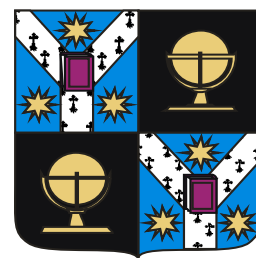
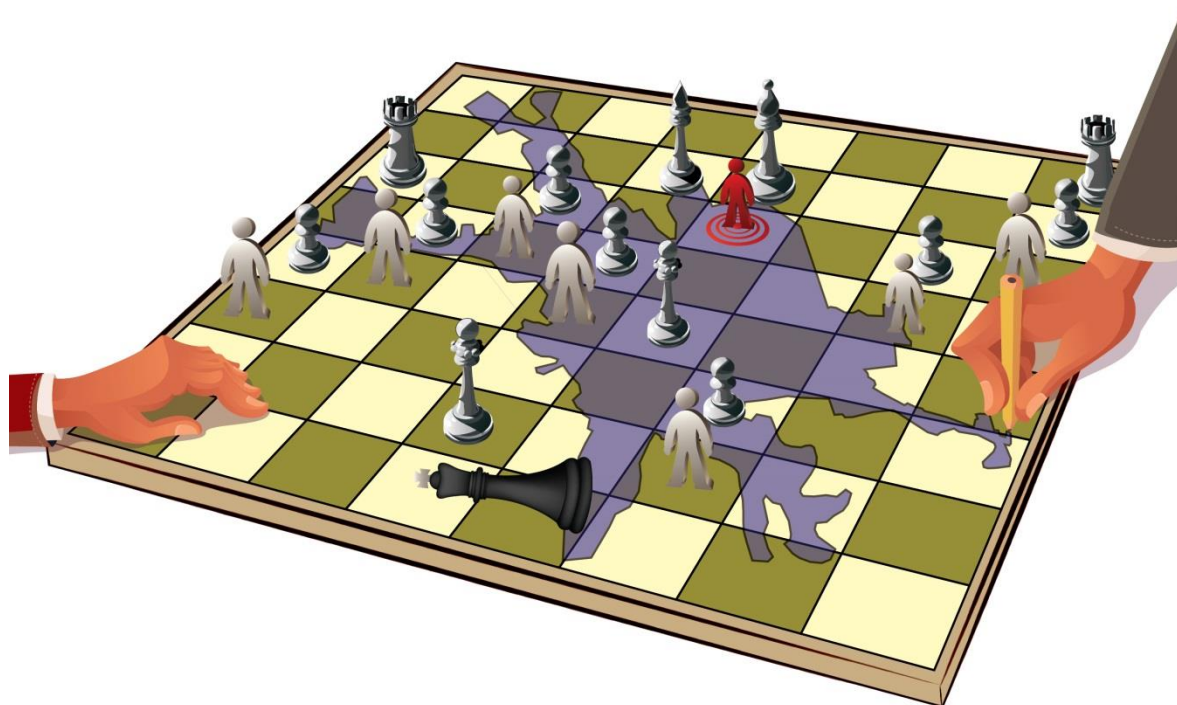


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**PhD Thesis**

**MORPHO-FUNCTIONAL DYNAMICS OF IASI CITY  
AFTER 1990 - PROCESSES, STRUCTURES AND  
SPATIAL STAKES**



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# MORPHO-FUNCTIONAL DYNAMICS OF IASI CITY AFTER 1990 - PROCESSES, STRUCTURES AND SPATIAL STAKES

**Key words:** *Iasi City, urban dynamics, spatial planning, functional spaces, urban image, quality of life*

## Abstract

The present thesis entitled “**Morpho-functional dynamics of Iasi City after 1990 - processes, structures and spatial stakes**” has in view the issue of urban dynamics in an interdisciplinary manner, combining the paradigms of the theory of urban sociology, anthropology, landscape planning with a spatial integral vision specific to geography. The interdisciplinary character of the theme led to the accomplishment of connections between the research methods specific to different disciplines (geography, sociology, urban and spatial planning, statistics etc), but the main aim of the paper to achieve a geographical study was preserved.

This approach provides the opportunity to highlight the major changes both at city level and evolution particularities of distinct components which express effectively the reality in micro-scale. The paper proposes a theoretical and methodological approach of the urban environment in order to identify how Iasi City has evolved in the last 25 years and the responsible actors of this development.

The thesis aims to show the role of civic responsibility of the residents and local government in Iasi in creating living spaces that no longer focus on *location* (in the sense of admission to physical space, quantified by the density, structures, territorial distribution etc.) but on *situation* (which refers to interactions of people with the space, spatial behaviors and attitudes etc.) and whose *geographical feature* (the value of a place or area is given by site) was replaced with *contextual functionality* (summarizing community values that are found in the actions of practice, conception and perception of space).

Throughout the thesis we have tried to give relevant and objective answers to several questions:

- What are the major changes in the structure and function of urban space in the current period and what are the responsible actors?
- How the new requirements and demands of the market economy and the transition influenced the changing of urban metabolism?
- To what extent the politics combine with individual decisions?
- What are the limits of the living spaces imagined by politic and social classes?
- Does Iasi city evolve into one of the classical models or it individualizes a local model of urban development?

The wording of the title can foresee a great deal of freedom regarding the selection of variables and analysis areas and during the thesis the main attention was given to surprise the phenomena at a variable scale.

The paper is divided into five chapters as follows:

Chapter I focus on theoretical and conceptual framework of the proposed theme, offering an overview of the conceptual and methodological elements that will accompany the algorithm of the scientific research.

The scientific and methodological approach was based on the study of individual behavior of the physical-geographical and socio-economic systems, on their dynamics and on the relationships established in terms of structure and functions. In an attempt to have a look more accurate on the geographical space in general and urban space in particular we have built different hypotheses based on the context of evolution of the settlement, the spatial

reality, the processes and phenomena that have contributed to the evolution of Iasi from a diachronic point view.

The geographical resolution (the spatial scale of observation and perception) is significant in the relevance and objectivity of the study as it could provide an overall vision of the city by summing realities observed in different scale. Iași City can be seen in a fractal manner because it respects at all levels the same morphological and functional complexity specific to all Romanian cities subjected to the systematization process in the socialist period. The organization of the geographic space at different scalar levels, requires a morphological and functional duality that can be highlighted only by analyzing at a general level and at eye level.

Therefore, the analysis of urban space of the city of Iasi was carried out on three levels scalar: macro-scale, meso- and micro-scale, from the city as a whole as a place of social interaction. Subsequently, the spatial decomposition of the urban organism was made for the analysis tools as well: starting with the General Urban Plan up to a street or a park.

The second chapter aims to provide a general framework for the development of Romanian cities over time and an inventory of mechanisms to manage the organization of the Romanian urban space after 1990 and to emphasize the paradigm shift in terms of urban planning that occurred once with the change of regime and after Romania joined the European Union.

This chapter defines a typology of the urban planning, which brings together the traditional and integrated urban planning, along with their features.

The III-rd chapter represents a radiography of Iasi urban space that points out the role of the structural elements in the urban development of the city and the particularities of the evolution of Iasi. Thus, we analyzed the dynamics of participatory and public policies in Iasi, on the premise that the morphology of urban space is a function of the interference of social and political factors. Within this chapter, we enter through the analysis of case studies in the depth of the urban organism with a clear reference to the two basic elements of the organization of the city: the political and the social.

In order to understand the mechanisms that led to the morphological dynamics of the city of Iasi and which generate new trends of evolution, we achieve a systemic approach to the city that will reveal the links between the territorial development and geographical characteristics of the site.

Each element of the urban system has a well defined role within the study, and the dialectical relationships established between them and the conduct synergistic manner are likely to make mandatory the consideration of these subsystems both static and quantitatively and dynamic, qualitative, as well. Both approaches devoid of any affiliation, may be determined by mapping the elements of the urban system, thereby imagining a strategy for obtaining a continuous feedback from the city subsystems.

In the **IV-th Chapter**, the functional urban spaces are treated as a result of interaction between the administration and the citizens in a free world. The premise from which we started the analysis of functional urban areas is that the daily operations, relative to space, administration and residents, is a resource for new civic attitude derived from the intimate sharing between functionality space and inhabitant of objectivity administration in planning and urban regional planning.

After 1990, when urban life has acquired new meanings, the processes that generate functional arrangement have changed. The spaces have gained new functions, resulting from the merger between matter (represented by buildings, green areas, transport infrastructure, etc.) and events or associated human experiences with the migration of the main zoning factor from the political to the socio - economic sphere.

In this way, the civic responsibility, which is the defining element of the resident participation in planning and urban organization, was activated. This created a rift between the forms and functions prescribed by the administration of the city and urban reality. The urban space is thus transformed from a political laboratory in a vernacular building resulting from the logic of everyday life. From simple anonymous practitioners of the city, the residents are legitimate creators of space to a greater extent than the local authorities.

The human community is identified at any level scalar with the residential space, while public administration play a subordinate role. The immediate priority of the local authorities is the reconfiguration of the perception of urban space and finding the appropriate scale for urban planning. Local development policies must go beyond the boundaries of the site that only deals with the physical space, and to focus on the situation, referring to the interaction between people and space.

So far, the participatory approaches implemented at the local level are not able to provide fruitful elements for urban development practices, as political decisions are not linked to the individual. Although, the behavior and self-awareness of the inhabitants have included a change, reflected in their greater involvement in the community and the government decisions have become more sensitive to the reactions they generate among citizens.

Of great importance in defining the relationship between the individual and government, in terms of urban planning and organization returns to scale that allows the identification of the magnitude of the needs and problems of citizens which are to form an overview of the territory. The overall context in which the living spaces are perceived by planners do not correspond to the informal urban residents because they colonize, fragment and atomize the urban space.

Chapter V is devoted to the spatial challenges of morphofunctional dynamics of the city of Iasi, with the identification of elements and phenomena resulting from this process of evolution. The spatial stakes of the morphofunctional dynamic after 1990 are derived from the processes and organizational structures of the post-communist space that facilitated the transition from a planned development to a hybrid one (planned and organic).

The real stakes of the morphofunctional dynamics are related to the factors concerning the management of the urban image, urban design and quality of life. The city is invented by humans and consumed daily by everyday practices and the constituents should be the result of ongoing negotiations between the residents thoughts and the authorities practice. Thus, the city is transformed into a series of inventive strategies in small scale of the interest groups or residents.

In the last 25 years, the urban planning of the city of Iasi has taken as priority the road infrastructure, instead of a vibrant, sustainable and healthy city. In the recent years there has been a change of attitude, both at Community level, and politically assumed where people are encouraged to walk, cycle and spend time in the city, increasing the likelihood of a lively city.

The renovation of the public spaces led to increased use, more and more of them being able to determine pedestrian flows and to articulate a dynamic social environment. Thus, the urban culture is valued, contributing to the creation of the city's personality as a whole, being also an indicator of the quality of daily life of the community and the society which we live in.

In the city there are new functional spacing, which can be a resource for new civic and political attitudes of the urban organization. The spaces have acquired new functions resulting from the interaction of the physical framework with the events and associated human feelings, the main factor of individualization of these areas migrating from political to socio-economic. The perspective of Iasi to become the European Capital of Culture should determine the urban planning to descend to pedestrian scale, the stake of this approach is to transform the descriptive planning (which focuses on physical space) in the proactive

planning (analysis of the city on the processes and phenomena are established at micro-territorial level). The spatial entities resulting from the advance planning will distract the functionality of a space in its literalness.

The analysis of the urban phenomena in the Iasi municipality has led us to a general conclusion: the transition from a planned development when the city of Iasi showed good organization, at least from a physical point of view, growth in a hybrid one, that into a planned development appeared an organic development, it has turned the systematic city into a premeditated chaos. This urban development has occurred because of the continuing disruption - reorganization that has characterized the political parties that governed the city during this time. After a period of pseudo-policy specific to the 2000s, when the city could not host the competition from the urban bustle, it followed a period of transition policies and instruments urbanization that tinted the importance of paradigm shifts in public policy and urbanism.