 70. Many are related to one another or come from the same province. Despite the downturn in profits within the last three years, in China, the opportunity to immigrate abroad is still seen as a profitable adventure. Some Chinese, who arrived during the first opening of 1996, take responsibility for the preparation of necessary forms for new immigrants, though the entire process is conducted as a business transaction. For a letter of invitation, they charge up to 1000 Euros. “It is an established game among the Chinese. The big fish eat the small”, says Mr. Hu from Nanjing.

In China, he was an established cook and owner of two restaurants, but he could not resist the temptation to go abroad. “The advertisement firm promised me everything: my own store, apartment, and the infrastructure necessary to open restaurants. I paid 40,000 RMB. On my arrival in Belgrade I discovered none of these things. I would have most liked to step back into the airplane and fly home. Instead, I cooked in a rental apartment in order to sell the food at the market. I preferred that to ending up in some Chinese restaurant where the food they offer to customers has nothing to do with Chinese. Today I cook noodles and dumplings every day. People work hard and want to stay full. Though in the long run I will no longer do this. All I think of today is money. My only ambition is to make as much money as possible, in order to finally be able to return home.”

Mr. Hu, Chef in Block 70



Zhang He and Lee Xiao Jiang

**Zhang He and Lee Xiao Jiang are newly married. They both come from Zhejiang and are twenty years old.**

## Heterogeneity

Where do you live?

Some Chinese live here, in Block 70, because it is nearer to our place of work: the shopping mall. It is simply more practical. However, the majority of us cannot afford it here and live in Ladine, near the airport, as I do. It is simply more affordable there, though the conditions are not as good as in the Blocks.

Have you ever lived in these Blocks?

Yes, I have.

And how did you like the apartment?

They are old blocks, 20-30 years old. The apartments are decent, but it is dangerous here. Also in Ladina, where I live now, I feel unsafe. Every day I drive up to my front door and do not leave again. The Serbians believe that through our businesses we have a particularly great deal of money, but this is not the case. The businesses are poor, the police verify this and that, and besides, there is little clientele. Those that can afford it, leave to Poland or Croatia. Everywhere, it is easier than here.

Do you also intend to leave? Or do you plan to stay here?

You know, on the one hand life here is difficult, on the other, I have lived here so long that there is something of an emotional bind.

What would you miss the most?

Well, if you ask that way, there is nothing in particular. It is more a feeling.

Are you here with your whole family?

No, my child is in China. Only my wife and I came here. To bring our child here would be a pain to us all. I do not want to do this to my child. Our status here is not secure, we could return at any time.

Do you return to China often?

No, it has already been over a year. I don't have much reason to; we are not even able to sell the wares we have here. Everyone here is afraid. I am kept up at night.



Xiao Di

**Lu Shang, Fujian Province, 35 Years Old, in Belgrade since six years. Is waiting for better conditions.**

## Heterogeneity

Do you rent or own your apartment?

The Chinese are not able to buy apartments here, we rented the apartment from the owner. But for more detailed questions, ask my brother, he is not here, but he knows much more.

Excuse me, but may I smoke in here?

Go ahead, but it is actually not allowed. The controls are continually greater. There are more administrative people who make checks and verify the regulations. Besides, buyers have the right to exchange or return wares with a receipt. That also used to be easier. Sold was sold. Now there is even a penalty for smoking. But, just go ahead and smoke.

Would it be possible for us to see your apartment?

I work until six o'clock. Besides, I watch the store myself. So no, that will really not be possible. My brother is at the airport picking up a friend, so he cannot be there either.

How do you like the apartment? The size of the rooms, the functionality?

We think everything is alright, otherwise we would not have taken it. I cannot give you the size in m<sup>2</sup>, since I never went to school.

A second Chinese enters the room- he is at once curious and shy, answering tentatively to our questions. We can only discover that he lives in the vicinity of the airport, as most other Chinese do.

Can you explain to us why, at the moment, so many Chinese move from Block 70 to the airport?

It is cheaper there. Besides, the apartments there are larger.

What do these look like?

They are two storey houses, though inside not nearly as well equipped as those of Block 70. There is no central heating and poor insulation.

How do you heat?

With an electric oven.

How many people live in such a house?

It depends, around two, three families. We also share with Serbians sometimes, that is safer.



Lu Shang

**Lu Shang, Fujian Province, 35 Years Old, in Belgrade since six years. Is waiting for better conditions.**

## Heterogeneity

Are there associations which organize communal events?  
Something for the Chinese New year?

No, it is better when one can return directly home after work and no longer have to leave.

No activities at all? Do you never go into the city?

Not more than two times a year. There are not even available parking spaces there. To this day, we have been penalized each time- each time. I think they penalize everyone with Chinese license plates.

Chinese license plates?

Yes, all license plates that begin with 999. Once we went into town with a Serbian who had a Belgrade License plate- we were penalized, he was not.

In this case, do you sense a negative attitude of the Chinese, by Serbians?

Yes

So your interaction is purely restricted to business transactions?

Yes, it is just that there is no business.

Are there Chinese that leave?

Yes, some go to Poland, Bulgaria. There they have not raised the taxes yet, otherwise we would have to return to China.

Can they do business there?

No, even less, but what is one to do? It is very difficult for the Chinese here.

What is most difficult?

Well, one cannot move around freely.

If you had a free choice, would you want to live in the city?

No, I would prefer to live where it is safe.

It is not safe here?

No, not at all, the Chinese are often robbed.



Mr. Zhang

**Mr. Zhang, Fujiang Province. Has lived in Belgrade for four years, with his wife. They buy children's toys in their business.**

## Heterogeneity

Especially here? Is it safer close to the airport?  
No, it is unsafe everywhere.

How high is the rent?  
Close to the airport it is about 200 Euros a month. Here, in Block 70, it is already between 400 and 450 for a two-room apartment.

Are you also here with your family?  
Yes

Do you live as you did in China? I mean, in respect to food and customs.

Yes, completely. We can find nearly everything here, since we import it from China ourselves. The stores here are all kept by Chinese, though, as I said, more and more return to China.

When did the first Chinese arrive?  
1997. At the time, the stores still functioned well. Though since I arrived a year ago, nothing functions anymore.

Before coming here, how did you imagine Serbia, Belgrade and your life here?  
I came here to work for others. It was not important if I would like or dislike it here.

For whom do you work?  
For them here.

For them?  
For his brother.



Mei Ling

**Mei Ling, Fujiang Province. 18 years old. Has lived in Belgrade for three months. Lives with her aunt and uncle in Ledine.**

## **2. Generation**

My school costs 12000 Euros a year. It is an English-American School. After I graduate, I would like to study economics at Cambridge. I do not see a future for myself in Serbia. Three years ago, my family moved from Shanghai to Belgrade. In China, my father had been unemployed for three years. A relative suggested we go abroad, to conduct business there. In the meantime, we have three stores in the vicinity of the airport. We have done pretty well here, but even so, my friends in China have false illusions of our life here. They are jealous of me. Yet I feel so lonely here; I never go out. Our neighbor's son is still small, only three years old, so I cannot play with him. I seldom spend time in Block 70. My father does not want me to come here often, as the people here are uneducated. But one of my good friends works here, she is also completing a one year degree and would later like to study languages. We are in the same situation, and understand each other very well. For the time being, I would like to concentrate on school, later I would like to travel, learn other languages and move away from Belgrade, maybe to Shanghai, maybe to the US.



Vivi

**Vivi, Shanghai. 18 years old. Has lived in Belgrade for three years. Lives with her parents in Pancevo and studies at the Anglo-American School.**

## **Foreign Language Institute**

In three months, the Chinese, newly arrived in Belgrade, learn the basics of Serbian at the Foreign Language Institute. Only a few pursue the course to the diploma, which requires one year. The language serves solely as an instrument to communicate with clients. These four, sixteen-year old youths have been in Belgrade for two months and, next to their studies, all work in the shopping center of Block 70. They spend most of their free time in the Internet Café, where they either play video games or talk to their friends in China over skype. They have no Serbian friends. “ Maybe that will come in time, once we can speak Serbian better.”

Mrs. Zivkovic, Serbian Language Teacher



Yan Lee und seine Serbischlehrerin während dem Unterricht

**“ I love my students. They are all so full of life and learn quickly. They also remind me of my sons, at that age they also had only nonsense in their head.”** Smilica, Serbian Teacher

## Heterogeneity



Yan Lee, Zhang Pin, Zhao tong and ing Ming at the Language School

**“ Maybe in time we will make Serbian friends, when we speak Serbian better.” Yan Lee** Yan Lee

### Social Diversity

Speaking to the people in the shopping center, we discovered that they feel restricted and unsafe in Belgrade. Increasing criminality towards the Chinese and unprofitable business have limited their radius of daily movement. Additionally, their status in the country is not secure. In a normal case, a visa is good for three months, after which they may extend their stay every three months, which often requires a longer waiting time. This also applies to Chinese who have lived in the country for over ten years. For this reason, most people leave their children with relatives in China. Children who are born in Serbia are registered neither for the day school nor the kindergarten. From a young age, mothers leave their children under the supervision of Serbian women. The relationship between this daytime caretaker and the child can grow to become very intense. When the children reach six years, school age, they are sent back to China, resulting in many dramatic separations.



Marijanna Dragovic with Tintin, 2 jährig

**“This is a Serbian child.”**  
Nanny with a Chinese child.

## Heterogeneity

“Normally, Serbians and Chinese live strictly separated from one another. This is why we are sometimes looked at strangely. But that does not matter to us, as long as we love each other. We met here, in the Block. Ling is eight months pregnant. We are also engaged. The Chinese in the Block have accepted our relationship. I work here in the store, and she is, so to speak, my boss. We have rented an apartment in Block 70 and look forward to our life together. Maybe later we will go to China, but that is one and the same, so long as we are together.”



Igor Cincic and his girlfriend Wan fei

**“Normally, Serbians and Chinese live strictly separated from one another.”**  
Igor

## Heterogeneity

The Chinese have created a complex economy in the shopping center. Next to their own relatives, which they bring from China to Belgrade as workforce, they also employ gypsies, Serbians, and war refugees from the former Yugoslavia. Still, they are often accused of undermining the Serbian economy. To maintain control over the Chinese, they are given only very limited rights. Thereby, even Chinese who have lived in Belgrade as long as ten years must extend their visa every three months, which often requires long waiting times. These conditions lead to a feeling of uncertainty in the Chinese migrant population. The difficulty in making plans for the future is a great worry for many.



Milica , from Bosnia is working for the chinese

**“ I have worked for a wonderful family from China for two years now.”**

## **Accelerated Urbanization**

Natasa works in an airline office in the shopping center of Block 70. Among other things, this office is responsible for the administration of the Block, for instance when a commercial space is rented, or the internet connection does not work. Natasa studied Chinese in Beijing and is also employed as a translator at the legal tribunal. Her duties include the review of Chinese immigrant papers and she is officially registered as a translator.

“ In the past, the Chinese ordered a container of goods from China every few months. Usually they flew back for their purchases during the Chinese New Year. But recently, business has been poor. A few have already moved to other European countries, for those who remain it is very hard.

Since the NATO bombing of 1999, Serbia has suffered from a poor economy. There are no more industries and the people are therefore dependant on cheap goods from China, which were cheaper than those of Bulgaria or Romania. For this reason, Chinese businesses flourished for several years, until the Serbian government imposed very high taxes. One reason for these taxes may be the imitation designer goods, which the Chinese have continued to import despite restrictions.

Nevertheless, Natasa hopes that the Chinese will remain. “They are very important for this area. People from all of Serbia come here on the weekends to go shopping. Additionally, the Chinese have had a positive influence on the Serbian economy. They employ refugees from Kosovo, gypsies, and Bosnians. They have established an entire network of business transactions and provide jobs for many people.” Do the Chinese like it here? “ They work every day, including weekends. Business is their first priority and the only reason why people remain in Belgrade. They are not very concerned if they like it here or not and never go out. They simply have no free time.



Natasa and Igor at work in their travel agency 888

**“They are very important for this area. People from all of Serbia come here on the weekends to go shopping.”** Natasa

## Heterogeneity

Two years ago, the Serbian government came up with a new law: the Chinese had to show a receipt for every single object sold, in order to tax these a second time.

Every day a civil inspector carried out a control. In a 18m<sup>2</sup> store, in which things can often get a bit hectic, it is possible that one might forget an receipt from time to time. The inspectors just waited for stores to make the smallest error, and then imposed a fine of 20,000 Dinar, or approximately 2500 Euros. After three fines, the inspectors closed the store for a month. After about half a year, half the shopping center had closed down.

The situation was really serious for storeowners. It occurred during the winter, when many Chinese were unemployed, so they put themselves together and organized a strike. Natasa remembers these 15 days when the shopping center was closed due to the daily inspections. "The whole area was dead. There were no Chinese or even Serbians. In the Serbian shopping center, "Pyramid" in Block 44, the stores were also closed. There were no cars in the parking lots, no waiting taxis, no deliveries, and even the market was closed for several days. It was as if a bomb had fallen on this area. Everyone must have realized how important the Chinese had become to us."

Before the Chinese arrived, the shopping center of Block 70 was completely empty. There were hardly any small stores. Nobody came by who did not live in the block. When the first Chinese arrived in Belgrade, in 1996, they were scattered throughout the entire city. There was no center. They then discovered that Block 70 was not used, as well as qualities such as its good connection the city: Bus 45, 68, 72, 82 and 95, as well as the tram-lines 7, 9, and 11.

In 1997/1998 one was able to rent a 18 m<sup>2</sup> store here for fifty german Marks, these were unbelievably profitable conditions. One store after another was rented.



People come from all the communities by bus to go shopping in block 70.

## Heterogeneity



While the shopping-centre Block 70 is packed with goods....



.... the shopping-centre Block 45 is empty

## Heterogeneity

Eventually, the shopping mall of Block 70 became known as a “Chinatown”. Today, storeowners pay between 1500 and 300 Euros a month, depending on the centrality of the store’s location. The lower floor is more expensive, and the stores are small. One is not able to house a meaningful amount of goods in 18m<sup>2</sup> and a point was reached where the salesmen were hardly able to pay the rent. A Serbian contractor then discovered the growing need for further sales space and built the new shopping center next to Block 70, with escalators, generous sales space, and air conditioning. The opening occurred in the summer of 1995. The rents there are much lower; 500 Euros a month, yet some Chinese still prefer to remain in the old Block 70, as it is far more widely known. One Chinese rented all stores in the upper storey of the new shopping center for two years and sublets them out. The owners of stores in Block 70 are ordinary people with a great deal of luck. Originally, they intended to run their own stores yet failed due to lacking clientele. Today, they are wealthy. With the rent that they collect they are able to purchase a small apartment in the city center every two years. (36 000 Euros)

**“ Before the Chinese arrived, the shopping center was completely empty. Today the store owners are wealthy. With the rent that they collect they are able to purchase a small apartment in the city center every two years. (36 000 Euros)”** Natasa



Shopping-centre Block 45



shopping-centre Block 70



parking in front of the shopping-centre Block 70



shopping-centre opened in 1995

## **Block Journal Demography of the Blocks, 2006**

Under the direction of Prof. Dr. Ksenija Petovar, sociologist at the Faculty of Architecture and Geography, a survey concerning the happiness and quality of life in Block 45 was initiated in 2003. Only one out of ten people questioned expressed dissatisfaction with their quality of life. Of respondents, 60% live in 4-storey structures, 30% of these on the top floor, while 40% live in high-rise structures. In the four storey structures, 56% of respondents were female, while 54% were male in the high-rises. The majority were older residents, only 27% under 50. In the four-storey buildings, more than half of those questioned had a high school degree, in the high-rise structures, 36%. More than half of the respondents were retired, in both the four and high rise structures. The household composition was mixed: 22% couples with children up to 27 years, 19.2% couples without children, or with children who have moved out. 33% were composed of multiple generations. Households of only one person made up 14.2% of respondents, those with two people: 30%; four people: 25%; three people: 20%; one person: 14%. Income lay between 16'000 and 30'000 Dinar per month: 43.6% up to 16,000, 31.2% over 30'000, 17.4% did not respond to this question. However, one must assume that income figures are actually higher as respondents were more likely to answer with a lower income.



Residents of Block 45 and 70

### Level of Employment

Lawns and the spaces along the Save offer residents diverse free time activities. On warm days, old people stroll along the shore, the young ride in-line skates or bicycles, and families sit in cafés. The atmosphere is very relaxed, yet this exceptional idyll does not please everyone. Foremost teenagers and young adults complain of the monotony and the lack of cultural institutions, such as cinemas or theaters. For some projects, there is no available space. “ For children or old people it is paradise, but for us it is hell” says Goran, who is unemployed at the moment. Aside from playing video games or killing time at the betting agency -nothing interests him. The job market is dried out and there is no more money.

He sees this as the cause of continued drug problems within the Block. Since the NATO bombings, it has gotten very easy to purchase inexpensive drugs. “ They are smuggled in from Albania. Many youths and adults are affected. No one speaks of it, it is invisible, but yes, drugs are ever-present.

**“ Only 27% of respondents were younger than fifty.”**



Walker at the Sava

## Heterogeneity



Barkeeper at "Space", an internetcafé in Block 45

**"One must be very strong psychologically, in order to be creative in such an environment."**

**Mihailo**



Getting distracted with PC gaming



Nora, 23 year old student

**“Sports distract me. There is not much else to do here.”**

Ivana



A great advantage of the blocks are their generous green spaces.

**“Almost two thirds of respondents believe the quality of life in their Block to be higher than in others, in the four-storey structures 73%, in the high-rise buildings 53%.”**



M. Zivkovic

**“ I spend most of my free time in this garage. Here I can arrange things or simply sit in the sun.”**

**M.Zivkovic**



Katarina

## Heterogenität

“Since Yugoslavia won the Basketball World Championships in 1998, this sport has become very important to the youth. Every basketball net is different because the residents have added these themselves. Next to physical exercise, there is little occupation for the youth. One must be very strong psychologically, in order to be creative here.” Mihailo



Almost every Basketball-Board looks different. The residents erected them themselves

**Half of the respondents believe that there is no reason to construct new objects. One-third support the construction of new sport facilities and 20% would welcome a cinema.**



Various possibilities of practicing sports



A sunday afternoon in the park

**“In 1973, my father had to go twelve kilometers for a bottle of mineral water.”**  
Igor



the sprayers have identified themselves with their block....

**Seven out of ten respondents see the self-initiatives of apartment owners as negative. (Enclosure of loggias, painting of walls with new colors, and the railings of terraces and loggias) 60% as these alterations are unsightly and 10% because it is legally forbidden, 15% accept the alterations, and 15% are indifferent.**



## 9 Portraits

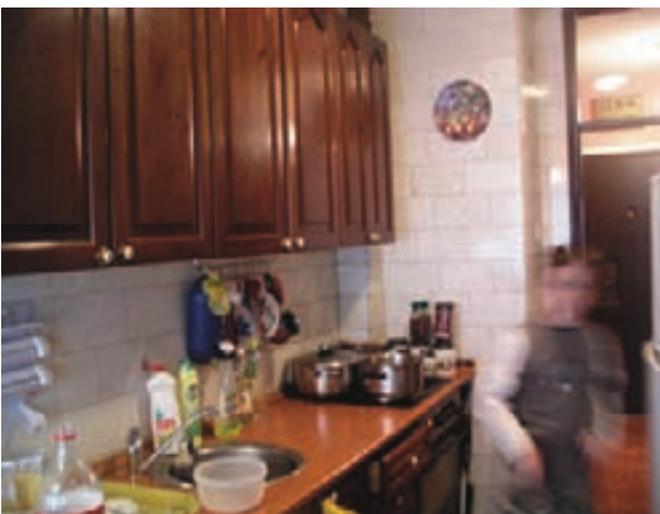




- 1. Mr. Milosevic**  
The pitfalls of the upper floor
- 2. Smilica**  
Serbian teacher for the Chinese
- 3. Puppe**  
Three apartments are created from two
- 4. Daniela**  
Newcomer from Berlin
- 5. Zorica**  
The thankless job as building representative
- 6. Mrs. Bjelanovic**  
Third place for hallway design
- 7. Iva**  
Newcomer from Berlin
- 8. Mihailo**  
Born in the Block
- 9. Drago**  
The hotel for construction workers

### Today's Identity

During our stay in Belgrade we portrayed eight people in their apartments. With their histories and life forms, they best reflect the future and past of the Block. They are connected to this place in natural terms. Together, they build the identity of this settlement. As variable as their relationship to their place of residence may be, each have one thing in common: they are happy to live here.



Different Apartments in one Block





## Jovan and Mira



Mira and her grandfather

“ I have lived here since 1975. I was a railroad worker at the time and the apartment was apportioned to me. Now I live here alone with my daughter. I have never remodeled anything in the apartment.

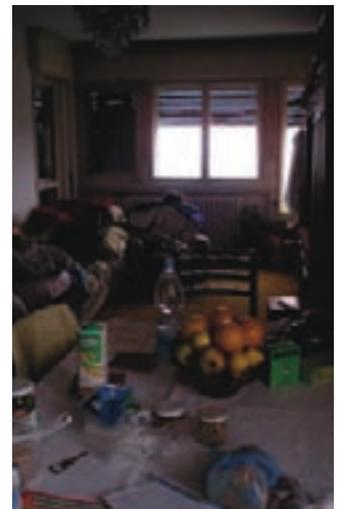
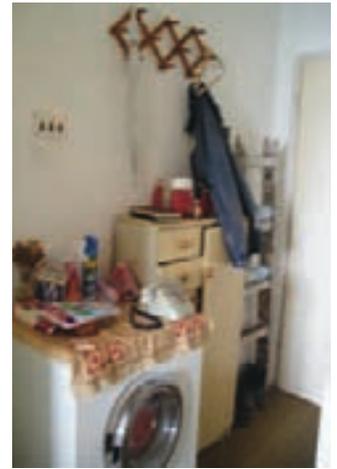
In the building there are two elevators, one for even and the other for odd floors. Maintenance and repair for these lifts occurs, on average, once a week. “ Last week none worked, which occurs very often. Even after they have been repaired, it is very risky to ride with them, particularly the even one, which often stops between floors! Since I live in the top floor, it bothers me greatly that the lifts do not work. Yet the residents of the lower floors do not care. They do not want to pay for the maintenance of the lifts, yet one still encounters them in the elevator.



It sometimes troubles me that I live so high up. It is pretty scary when it is windy. Besides which the windows are badly insulated and the rooms are drafty. Since I have lived here so long, I know that the rooms near the entrance to the building were intended for communal use. Yet one resident has appropriated these spaces for his own personal use. Due to their proximity, some claim that these rooms belong to his apartment. While others believe these to be his right as former building superintendent. Here, no one respects the law any longer. All the apartments of the building are bought up. I would like to install a satellite dish on the roof, but my neighbor will not allow me access to the roof, he has placed a padlock on the door. He may live on the top floor, but does that mean that he owns the roof as well! I contacted the authorities of the borough, but must now send a written notification for a communal inspection to the borough of New Belgrade. For this I can wait an eternity.”

**“He may live on the top floor, but does that mean that he owns the roof as well!”**

Jovan



## Smiljica



Smiljica in her Oasis

Smiljica is a professor at the foreign language school and teaches Serbian. Among her students, there are many Chinese. These are proud and playful children, not much different from her own.

“ I hold only the highest opinion of the Chinese. Some have assimilated themselves, especially those who have been here a long time. The others return home or travel on to other eastern European countries.



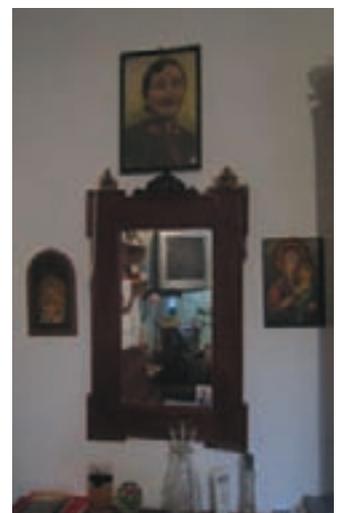
## **„The Chinese have brought a worldly flair to Belgrade.”**

**Smilica**

“ I feel very lucky to live here in Block 45. My two sons can let off steam in the many green spaces and playgrounds. The high-rises act as a wall separating the four-storey buildings from the traffic on Jurija Gagarina. The kindergarten and school are also in the Block. There is even a small “English School” in the center. On the opposing shore is the “Ada Ciganlija”, the beloved municipal pool, and in the neighboring Block an Aquapark is under construction.

In 1997, we bought the larger of out two apartments in Block 45. A year later, a smaller apartment, one floor down became available and we purchased this with the sale of my infirm father’s apartment in Rakovica. In 1997, the upper apartment cost 70’000 DEM and the lower, 58’000 DEM. Additionally we paid 20’000 DEM for new technical installations. We pay 2000 Din per month in maintenance to InfoStan for the one-room apartment (32m2) and 4000 Din for the four- room apartment (100m2). Yet I am not pleased with the services of Infostan, for instance they only clean the stairwell once a week, which is simply not enough.

I am also dissatisfied with the resident association of the building. The president carries a great deal of responsibility, yet he does not acknowledge this. At the moment, we are not even able to agree on the painting of the stairwell. Yet these downsides are minor. I see a positive future for the Block. I would like more facilities for different sports, improved infrastructure, and I am excited about the Aquapark. Much has already changed for the better; the many new buildings, shopping centers and stores have made life here more colorful. The houseboats, with restaurants and cafés, have also contributed to this. The availability of public transport has increased, and the Chinese have brought a worldly flair to Belgrade.”







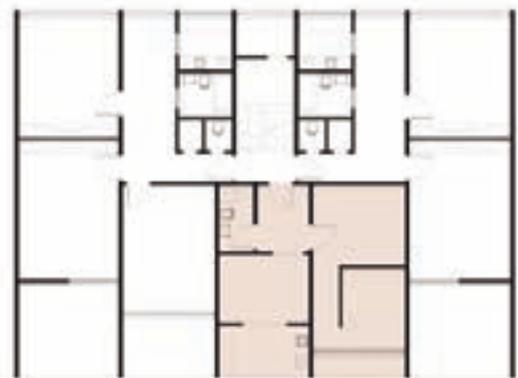
## Sanja



Sanja in her favorite spot

“ In order to receive a lease, I stood in line all night. Unfortunately, by the time my turn came, all the smaller apartments were reserved or sold and I was not able to afford a large apartment. As I disappointedly descended the stairs of the sales office I came across a couple arguing. The woman was pregnant and did not want to move into a small apartment. I approached them and asked if I might exchange numbers with them, theirs was the number one. Originally, only two apartments were planned in the four storey buildings. Later these were combined into three, which is why the apartments are so small and the doors so close to one another.

In 1969, I took a loan from the bank and paid Inpros the amount for my apartment. I was one of the few to purchase the apartment from the state. At the time, many apartments were distributed by companies to their employees.”



For a long time, Block 70 was known as the “Workers Block”. Yet in Block 45, apartments were purchased by the children of old, wealthy residents of Belgrade.

We wanted to live in Block 45 as it seemed more fitting to us: the Save is close and my husband had lived, since 1958, behind the opposing Block in Bezanija. There used to be a communal apartment for all the residents of the building, which one resident purchased, through a referendum, from each of the building’s residents. In 1971, the whole area was one, large construction site, green spaces were designed later. In order to take the bus, I had to traverse the entire building site, behind today’s Blocks 61 and 62.

The kindergarten did not yet exist in 1971. I was a nurse in Zemun and took my small daughter to a Kindergarten next to my workplace every day. After two or three years a kindergarten was constructed in the Block. To shop, I went either to Zemun or into the city center. There was not even a bakery in the block. Due to strong inflation at the beginning of the 1990s, wages were the equivalent of 3 DM per day. People who were unemployed or not dependant on their wages, constructed small stores or kiosks, which made daily purchases easier.

In the beginning, I was not at all happy to live in a construction site, and during the sleeper-city period I was bored. But for my children it was the best environment. Today they are in university, there are not enough cinemas, theaters, or other cultural institutions for them here.

We are constantly remodeling something in the apartment. In the kitchen we partitioned one room into two and we reduced the size of the terrace to gain interior space. In the bathroom we installed a large bathtub, though this later turned out to be a mistake. The apartment cannot live up to today’s standards as it is simply too small. In the beginning four of us lived here, later my son moved out, followed by my daughter, though she returned later. Today we can count ourselves lucky to live here. The Block has only changed for the better. Even the borough of New Belgrade makes an effort to remove the garbage on a regular basis, erect new benches, and maintain the green spaces.

It is possible that in thirty years the Block might be demolished. The technical installations are already in poor condition and I can imagine that foreigners might invest in the redevelopment of this area. After all, this year we are the “City of Future.”

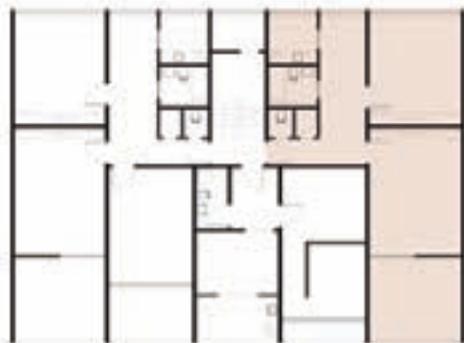


## Danijela



Living room of the parents

“ My parents live in this apartment, though they also have a vacation apartment outside of Belgrade. Therefore the apartment is empty half of the year. My father works for Nafta, in a prominent position, this is why this apartment was allotted to him. In these, low-ceiling buildings only two apartments per floor were originally planned. Yet today, there are three. One is extremely small, while ours is of the larger variant.”





**“ My father had a high position at Nafta, that is why this apartment was allotted to him.”**

Danijela

## Zorica



Living room

“An architect used to live in this apartment, that is why we still have the plans. He designed, among other things, the entire building. (arch. M.Kostic, teh. Z. Aranitovic) I was the representative of the board of the residential council. Though for the last time, as it is a thankless job. The residents do not care about what happens in their building.”



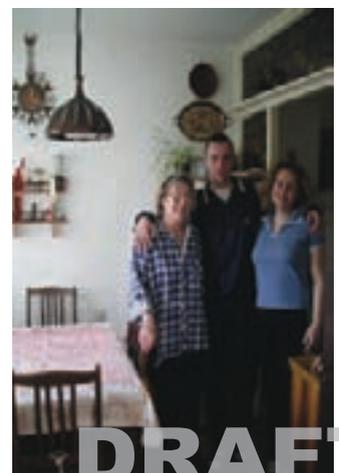
**“ When my brother got married, we sold the apartment in Block 21 and bought two new apartments here.”**

Boris

For example the lift: when it is broken, the residents of the lower floors want nothing to do with it. Similarly, these residents do not care about leaks in the roof, while the situation is reversed with plumbing problems. When a light bulb goes out in the hallway, no one does anything. There is no counting on the organization (stambeno predusece), everything takes very, very long. Residents care only for their own four walls, the communal life of the building does not interest them.

Son, Ivan:

My parents live here and, at the moment, also my grandmother. I am in military service, but spend most of my time in another Block at the center of New Belgrade, with my girlfriend. We don't keep much contact with the other residents. I know that across from us live a couple, who once invited me to a party, further back lives a seventy year old man and his daughter, and one apartment is currently empty. We bought the apartment in 2000, before this, we had lived in Block 21, in the center of the city. These blocks had been built for the military and my father was an officer. My parents moved for financial reasons, the apartments there are much more expensive. When my brother got married, we sold the apartment in Block 21 and bought two new apartments here. I like it here and the public transport is decent. The only problem is parking, especially at night one has no chance of finding a spot. People simply park their cars anywhere.



## Maja Bijelanovic



I live in this two-room apartment with my husband. When my children still lived here we converted this room into two and partly enclosed the terrace to create a larger dining space. The kitchen was here when we moved in. Of my own accord, I applied for the head position of the residents association. It is easy to rent out the vacant, public spaces. In one, a family has lived for over twenty years. The other two are rented out for other purposes. With the rent, we pay for a cleaning lady who comes two to three times a week. We thereby maintain the lift, stairwell, and garden. My husband and other neighbors installed the flooring in the hallway. Communication between the residents is generally good, but, of course, that depends upon the individual residents.



**“It is easy to rent out the vacant, public spaces.”**

M. Bjelanovic

Though before, this was usually not the case, as everyone worked and had no time to deal with their building and neighbors. However, today many retirees live here, we know each other and sit outside during the summers, naturally we want everything to stay in order.

We tell our children not to dirty anything downstairs. For some time, a kiosk stood in a vacant room of the building. We requested that it be removed as the store slowly developed into a bar, which attracted many alcoholics. We often had drunks in the entrance, in part late into the night. But we are rid of them now. I have lived here for thirty-four years and work in a department store in Belgrade. The best employees are rewarded with points, which allow us to collect credit early. We deposited the money and moved in after the apartment was completed. Some also received apartments, but these were more prominent employees. In the early years, there was nothing here: no cafes, no stores. We bought everything we needed in the city; we were only here to sleep. Today everything is much better. Today young couples, children, and old people live here. What I like the most here- which may not seem attractive for you- is that it feels like a village. With time, we have gotten to know our neighbors and my son and daughter live, with their families, in other houses on the block.



### Iva



The not yet completed living room.

Iva Zigic is twenty-four years old and lives alone. She is the chief secretary at the Deutsche Bank and works in an office in the Genextower. She makes 1100 Euros a month, and, aside from her work, studies law at a private school.

“ I bought my apartment in July 2005. I used to live in Berlin and am now in Belgrade to work. The location here is phenomenal. I am sure that the value of the apartment will increase in the coming years. There are already many international investors who have come to New Belgrade. I lived in central Belgrade for three years. I did not like it there are all; it was far too cluttered. In contrast, I now have the Save directly outside my front door. There are also enough parking spaces, though I only ride in taxis, after all, it is so inexpensive.



**“ I hope that, in the future, New Belgrade will become fuller, more colorful and more interesting.”**

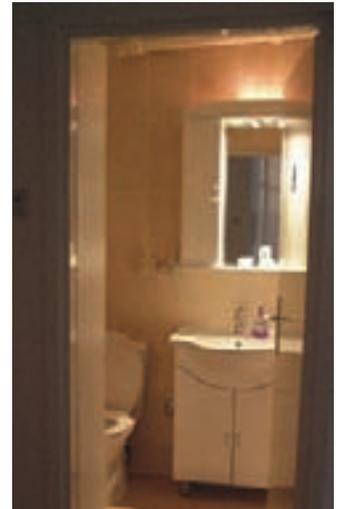
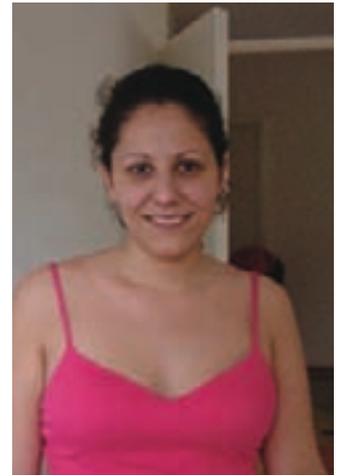
Iva

The public transit actually works pretty well. But the cigarette smoking, unfriendly bus drivers unnerve me and it is pretty annoying to constantly buy bus tickets at the kiosk. When I bought the apartment, I hired a lawyer for my own security. I found the apartment through Arus 45. I took out a loan in Germany and purchased the apartment for 80'000 Euros, plus an additional 5000 Euros in taxes. Monthly, I pay an additional 60 Euros for Infostan and the cleaning lady.

Although, out of obligation, I transfer the money to Infostan monthly, I still need to take care of everything myself. When my bathroom was clogged I still had to hire a plumber myself. I also had to replace the bulbs outside my apartment. Anyway, if it were up to me, I would build in a dimmer like in Germany.

I have almost no contact with my neighbors, only the occasional 'hello' in the stairwell. Some of my neighbors have absolutely no manners, they throw their garbage out the window. For this reason, one neighbor installed a protective roof to his terrace- though not everyone is pleased about this. It also innerves me that the front door is always open. I would like to instate a porter and paint the façade a new color. When it rains it looks quite sad here, though, on the other hand, that is the case everywhere.

I am very happy with the apartment. It is bright, large, and the layout functions well. I have changed a few things since I moved in: I added a parquet floor and painted everything white, everything used to be a swampy brown. The bathroom is also completely new: a new shower stall, sink, and tiles. Of course, the kitchen is also new. This summer I would like to install a new air conditioning system and the wall between the living and dining rooms must go. I like things a little airy and Mediterranean. I hope that, in the future, New Belgrade will become fuller, more colorful and more interesting. One can live very well here, but one must take responsibly for everything oneself.







## Mihajlo



The Japanese touch

“ I was born in Block 28. At the time, my family lived to four on an area of 35m<sup>2</sup> , that is less than 10m<sup>2</sup> per person. Because of the lack of space, my family moved to Block 45 twenty years ago. Here, they had 13.5m<sup>2</sup> per person until my parents bought a second apartment two years ago. Since then, I have lived in this apartment practically by myself. I associate my entire childhood and youth with this Block. When I was little they changed the sand in the sandbox every month. Today, however, I spend much more time in the center of the city with my friends. Since 1998 I have freed myself from the Block more and more.”



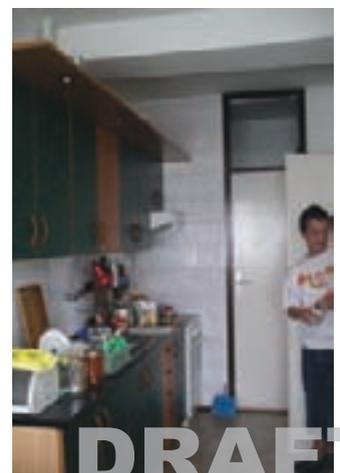
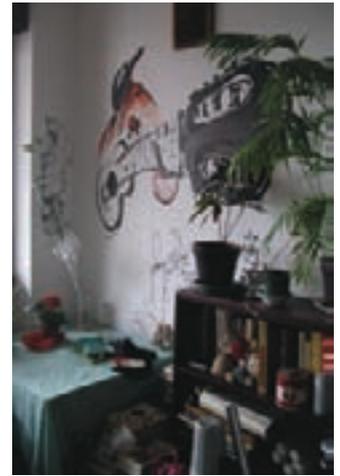
**“ During the three months of the bombings, one could not go anywhere. My entire life was played out inside the Block.”**

Mihailo

“ After the NATO bombings in 1998, my life changed dramatically- above all in the Block. I have hardly any friends from my youth, most of them had problems with drugs: inexpensive drugs, all types of drugs. During the three months of the bombings, one could not go anywhere. All stores, all cafés were closed. We survived on the instant noodles and canned foods we had purchased before. My entire life was played out inside the Block. We had no electricity, no TV, no music or school. What I actually did during this time I realized only later, about a year later.

My mother knew our neighbor pretty well. She had left for the country before the bombings and had left her key with my mother, so that my mother could water her plants. I took the keys and, with about twenty friends, lived like house pets in the apartment for the next three months. We established a punk band, and I learned to play guitar. We also took massive amounts of drugs. We sang and drank; the war was never mentioned. It was a wonderful time.

But afterwards, many of my friends became addicted to drugs. In fact, many in the Block were addicted. Every family must know an addict, but we do not mention it. Since then I have broken off from these friends. We see each other in the stairwells from time to time, but that is it. It is hard, but I must continue to live my life. Younger people here desperately need social institutions such as cinemas or theaters. The Aquapark may be a tourist attraction, but surely not what we need.”



## The Forgotten Hotel



Drago, house owner and former employee of the building firm "Ratko Mitrovic"

"Next to Blocks 45 and 70, our troop also built the military hospital. We are proud of our work, but we can and will not accept the way the state treats us today. Thirty years ago, we built this house with our own two hands, but today the profit-driven investors want to take it from us. It is shameful how important money has become to us. Under Socialism we had everything."

**" We partied hard here and worked hard all day long. They were better times."**

Drago



The former construction-worker accomodation had a cantina and a huge ball-room besides sleeping-rooms

## 9 Portraits

It is indistinguishable from the other high rise buildings. Only when one passes by the entrance does one notice the board with the name " Hotel Ratko Mitrovic". Who would want to spend their time in Belgrade here, next to comfortably domestic families? Precisely this reveals that the lively days are over. The room keys are all taken, each room has the charm of a neglected living room. Old deeds lie strewn on the floors and one hears the leaking drops of old faucets. Even more surprising is it to hear that people still live here, some close to thirty years. The hotel "Ratko Mitrovic" was a residence for the construction works of the construction firm of the same name. One hundred and thirty single men were housed in two to four bed rooms. They shared the bathroom. In the neighboring building was the canteen, of which the kitchen prepared 15'000 portions a day. The large assembly hall could hold up to 500 guests and was the site for birthday, departure, and wedding parties. In the beginning, the building belonged to the State and was sold in the 1990s. The present owner is currently remodeling it into a residential building of 2-room apartments of 54 m2, which will be put up for sale. The workers who used to live here will not be able to afford these apartments. Today, eight men and one woman have occupied the building. It is similar to a construction site. They do not agree with the change in owner and were not asked for their opinion. Since they constructed the building themselves and served the company well, they do not want to be resettled without honor.

**“ It is shameful how important money has become, but we will continue to fight.”**

Drago



enthusiastic onstruction workers - what the state promised them over 30 years ago is about to be taken away from them again.



ex-construction worker shows us the empty key-cases





**Auspicious, New Future**

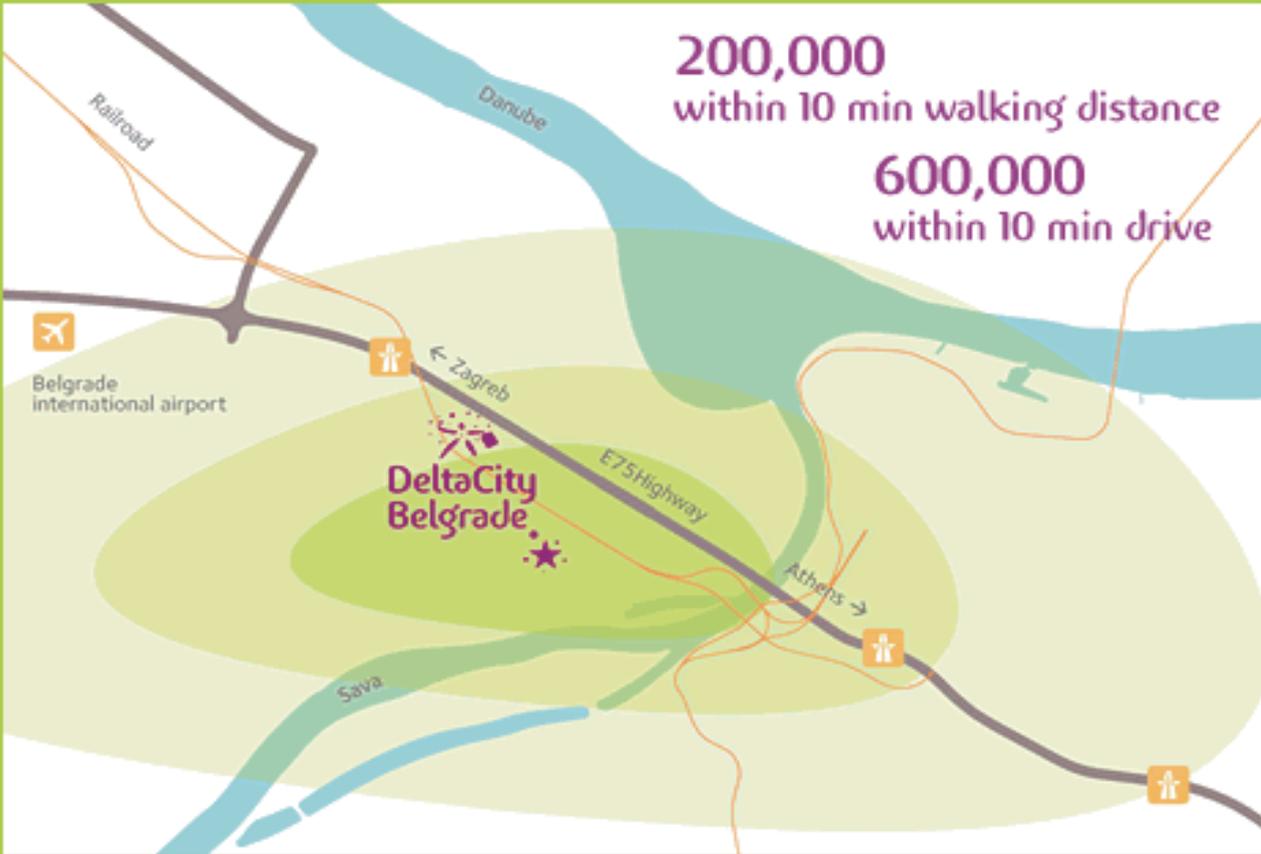
## **Connection to the World**

“ Strategically placed and with excellent transport corridors, Serbia is a natural transit point to the Southeast and Central Europe. 7.5 Million Serbians create one of the largest markets in the region. Since 2001, the per capita GDP has doubled to 2,813 Dollars- before Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania, and Bosnia Herzegovina. This condition demands new consumer goods and retail.”

Advertisement for Deltacity.

Next to the ambition of achieving international construction standards, small-scale solutions must also be found. Urban planners seek the sanitation of flats roofs in the Blocks, or the standardization of street kiosks. The designs and plans often exist, but simply lack the necessary financial means. Yet, before all the repairs and maintenance work, which would significantly prolong the lifespan of the Block, a gigantic shopping center at international standards and an Aquapark are under construction. The investors act privately and too infrequently in partnership with the borough.

# Catchment area



This map should show, how well placed DeltaCity is - close to Belgrade

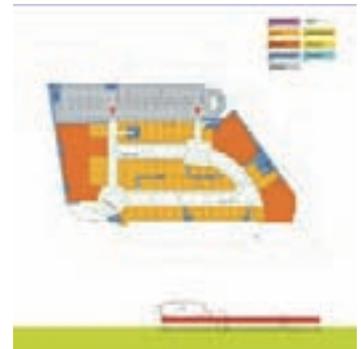
# Delta City



Situation plan Deltacity



Shopping, entertainment and enough parking space





This is what Deltacity should look like in the future.

At the moment, Belgrade does not yet have an international shopping center. Belgrade lacks a commercial space, which would offer the two million residents and visitors both shopping and entertainment. Delta City plans a area of 78 000 m<sup>2</sup> for precisely this. The program includes famous flagship stores, a larger grocery market, a Cineplex, fast-food corners and a parking garage for up to 1700 visitors.”

## **Aquapark**

This new recreation facility in Block 44 has been under construction since last year. The famous, Serbian basketball player Zarko Paspalj, as well as the Genel firm from Novi Sad are the investors.

The residents of Belgrade will soon have the opportunity to enjoy this water park, which to fore was only possible elsewhere. This type of investment is not only important for New Belgrade, but also for the entire city. It will enrich the lives of the residents greatly. The water park is to be completed by May 25th. The project was designed by Atelier Dusan Tecic (ATD) and Polin, from Turkey. Eleven pools and twenty-one slides are to be constructed on five hectares of land.



Process of Construction at Aquapark

**“ I live abroad for many years and thereby had many opportunities to visit such parks. For this reason I also wanted Belgrade to have a water park.”**

Zarko Paspalj, Basketball player and Investor



11 Pools und 21 water-sides are projected

**“ Three months a year it will be an Aquapark and nine months a Ghostpark.”**  
Damjan

## **Competition New Belgrade Kiosk**



A modern competition entry of steel

In 2005 a competition was initiated for the standardization of kiosks. The winning team is composed of: Jakovljevic Zarko, Milorad Mladenovic and Jovanovic Branislava. The former kiosk managers must eliminate their stands, as the new kiosks are to be run by new owners. Zoran, a kiosk owner complains: "Business has been good. My kiosk has stood here for twenty-five years, yet from now on we only have contracts for one month at a time. This means they can eliminate us at any time." For these salesmen, the future is uncertain. In total, close to 450 family businesses are affected.



Today's kiosks appear colorful and full of life.

**“Business has been good. My kiosk has stood here for twenty-five years, yet from now on we only have contracts for one month at a time. This means they can eliminate us at any time.”**

Zoran



