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CONTEMPORARY FEATURES AND PROBLEMS OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING IN POST-SOVIET COUNTRIES

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The article analyses both contemporary urban development and planning features and problems in post-Soviet Union nations. This includes an exploration of both the history of socialist urban planning and the emergence of new spatial transformations following the collapse of the socialist structure within the Soviet Union. A key focus of the article is the effects of market-oriented reforms on the creation of socio-spatial inequality, infrastructure problems and the challenge of sustainable development. The second part of this research is an analysis of two former Soviet republic capitals: Yerevan and Tbilisi, showing similarities, as well as distinctive features, to the urban transformation process in these cities. The findings support the notion that the urban development trajectory of all former Soviet cities is the result of inherited spatial characteristics from the socialist era, institutional transformations following the collapse of the Soviet Union and current market conditions. To achieve effective urban development, it is necessary to integrate strategic planning and implement the principles of sustainable development into the urban development process.

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Introduction. Urban development in post-Soviet countries can be viewed as one of the most significant urban transformations of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to essential institutional reorganization, economic liberalization, and changes in forms of ownership. These transformations significantly impacted the formation, organization, and management mechanisms of urban spaces.

However, the “physical structure” of many post-Soviet cities continues to experience the decades-long influence of socialist planning. Large residential districts (*microdistricts*), spaces shaped by the principles of functional zoning, and centrally designed infrastructure networks continue to influence spatial development patterns, even after institutional reforms. As a result, so-called hybrid or mixed urban

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systems based on the combination of traditional planning and a market economy emerged in post-Soviet countries.

The restructuring of urban space in post-Soviet countries is directly linked to the challenges of overcoming social inequality, ensuring infrastructure provision, and achieving environmental sustainability. The rapid privatization of land and housing stock, combined with changes in governance systems and institutional reforms, has led to the formation of new urban development and planning processes and realities.

Despite numerous publications on urban transformations in post-Soviet countries, relatively few studies simultaneously address institutional changes, spatial restructuring, and contemporary planning challenges specific to certain post-Soviet cities.

The aim of the paper is to study the contemporary characteristics of urban development and planning in post-Soviet countries, as well as identifying the main challenges causing these processes. Accordingly, the following objectives have been set:

- to analyze the main characteristics of urbanization processes during the socialist era;
- to discuss the processes of institutional and spatial transformation in post-Soviet urban systems;
- to conduct a comprehensive analysis of urban development patterns using the examples of two South Caucasian post-Soviet national capitals: Yerevan (Republic of Armenia) and Tbilisi (Georgia).

The broad (general) framework of the study is urban planning and development, which is one of the key thematic areas of urban studies and urbanism. The specific (particular) framework refers to certain characteristics, issues, and challenges of urban development and planning in post-Soviet countries.

Materials and Methods. The nature of the conducted research is theoretical rather than empirical or experimental. Accordingly, secondary information sources were used, including various professional publications (books, reports, articles, etc.) related to the research topic and content, as well as relevant statistical data and yearbooks. To compare with the current situation and to highlight the dynamics and substance of development processes, the main results of a survey we conducted in 2013 within certain administrative districts of Yerevan were used as well.

Consequently, to achieve the research objectives, the methods of analysis and synthesis, quantitative analysis, comparison, and generalization were primarily employed.

The Main Outcomes of the Study.

General Characteristics and Features of Socialist Urbanism. It should be noted that the field of urban studies is highly interdisciplinary and cross-sector, including numerous directions and approaches. These include historical, geographical, social, cultural, architectural and engineering, management and policy development, and economic perspectives, among others. Therefore, a comprehensive and system approach is required to identify and analyze the challenges of urban development and planning.

Among the recent conceptual transformations in urban studies are the application of sustainability and sustainable development principles (sustainable

urban development, sustainable cities), as well as the introduction of smart urban development approaches (smart cities, smart and sustainable cities).

When discussing the main features of socialist urbanism, contradictions can be clearly observed from the perspective of modern smart and sustainable urban development principles.

Socialist urbanism was a specific model of spatial organization formed under conditions of centralized economic planning, state ownership of land, and administratively controlled development [1]. Urban growth was regulated not by the logic of market demand, but by political and economic priorities. Meanwhile, spatial planning operated as an instrument of state coordination, rather than a platform for negotiation among various stakeholders.

In socialist systems, industrialization was the primary driving force behind urban growth, and a significant portion of urban land was allocated to industrial enterprises and related infrastructure [2]. Compared to capitalist cities, a larger share of space in socialist urban systems was used for industrial activities, whereas commercial and service functions had a relatively limited spatial scope.

Another key component of socialist urbanization policy was housing provision. Residential construction was organized and financed by the state, and the distribution of housing was carried out through administrative distribution mechanisms. Large residential districts became the essential elements of the urban environment, featuring integrated social service facilities such as schools, healthcare institutions, and commercial infrastructure. Essentially, the design of these residential environments promoted functional efficiency in organizing the daily lives of residents and contributed to the creation of a relatively homogeneous and similar social background.

Land ownership was another core element of socialist urban systems, with urban land being almost entirely under state ownership. Although this restricted potential speculative developments, it also made market-based land valuation and utilization impossible.

Thus, the urban morphology shaped by socialist planning possessed several characteristic features: functional zoning, expansive industrial areas, large residential complexes, and a relatively low level of socio-spatial segregation [1]. Actually, the differentiation of residential zones based on income or class status in Soviet-period cities was lower than in market-driven urban systems due to administrative housing distribution mechanisms.

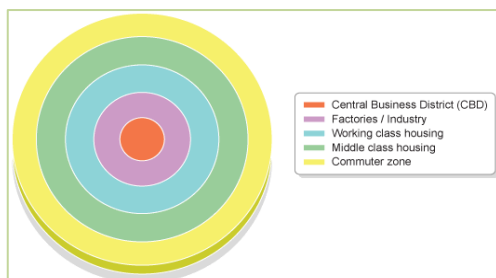


Fig. 1. Concentric zone model of Ernest Burgess [3].

Fig. 1 shows the concentric zone model of the city, which includes the central business district, industrial, residential, and suburban (commuter) zones.

It should be noted that this functional zoning was largely preserved in Soviet cities, and later, in post-Soviet ones as well. Thus, during the socialist period, central areas stood out for their clear socio-cultural as well as residential functions. In the post-Soviet phase, commercial, business, entertainment, and service functions were added to these and assumed a more pronounced character. Soviet cities were characterized by the allocation of industrial zones and expansive residential districts outside the central area. In the post-Soviet period, along with the decline in the capacities of many industrial zones, large commercial spaces increased outside the center and in the suburban zone, and residential construction became more intensive.

Institutionally, socialist planning systems were highly centralized. Decision-making authority was concentrated in the hands of state or regional planning bodies, while local self-governing authorities enjoyed limited autonomy, and public participation in the decision-making process was minimal.

It can be concluded that while socialist urban planning enabled the rapid industrialization of cities and large-scale housing provision, it simultaneously created urban spatial structures characterized by limited flexibility and adaptability. This left a lasting footprint on urban transformations, continuing even after the collapse of the socialist system.

Institutional and Spatial Transformation Processes in Post-Soviet Urban Systems. The collapse of the Soviet Union initiated profound institutional and spatial transformations within the urban systems of the newly independent states [4]. Urban development processes shifted from centralized administrative planning to market-driven approaches characterized by private ownership and decentralized governance.

One of the most significant institutional changes concerned the transformation of property forms and ownership relations. As previously mentioned, urban land and housing stock were predominantly state property and distributed through administrative mechanisms. During the transition period, post-Soviet states implemented large-scale privatization programs, which transferred residential and commercial properties into private ownership. These reforms facilitated the emergence of new spatial development mechanisms based on investment and market competition [5].

In many post-Soviet countries, more than 80–90% of the housing stock was transferred into private ownership within a relatively short period. While this process significantly increased the share of home-owning families, it also introduced new challenges regarding the effective maintenance and management of residential buildings, neighborhoods, and urban infrastructure, as well as unequal access to housing resources [2].

During the transition period, urban governance systems also underwent substantial restructuring. Local self-governing authorities gained greater autonomy in planning and development decision-making, in stark contrast to the former centralized administrative system.

The formation of market mechanisms for buying and selling land was another fundamental transformation in post-Soviet urban systems. Land plots, which were previously allocated via administrative procedures, began to acquire real market and investment value and importance [6]. In many cities, this shift predictably stimulated

the further development of central urban areas, leading to rising land prices and a continuous influx of investment into commercial, residential, and other sectors. However, it is worth noting that the expansion of development driven by market principles can carry certain risks regarding the weakening regulatory role of planning authorities and systems – especially when legal and legislative regulatory mechanisms and foundations remain incomplete or insufficiently applied.

In the case of central urban areas, the significant commercialization and transformation of historic urban cores should also be noted, particularly within the context of tourism and the general expansion of the service sector. This, in turn, leads to an increase in real estate values and changes in the structure and substance of land use.

These institutional transformations were accompanied by significant spatial restructuring. In numerous cities of the former USSR, large industrial complexes (previously served as the main pillars of urban economies) began to decline [7]. This deindustrialization created extensive underutilized industrial zones, which in some cases were repurposed for commercial use, but frequently remained vacant or abandoned [8].

At the same time, new trends in city growth started appearing. These included the expansion of suburbs, the opening of large shopping and business areas, and the building of private housing complexes. These processes inevitably contributed to growing spatial differentiation within city boundaries, contrasting sharply with the relatively uniform residential environments of the Soviet era.

Overall, the transition from centralized planning systems to market-oriented urban management has caused complex and even contradictory outcomes. While new economic opportunities stimulated investment and the reorganization and growth of the urban economy, institutional instability, flawed regulatory systems, and disparities in economic development often led to the emergence of new forms of urban inequality.

The study of these processes has a vital importance for analyzing contemporary urban challenges in post-Soviet countries. The interactions between the urban spaces inherited from the socialist era on one hand, and market-driven development on the other, continue to have an essential influence on the current directions and defining features of urban development in these countries.

The Main Urban Planning and Sustainable Development Challenges in Post-Soviet Cities. Despite the diverse paths of urban development in post-Soviet countries, many cities continue to face a range of challenges driven by both the legacy of socialist urban planning and the institutional transformations of the transition period. The examples of Yerevan and Tbilisi demonstrate several common urban planning issues that continue to have a significant impact on modern urban development.

One of the most significant challenges relates to the institutional capacities of urban planning systems. During the socialist era, planning was carried out within a highly centralized administrative framework, where decision-making authority was concentrated at the state level [9]. As a result of transitioning to decentralized governance systems, a significant portion of urban planning powers was transferred to local self-governing bodies, yet institutional reforms often progressed more slowly than economic liberalization processes [10].

Consequently, local planning systems often entered the transition period with limited technical capacities, incomplete regulatory mechanisms, and weak oversight tools. In many cities of the former USSR, planning systems struggled to regulate the rapidly expanding process of private construction, resulting in discrepancies in spatial development, urban design, and land-use management.

The introduction of market mechanisms significantly altered the dynamics of urban development. The expansion of land and real estate markets, along with private investments, became the primary driving forces behind spatial transformations. While these processes contributed to economic growth and the “revitalization” of the urban environment, they simultaneously generated additional developmental pressure that often exceeded the regulatory capacities of urban planning authorities.

As previously mentioned, in many post-Soviet cities (including Yerevan and Tbilisi), private investments, development, and infrastructural improvements have been predominantly concentrated in central areas – in contrast to the more peripheral zones.

Another crucial issue emerging in post-Soviet cities is the growing differentiation within the urban space. During the socialist era, housing allocation systems and redistributive policies limited socio-economic spatial stratification within cities. Although residential environments were not entirely uniform, differences between neighborhoods were generally less obvious than under market economy conditions. After the transition period, newly constructed residential complexes became affordable primarily for higher-income segments of the population, whereas the relatively lower-income population continued to concentrate in residential districts built during the socialist era. This process led to the gradual formation of new forms of socio-spatial inequalities in post-Soviet urban areas.

Another important characteristic of the development of modern post-Soviet cities is the aforementioned suburbanization – the expansion of the suburban zone. Although this is one of the characteristic features of contemporary global urbanization, in post-Soviet countries, it has often occurred in the absence of necessary spatial planning strategies. As a result, transport systems, public utilities, public services, and engineering networks have often failed to keep pace with the development rate of the city center. This imbalance between development and infrastructural provision has led to traffic congestion, environmental pressures, and unequal access to public services in rapidly growing urban areas.

Finally, developing and ensuring the attractiveness of former industrial areas remains one of the vital urban planning challenges for many post-Soviet cities. Large industrial complexes significantly lost their former significance under the new realities of economic transformation and restructuring. These areas often occupy vast land plots, but their effective “revitalization” requires substantial investment and coordinated planning.

In this regard, the alternative utilization approaches of former industrial enterprises and transport infrastructure in the Ruhr basin (North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany) are notable. These were implemented in the following directions: primarily for non-tourism purposes (creation of business centers and residential complexes), and primarily for tourism purposes (formation of cultural centers,

industrial heritage galleries and museums, expo centers, exhibition halls, entertainment and event centers). With the necessary planning and investment, these approaches are also applicable to the case of Yerevan. Specifically, there is potential for the development of industrial tourism in the former industrial zone of Southern Yerevan. The presence of metro stations nearby can increase the accessibility of this area and facilitate its transformation into a component of tourism and service infrastructure [11].

As already mentioned, the development based on the principles of sustainability continues to be one of the most critical directions and ideologies of modern urbanization.

Sustainable urban development can be defined as development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It prioritizes different components of sustainability: economic, environmental, and social. Sustainable development aims to shape cities and urban areas that are livable and capable of ensuring economic, social, and ecological stability under changing climatic conditions [12].

Accordingly, the following main directions of sustainable urban development can be distinguished:

- *Social development*: includes ensuring well-being, overcoming social inequalities, promoting public participation, etc.;
- *Economic development*: encompasses stimulating investment, increasing the city's competitiveness, developing the labor market, and ensuring the viability of the urban economy;
- *Environmental management*: aimed at ensuring long-term environmental sustainability, using renewable resources, and implementing "green" development policies [13].

It is evident that the transformations of post-Soviet urban systems are associated with numerous challenges to sustainable development in terms of environmental safety, social justice, effective urban governance, and balanced economic development. In general, every transformation can carry certain risks of vulnerability for urban systems.

Based on the already discussed characteristics of the planning and development of post-Soviet cities, it can be concluded that within the context of ensuring sustainable urban development, a number of problems emerge. Among these are intensive construction and its density, inadequate infrastructure development, and the deepening of socio-economic inequalities between separate parts of cities (specifically, central and peripheral areas).

At the same time, the rapid growth of the urban population and the intensive development of the urban economy and infrastructure, combined with heavy traffic under conditions of insufficient planning, are directly linked to the formation and deepening of environmental problems. Therefore, ensuring sustainable development has a particular urgency, especially in post-Soviet cities, and requires a balanced approach that combines environmental sustainability, social justice, and economic competitiveness. Such an approach must be based on long-term strategies and effective governance systems.

In conclusion, to mitigate the potential negative consequences of post-Soviet urban transformations and ensure sustainable urban development, the concept of mixed-use design and development can be of significant importance.

A mixed-use development is a project that provides for the planned integration of commercial, office, residential, hotel, entertainment, and other functions. It is pedestrian-oriented and contains elements of a “live-work-play” environment. This type of development maximizes the efficiency of space usage and is aimed at reducing traffic congestion and the uncontrolled spatial sprawl of cities [14].

Analysis of Urban Development Characteristics in Yerevan and Tbilisi.

In the post-Soviet phase, the transformations of urban systems in different countries proceeded unevenly and in various ways. Although cities within the territory of the former Soviet Union are largely facing the influence of a shared institutional heritage, their development paths have been shaped by the impact of diverse economic reforms, governance systems, and geopolitical conditions. A comparative study of Yerevan and Tbilisi shows how similar and shared foundations of urban development inherited from the socialist era have led to the formation of different modern planning challenges and distinct developmental patterns.

It should be noted that the two national capitals have completely different geographical locations and altitudes above sea level, different climatic and relief conditions, and, consequently, different opportunities and problems of urban development. While Yerevan extends spatially within an amphitheater-shape valley, Tbilisi stretches along the canyon of the Kura River and surrounding hills. These topographic features impact the air basin; specifically, in Yerevan, they lead to the accumulation of emissions in the city’s atmosphere.

In terms of climatic conditions, Yerevan’s dry continental climate and summer heat make the operation of artificial irrigation systems and the expansion of green zones an absolute necessity. Tbilisi’s relatively mild and humid climate contributes to the city’s natural greening; at the same time, it creates sultry weather conditions in the summer, and construction works carried out on the hillsides can increase landslide risks.

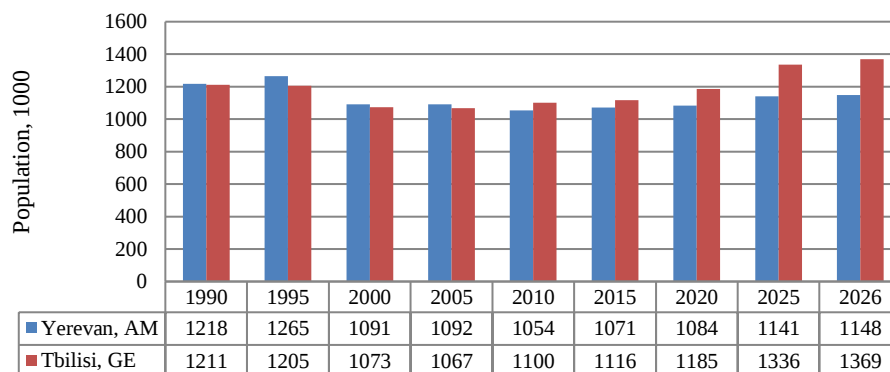


Fig. 2. Population dynamics of Yerevan and Tbilisi, 1990–2026 (thousand people). Own draw.

Sources: <https://populationstat.com/georgia/tbilisi>, www.armstat.am

The main water arteries are having a different significance as well. While the Kura River in Tbilisi provides broad opportunities for developing waterfront recreation and eco-tourism environments, and also holds important socio-cultural significance, the deep canyon of the Hrazdan River in Yerevan has a relatively isolated position and limited directions of use.

Spatial coverage and relief characteristics create additional problems for transport communication in both capitals. Thus, in Yerevan, the bridges and highways connecting the center to the city's higher-located residential zones become overburdened, whereas Tbilisi's linear extension along the Kura River canyon limits the construction of alternative highways that bypass the center.

Fig. 2 shows the population dynamics of the two capitals over the period of 1990–2026. Accordingly, in the early 1990s, Yerevan and Tbilisi had approximately equal populations. Until the mid-2000s, Yerevan had some advantage, whereas from 2010 to the present, Tbilisi's population has been greater than Yerevan's. According to official 2026 data, this difference amounts to around 220 000 people.

Urban Transformation in Yerevan, Armenia. In 2025, the population of Yerevan was 1.141 million people, accounting for about 37% of the total population of the RA. According to data from the same year, there are 5 198 apartment buildings in Yerevan, which constitutes around 27% of all apartment buildings in the RA. The total number of apartments in these 5 198 apartment buildings is 252 484 (about 55% of the total indicator for the RA). The total area of the apartments is around 17.4 million m^2 , which is about 61% of the country's total indicator [15].

The course of post-Soviet urban development in Yerevan was also conditioned by a number of processes that began in the 1990s: radical transformations of institutional and economic systems, the transition to a market economy, large-scale privatization of the housing stock and land plots, and so on.

Although the privatization of state-owned housing had begun as early as 1989, during the period of 1989–1993, only 40 000 (8%) out of 500 000 state apartments had been transferred to the private sector [16]. In order to accelerate the privatization process, the RA Law “On the Privatization of State, Public, and Municipal Housing Stock” was adopted in 1993. According to statistics from the Ministry of Urban Development, 381 000 households had applied for the privatization of their apartments [17]. The process of housing stock privatization continued until the end of 1998. As a result, in 2000, around 96% of the housing stock was under private ownership [18].

It must be noted that another feature of urban development in post-Soviet Yerevan was the deepening spatial disproportion of development between the central and peripheral residential sectors. While the city center is more attractive for significant private investment, issues regarding the deterioration of infrastructure and limited opportunities for reconstruction remain pressing in the peripheral residential neighborhoods formed during the Soviet era [19].

Thus, investments were mainly concentrated in the city center – in the sectors that were most favorable from a commercial standpoint. Although this contributed to the modernization of urban infrastructure and the development of a service-based economy, nevertheless, a number of problems emerged regarding the preservation of historical-cultural heritage and the regulation of the construction process.

Referring to the aforementioned concentric model of urban functional zones, it should be noted that in the first decades of the Soviet period, urban development of Yerevan has started in the central zone: from the physical-geographical standpoint, it included the bottom or lower section of the valley. The city's central zone was accomplishing, particularly, administrative, cultural, and residential functions. Later, parallel to the industrialization process, large residential districts were formed in the higher-located parts of Yerevan (northwest, north, northeast). The lower areas of the city, characterized by relatively hot and dry climate conditions (south, southwest), was transformed into an industrial zone with relevant production and transport infrastructure.

Following the collapse of the USSR, Yerevan's industrial zones lost their former capacities, very often turning into abandoned spaces. As discussed in the previous section of the paper, the revitalization and use (including the alternative use as well) of these areas is of pivotal importance.

The intensive reconstruction of Yerevan, particularly the city center, began in 1998. As a consequence, construction density increased, while green spaces were simultaneously reduced. The Yerevan Master Plan adopted in 2005 projected that the population within the city's current administrative borders would reach 1.2 million [20]. Yerevan's current Master Plan was adopted in 2024.

Currently, cleaning and improvement works are being carried out in the area of Yerevan Lake (an artificial reservoir). Located in the southwest of Yerevan, between the Malatia-Sebastia and Shengavit administrative districts, it was constructed in the 1960s. In case of appropriate planning and design solutions, the lakeshore zone can serve an entertainment and recreational destination for the city.

A study conducted in residential neighborhoods built in the 1970s–1980s showed that the architectural style characteristic of Soviet housing construction dominates almost everywhere. Accordingly, families living in these neighborhoods face the same problems and difficulties across almost all administrative districts.

The identified problems can be divided into two groups: internal (at the level of households or apartments) and external (at the level of buildings, courtyards, streets, or administrative districts). One of the main internal problems is the small size of living space per capita. Excluding individuals living alone (up to 68–70 m^2 per person), the average living space per resident ranged between 16–21 m^2 . In most apartments, renovations were carried out only partially or superficially. External problems relate to municipal utilities, the condition of courtyards, elevators, and building entrances, as well as the accessibility of transport and public services, the lack of green spaces and playgrounds, high construction density, etc. [21].

Urban Transformation in Tbilisi, Georgia. According to 2025 data, the population of Tbilisi is 1.335 million people, which accounts for about 34% of the total population of Georgia. In the city's housing stock, around 280,000 apartments are distinguished within apartment buildings (about 78% of which were built during the Soviet era) and approximately 46 000 private/individual residential houses [22].

During the Soviet era, rapid urban development in Tbilisi reached its peak in the 1960s–1970s, after which a phase of decline began, coinciding with the deterioration of the economic situation of the USSR. The beginning of the post-Soviet phase was marked by so-called “shock developments”. At the beginning of the 21st century, the stabilization phase was followed from 2003 onward by a new

and intense wave of developmental activity. As a result of the drastic changes taking place in Georgia, new fundamental problems emerged in Tbilisi, as well as in many other post-Soviet cities. The shortage of social housing stock, green spaces, and public spaces in general, homelessness, poor construction quality (which was not a completely new phenomenon), as well as chaotic development practices led to problematic levels of density and the emergence of environmental issues [23].

Like other post-Soviet capitals, the development of Tbilisi was greatly influenced by the large-scale institutional reforms implemented at the beginning of the 21st century. In particular, urban development policy was primarily aimed at economic liberalization, the encouragement of private investment, as well as the development of tourism and international business.

One of the main transformations of the urban space was the reconstruction of the historical center. Extensive work has been carried out toward restoring historical areas and utilizing them for commercial and cultural purposes. As a result, tourism and investment have mainly concentrated in the historical core of the city, which has become an important hub for tourism development and international investment [24].

Since 2000, historical Tbilisi, the Old City, has benefited from a special protection status through a specific land-use regulation. According to most sources, this regulation is enforced and monitored more strictly than the 2005 land-use plan and the 2009 Master Plan [23].

At the same time, mention must be made of the intense suburbanization processes (the development of suburban zones) and the activation of new residential construction in previously less-developed suburban areas. Private residential complexes, commercial centers, and multifunctional developments have become important elements of modern Tbilisi's urban landscape. Notable is the formation and development of recreational and tourism areas in the suburban zone, in the sectors of Lisi Lake (West of Tbilisi), the Tbilisi Reservoir or “Sea” (East of Tbilisi), Tskhneti, etc. These areas also stand out for their potential for green and ecologically clean suburbs development (suburbanization).

In particular, mixed-use development projects aimed at developing green and sustainable residential areas are already being implemented in Lisi Lake shore area [25].

Conclusion. The study provides a comprehensive analysis of the institutional and spatial transformations occurring in post-Soviet urban environments, focusing on the shared legacies and different trajectories of Yerevan and Tbilisi. The main findings show that while the collapse of the socialist system caused a rapid transition from highly centralized administrative planning to decentralized and market-driven mechanisms, the urban morphology inherited from the Soviet era continues to have a significant influence on contemporary development.

As discussed, the structural profile of socialist urbanism (defined by strict functional zoning, large industrial sectors, comparatively homogeneous residential areas or microdistricts, and a low level of socio-economic segregation) faced immediate fragmentation during post-Soviet economic liberalization. Large-scale privatization programs successfully transferred the housing stock to private ownership and assigned market valuations to land slots. However, the newly decentralized municipal authorities, entering the transition period, struggled to govern intensive private investments. It resulted in chaotic construction, loss of public green spaces, and significant spatial disproportions.

In general, urban development in post-Soviet countries cannot be viewed exclusively through the lens of economic transition processes. It represents a complex system of interaction among historically formed spatial structures, institutional reforms, and contemporary global urban processes. Recognizing this interaction is an essential prerequisite for developing more balanced and sustainable urban planning strategies in post-Soviet cities.

The obtained results reveal the necessity of capacity building for urban planning and urban development institutions in post-Soviet countries. Effective planning systems are crucial not only for regulating market development processes but also for overcoming the problems inherited from the socialist era. The combination of strategic planning, infrastructural investments, and participatory management mechanisms can contribute to the effective management of urban transformations.

The aforementioned features and contradictions are clearly illustrated by the different and diverse geographical, climatic, and structural patterns of Yerevan and Tbilisi:

- *Spatial and Socio-economic Disparities.* In both capitals, private investments and commercialization concentrated basically within central urban cores and historical centers. Because most investments went into tourism and businesses in the city center, downtown property prices soared. Meanwhile, the outer Soviet era neighborhoods were left behind, facing crowded apartments and crumbling infrastructure.

- *Geographic and Infrastructural Pressures.* The local geography makes these problems worse. Yerevan is situated in a bowl-shaped valley that holds the air pollution, and its dry weather means that green areas can't survive without watering systems. On the other hand, Tbilisi is stretched out in a long and narrow way along a river canyon, which makes it hard to build new roads to bypass traffic. Meanwhile, construction activities on steep hills increases the risk of landslides.

- *Suburbanization.* New neighborhoods are growing rapidly outside the cities. Therefore, these areas need proper roads and utilities. As a result, traffic congestions and environmental impacts are becoming crueler.

To fix and mitigate the aforementioned issues and make post-Soviet cities smart and sustainable, urban planners need to adopt a more proactive approach. One of the possible ways to do this is the reuse of former Soviet industrial areas. For example, in case of relevant planning and investment policies, Yerevan could practice the case of Germany's Ruhr region by turning old industrial zones into services-based areas. Cities should also stop separating neighborhoods by strict uses and adopt mixed-use development practices instead, where people can live, work, and play in pedestrian-friendly areas. This controls the mass city growth, decreases traffic, and potentially erases the gap between rich and poor neighborhoods. In the end, true sustainability means balancing business growth with strong rules and fairness for everyone.

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ՔԱՂԱՔԱՅԻՆ ՉԱՐԳԱՑՄԱՆ ԵՎ ՊԼԱՆԱՎՈՐՄԱՆ ԱՐԴԻ
ԱՌԱՆՁՆԱՀԱՏԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐՆ ՈՒ ՀԻՄՆԱԽՆԴԻՐՆԵՐԸ՝
ՀԵՏԽՈՐՀՐԴԱՅԻՆ ԵՐԿՐՆԵՐՈՒՄ

Ա մ փ ո փ ու մ

Հոդվածը նվիրված է հետխորհրդային երկրներում զարգացման և պլանավորման ժամանակակից առանձնահատկությունների և հիմնախնդիրների

ուսումնասիրմանը: Քննարկվել են սոցիալիստական քաղաքաշինության տեսական և պատմական հիմքերը, ինչպես նաև ԽՍՀՄ փլուզումից հետո ձևավորված ինստիտուցիոնալ և տարածական վերափոխումները: Հատուկ ուշադրություն է դարձվում շուկայական հարաբերությունների ազդեցությանը, սոցիալ-տարածական անհավասարությունների խորացմանը, ենթակառուցվածքային խնդիրներին և կայուն քաղաքային զարգացման մարտահրավերներին: Գործնական հատվածում իրականացվել է երկու հետխորհրդային մայրաքաղաքների՝ Երևանի և Թբիլիսիի համեմատական վերլուծություն՝ բացահայտելով դրանց զարգացման ընդհանուր օրինաչափություններն ու առանձնահատկությունները: Հետազոտության արդյունքները ցույց են տալիս, որ հետխորհրդային քաղաքների զարգացման ընթացքը պայմանավորված է սոցիալիստական ժամանակաշրջանից ժառանգված տարածական կառուցվածքների, ինստիտուցիոնալ բարեփոխումների և ժամանակակից շուկայական գործընթացների փոխազդեցությամբ: Ուսումնասիրությունը ցույց է տալիս, որ քաղաքային զարգացման արդյունավետ կառավարումը պահանջում է ռազմավարական պլանավորման, ինստիտուցիոնալ կարողությունների ամրապնդման և կայուն զարգացման սկզբունքների համակցված կիրառում:

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СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ И ПРОБЛЕМЫ ГОРОДСКОГО РАЗВИТИЯ И ПЛАНИРОВАНИЯ В ПОСТСОВЕТСКИХ СТРАНАХ

Резюме

Статья посвящена исследованию современных особенностей и проблем городского развития и планирования в постсоветских странах. Рассматриваются теоретические и исторические основы социалистического урбанизма, а также институциональные и пространственные преобразования, сформировавшиеся после распада СССР. Особое внимание уделяется влиянию рыночных реформ, усилению социально-пространственного неравенства, инфраструктурным проблемам и вызовам устойчивого городского развития. В практической части проведен сравнительный анализ двух постсоветских столиц – Еревана и Тбилиси, позволивший выявить как общие тенденции, так и специфические особенности их развития. Результаты исследования показывают, что траектории развития постсоветских городов определяются взаимодействием пространственного наследия социалистического периода, институциональных реформ и современных рыночных процессов. Исследование показывает, что эффективное управление городским развитием требует сочетания стратегического планирования, укрепления институционального потенциала и принципов устойчивого развития.