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BRINGING THE STATE BACK IN TO BUILD THE POSTSOCIALIST CITY: THE STATE EFFECT AS A POSITIONED CULTURAL CONSTRUCT

The postsocialist prosperous families from Cluj started, in the second part of the 90s, to build new villas in the interstices of the interwar villa neighbourhoods or to erect new outskirt colonies of villas, in the rural hinterland. In the second postsocialist decade, the emerging capitalism transformed this category in highly targeted demographics for real estate projects, yet the quality and safety standards varied considerably. A big media scandal started when in a new suburban neighbourhood, populated by young educated families with well paid start-up jobs, a bathtub felt two floors through the neighbours' ceilings until it hit the ground floor. As an irony, the new residential project was called 'Luxor', a suggestive marketing name picked by the developer because it connotes with luxury.

Urban studies in the postsocialist region have often pointed out that the current round of chaotic urbanization and urban sprawl is an effect of the retreat of the neoliberal state from the economy. State regulation and intervention are kept at a minimum level, in order not to impair the market, since the new postsocialist state does not have the capacity to provide new housing, as it was the case of its socialist paternalist predecessor. In addition, because of the abusive and strong interventionist overtones of the socialist state, urban regulations in the postsocialist era were delegitimized in both the eyes of state actors and the new urbanites. The market was considered the solution to the housing problem, as it was believed to be the force that would sort everything out. Yet, when the ceiling falls down, or the suburban areas are sprawling uncontrolled, or the neighbouring building dose not conform to safety rules and impairs the exercise ones property rights, the state is summoned back in. The power asymmetries produced by an unregulated market are the reasons why the need for

187

state regulations is salient once again. Attention to the new urbanization process reveals how the boundaries between state-society and state-economy are once again recreated and redrawn. The processes related to the new urbanization appear like strategic social spaces in which the representations of the state are constituted, contested and transformed on an everyday basis.

I will show that even if there are multiple positioned state effects, the postsocialist state is imagined as a Paper Trail State, a complicated network of records and files that fades away in the face of the materiality of property rights. The urban planning regulations are systematically circumvented through informal arrangements and negotiation because the ownership rights are reified in such a measure 'that state' is dismantled even in the eyes of the state agents, rendering it an 'entity' that regulates only papers through papers. I have conducted 36 interviews with urban planners, architect, bureaucrats, real estate agents and people leaving or buying houses or apartments in the new developments. I had tree waves of interviewing on a period spanning from 2003 until 2008. I was also part of different teams involved in urban planning in the city of Cluj. In what follows, first I discuss the relation between the state and state representations, and subsequently I point out the way in which state is embodied in everyday practices and representation during the first and then the second postsocialist decade of urbanization in Cluj. As Kowalski observers much of the scholarship which emphasizes the cultural dimension of the state focuses on the practices of legibility and control, erasing the agents from the analysis. My endeavour is exactly reveal the situated state effects of the different actors enmeshed in the new urbanization power assemblages. The chapter ends with a comparison of the two decades and a discussion of the theoretical implications.

The State Effect of the Power Assemblages

Opposing structural and functional analysis that imagined the state as a preconstructed "thing", the current stream of state theories tend to examine the state as an emergent "effect" of mundane everyday practices, representations, and multiple strands of power . This conceptualization of the state is strongly rooted in a more flexible concept of power, which, in its exercise is ambiguous, multidirectional . Such a vision creates a complex paradox for the state theory. If considered from a methodological vantage

point, the edges of the power system and institutionalized practices that form the state become indeed elusive exactly because of the capillary distribution of power. Nevertheless, this is not the case when considered from the point of view of everyday life: in this case, the state gains a clear corporality, and the state comes to be represented as possessing the coherent boundaries of a transcendent body.

In order to avoid the trap of seeing the institutional system as real, and the representation of the state as pure illusion, I lean on Miller and Rose to restate the terms of my analysis. Following Foucault concept of governmentality, Miller and Rose claims that the modern experience of power is an effect of the rules of ordering put in motion by complex assemblages that link together apparatuses deemed 'political' with institutions that are constituted as non-political. The distinction between what comes to be classified as political and non-political, state and non-state, public and private, or law and norm is an *internal* operation of the diverse assemblages. Thus any attempt to explaining how 'the State' arises has to come to terms with the way the networks of power are producing the operational distinction between what is the external, or the non-state. While Miller and Rose does not come to designate the mechanisms of this operational performance, Timothy Mitchell forcefully argues that even if the state does not have an actual clear cut structure, the structural effect comes to be bestowed by the everyday practices permeated by disciplinary techniques of the conduct as those described by Foucault – the detailed organization of space, movements, positions, bodies. The same methods and mechanisms that work locally, breaking the actions into separate components, rearranging their parts to increase the efficiency and precision produce the specific appearance of an external structure. The forces at work in the structuring of everyday practices through discipline, come to recompose the nation-state as "something much more than the sum of everyday powers of government", in order to appear "as a structure containing and giving order and meaning to people's lives" (p. 179). The forces that are organizing internally the assemblages of power are producing the effect of externalities, 'the state effect' .

I find the paradigm of disciplinary practices as somewhat narrow, given that these particular practices have emerged in a specific historical context, namely the 17th and 18th century European modernity. Occidental-type of disciplinary techniques are probably a tenable supposition when discussing the 'state effect' for Western societies. However, when applied to peripheral settings the paradigm becomes problematic. Indian

bureaucracies are not organized and disciplined as would have predicted the Weberian ideal-types, yet the State is still imagined as an external entity, even if not as unitary as expected. Gupta demonstrate that everyday practices and discourses of corruption are mechanisms through which the State is imagined and through which people see themselves as exploited, or conversely, as citizens entitled with certain rights. Furthermore, Dunn shows that even if the state-institutions dose not infuse the entire social space in contemporary postsocialist Georgia, state is still conceived as an external reified actor. Even if Mitchell's theory has debatable assumptions, it brings up a crucial point that helps shade light on the postsocialist field. The micro organization of power it is an element to be taken into account in any historical attempt to disentangle how the state effect is created. If the appearance of the state as an external entity is produced through internal processes of the power assemblages, than the way power is organized inside these assemblages matter.

Any view is a view from within somewhere in a power assemblage, and any description will be a positioned description. The endeavour to think the state as a construction cannot avoid the issue that the state effect is an emergent distinction from within a power assemblages. Bourdieu warns that any thinking of the state runs 'the risk of taking over (or being taken over) a thought of the state' (p.1). The categories produced within the power assemblages, the categories through which the state is constructed as a transcendent entity, not only transform my writing on the state in a situated text, but constrains me to recognize that there is no exteriority from which I can project an objective external view on what is the state. It is Bourdieu contention that in contemporary society, the state 'imposes and inculcates all the fundamental principles of classification' (p. 13). But the irony is that Bourdieu argues exactly against this kind of reification when he speaks about the 'fictive body' of the state. 'The state' is not a homogeneous singular structure, as Haney excellently reveal in her careful empirical analysis of welfare state institutions. On the contrary, she demonstrates that the categories and principles of classification put forward by 'the state' are contradictory, and if viewed at the institutional level, the state is fragmented and coated in various sites of control and resistance, and the form of control over the welfare clients vary by state agency. Therefore, one should restrain for totalizing images about what state does and does not.

The postsocialist state is no exception here. As Deneva shows, what comes to be called the Bulgarian State is an achievement of multilayered

and conflicting sets of practices and institutions, 'the state' of the Bulgarian Muslims immigrants appears as a situated accomplishment depending on the subject's position in different translocal fields of power. From this vantage point, the postsocialst state effect is performed in a similar manner as the Western one. Yet, some specificities still can be discerned. The void left by the downfall of the socialist industrial world, regulated workplaces, highly scrutinized markets, and centrally managed agriculture was filed by the expansion of the domestic and private world . When the complicated web of state institutions collapsed, 'what was left was the private, domestic, invisible or hidden world' . In addition because of the interventionist abuses in socialism, the private became the prime source of what is acceptable, while public regulations were delegitimized. This gave rise to a sort of popular neoliberalism. Therefore the state institutions were in the difficult position to regulate the inviolable private through illegitimate public means. My approach follows the culturalist agenda, which conceives the state as a cultural construct, a product of situated discourses and beliefs. Therefore, states are not just bureaucratic organizations, but fragmentary power relations that are culturally represented in complex ways. Abrams warns that the modes and effects of state-idea may vary historically, yet he dose not specify ways for identifying the fluctuations. Nevertheless, Mitchell's idea on the state effect may be helpful here: one has to investigate how the exercise of power aggregates and comes to be perceived as something exterior. Focusing on the nexus of practices and discourses involved in the urbanization power assemblages from Cluj I will delineate the contours of the positioned transcendent body of the state. In the following sections, I am describing the socialist urbanization, the first postsocialist decade, and finally the developments from the second postsocialist decade.

How the State Faded Away

Some key neostalinist elements of governmentality, in the double sense of Rose's (1996) of political rationalities and technologies of government, had a major impact on the way the postsocialist state apparatuses handled the multitudinous affairs of territory and urbanization. First, the *political rationalities* through which territory was governed it has to be taken into account; that is the practices for formulation and justification of idealized schemata and categories, which render reality thinkable and politically

programmable. The socialist administration was the owner of most of the urban land stock. When a specific landplot was manipulated by a state agency, it was from the perspective of the landlord, not from the perspective of an urban manager. Urban space was not imagined as a space to be regulated or controlled, but as a discretionary playground for systematization and development. This specific political rationality became even stronger after 1970, when Ceuşescu's industrialization project of Cluj started. The urban real estate market was heavily restricted and there were barely any land transactions or private building projects. Moreover, in order to make way for the socialist block of flats neighborhoods, important parts of the previous urban stock of houses was pulled down[1]. The restrictions on the real estate markets, the misused and the discretionary way of managing property during socialism had delegitimated subsequent regulation of property in the postsocialist era.

Second, the socialist *technologies of government* through which different socialist authorities enacted the political rationality of the 'owner' were deeply entrenched in the logic of resource accumulation of the redistributive system, in the sense theorized by Szelenyi . The socialist bureaucratic leaders, in the process of enhancing their redistributive power, have created a dense institutional network in order to maximize the bureaucratic seats available for redistribution. Yet, this mechanism produced uncertainties and arbitrariness, because the demarcation between the proper sphere of competence and resources of different offices was unclearly marked. In this context, the informal networks became the secondary mechanism that was holding up the functioning of the state agencies. However, these informal networks were tied around some central actors – generally party members – that could link through their authority disparate resources, in time and space.[2]

At the beginning of the '90s, these socialist rules of ordering of the city triggered a series of reactions, which, to some extent, de-statize the practices of urban government and planning. The local state was degovernmentalized, the substantive authority of expertise in regulating urban development was disconnected from the apparatuses of political rule, and most of the responsibilities of managing real estate properties was transferred to the owners. A new form of *political rationality* emerged, property was reified and the hope emerged that once the proprieties restituted back to their rightful owners it will be taken care off; it will be governed, it will govern itself. Ownership was no longer a social relation between social actors with regard an object; a relation that referred to the

reciprocal recognition of the condition of handling real estate possessions. Through reification, property rights were schematized, leaving aside any social relations that it may have implied, rendering in this way the object of possession maneuverable only by the 'owner'. The political apparatuses were excluded from the ownership relations, reducing the range of legitimate urban management interventions, even if some owners would abuse their rights. The sum of private owners came to be imagined as the market, the perfect device amenable to regulatory functions. Yet, land restitution started at the national level only at the beginning of 1996 and the land market was heavily restricted by the tight delimitation of the city edges form its agricultural hinterland (another socialist legacy).

An idealized schema of the self-governing property has begun to take shape already since the beginning of the 90s, being easily amenable to political action through the idea of market. However, the actual new urban planning for the city of Cluj-Napoca started later, in the second half of the 90s, and was done through the local administration, a bureaucracy organized, as I mentioned, on very different principles than those outline by Weber's ideal-type. Instead of reorganizing the administration, the local government in Cluj elected after 1992 deepened the informal coordination between offices, through favouring of the local and private networks . The planning proceeded in three ways. First, the 1996 city master plan was meant to redraw the boundaries of the city: the surface of the city was doubled by incorporating the southern hinterlands. The decision was a result of channelling up requests from land owners from the city fringes. Nonetheless, the plan was administratively effective only in 1999. The second form of planning, consistent with the idea of self-governing property, was more consequential: building became possible even on pieces of land lacking the adequate amenities (roads and public utilities). The local administration had the legal responsibility to prepare the territory for urbanization, but it did not have such an infrastructural power, and the owners were entitled to provide for themselves all the necessary facilities. Third, the local administration negotiated the official urban regulations on a case-by-case basis, in order not to impair 'the property rights' of the owners. What came to be actually enacted was not really a market, but in effect an emergent complex assemblage that was lashing up together political and administrative forces and private owners of land and real estate proprieties.

Most of the building plots were irregular, being former agricultural fields, and their limits most of the times were unclear. Therefore, it became

a very difficult task to state some urban-planning regulations, even to sketch the street structure or fix some buildings height standard were very difficult tasks. Thus, the strategy was to wait for the first buildings and use them as guides for the subsequent regulations. In fact, every new construction was obliged first to provide a zoning plan which had to be approved by the local government. This opened the door to a case-to-case negotiation of the building parameters (height, percentage of the land used for building, etc.) between the administration and the owner, and between the owner and his/her neighbours. However, even if these negotiations were important, still they were render less consequential since there was never a precedent in tearing down an illegal building[3]. The legal system was working in the paradigm of the self-governing property, and, in the last instance, always favoured the 'owner'[4]. In addition, when a big plot was divided in order to be sold, the owners' pressured the notary to use any legal means to maximize the marketable surface. Since afterwards the buyers of the divided plots were reluctant to give away expensive land to facilitate the construction of proper roads, the result was a bent and narrow street structure, or sometimes even the complete lack of access streets. All these unwanted effects proved very frustrating and created tensed relationships between neighbours.[5]

To sum up, in the 90s 'the state' came to be imagined as the structure that was hindering the freedom and self-management of the individuals and the properties. Thus, there was a great deal of pressure towards deregulation and real estate market creation. Yet, what came to be actually enacted was not a market for single-familiar houses, but a complex in which the owners and different political and administrative actors have been bound together. But what do these negotiations say about how the state effect is produced? The most important theoretical consequence for our understanding of the way the line between state and society is created within complex configurations of practices and relations is the fact that the very production of this boundary represents what one can call *a positional state effect*. On one hand, for the families investing in the villas, anything restraining their self-governing property rights was just parts of the oversized and constraining postsocialist bureaucracy. The state appears here as the limiting huge paper trail that had to be bypassed using the state agents themselves, through informal arrangements. For the urban planners the incoherency of all the market forces were pointing out to the weakness of the unable politicians, responsible with issuing adequate legislation, while for the politicians the most important task of the centralized power

was to retreat by any means from the economy. 'The market' as the rest that appears from curtailing everything that is 'political' is composed from all the forces embodied by the private owners. However, even though one can identify the different 'state effects' produced by the multiple forces at work in the process of the postsocialist urbanization, the state-idea, its invisible transcendent body, can be still discerned from all these positions. It loomed threatening over the self-governing property that, if left on its one, could somehow deliver a self-regulating market. The outcome of this configuration was a privatized and chaotic process of urbanization which produced a specific postsocialist landscape: the new misshapen but nevertheless prestigious villas neighborhoods.

Current Urbanization: The New Power Assamblage

At the end of the 90s, after the national level stabilization, the city of Cluj enters i the second postsocialist decade and into an economic expansion cycle. While the pace of urbanization until that date was rather slow and it entailed only the construction of houses, after 2002, the rhythm grew steadily and more and more blocks of flats were built instead of villas. The local administration was overwhelmed by the new situation and a new political rationality was needed to tackle the rapidly changing situation. A new schema to handle the reality came through perfecting the privatized urbanization technique. Deprived of effective instruments of planning, as pointed above, architects and urban planners had externalized in the previous decade the requirements of urbanization to the investors. Yet the scale of the transformations asked for a change in the scale of the privatization of the urbanization: the big investments were favoured because they had enough resources to furnish the territory with the adequate public amenities. An investor could get also an exemption from the zoning rules if he/she is willing to invest in the necessary urban infrastructure[6]. Even if this was just a small perfecting of the privatized urbanization scheme, in fact the effects brought paradigmatic changes. Up until then the rules for regulating an area were produced in the process of building up a zone, rules were derived from the first few cases and then applied to all the subsequent cases. Even if not always successful and most of the time impaired by the self-regulating ideology, the planners were still trying to impose a consistent geometry to the city. Now rules were becoming negotiable if the developers were auctioning for bigger

investments in urban amenities. The old power assemblage which coordinated the case-to-case petty negotiations of the first postsocialist decade underwent a series of profound transformations Consequently, in the process of changing the technologies of government that enacted the new political rationalities of 'big investments', the smaller investors, (the villa builders), were systematically prejudiced, while the block of flats builders, became the favorites of the local administration.

Holding an explicit pro-growth agenda and capitalizing on the capitalist expansion of the second postsocialist decade, a new configuration of power emerged. The nexus comprised primarily urban planners and architects, politicians, clients and homeowners, developers and building companies organized in complex institutional networks. However, the new political rationality was not enacted in a smooth and coherent manner by the ensemble of actors, practices, and institutions involved in the urbanization expansion. Expert knowledge is a key part of the urbanization process since the sole bureaucratic body entitled to issue construction permits is composed by a numerous personal (more then 30 members) of urban planners and architects. Because of the case-by-case negotiation planning of the 90s, the expert commissions became central in any arrangements, therefore there were pressures to extend the body of the committee to make way to all the stakeholders. At the same time, in order to still hold grip of the informalized urbanization process, a whole institutional proliferation flowered. New committees were put in place to issue particular permits (water piping, gas, sewer system, etc.). The paper work necessary to be filled in was very consistent and it represented one of the tasks of any architect hired by a client. In addition, the architects had to negotiate or incorporate the recommendations given by the main planning commission. The clients did not have a direct relation with the commissions; it became an internal affair of the architectural and planning expert field. As a result, the evaluations produced inside of the commission became deeply embedded in the logic of prestige distribution and authority of the architectural field. For an external observer, the criteria of evaluation for different projects became opaque and time consuming[7]. As a local politician puts it: "we face a bureaucratic apparatus which tries to demonstrate it's needed" (M, 44, politician).

For the politicians, the commission became a classical example of "red tape bureaucracy", based on an obscure logic of power. Aware of the cyclical movement of capital, the politicians were interested in capitalizing on the current economic expansion. 'The growing construction trend

will last only two or three years. If we prevent this capital entering Cluj, by cutting down the red tape, the city will lose billions of lei" (M, 43, politician). At the same time, big economic actors were trying also to avoid the timely, and thus costly, logic of the expert bodies. Militating for a more transparent power exercise, the big developers came to lobby the political apparatus, playing it against administrative apparatus[8]. The result is that facing the bureaucratic apparatus different categories of actors experience the emergence of two different temporalities as the architect commission prioritizes the big developers on the expense of the small investors[9]. It is clearly not a political victory over the bureaucracy because it only enforced the tendency of the whole architectural field and specifically the planning commission to favour bigger projects. It became clear for the commission that the owners of small lots were interested in introverted private spaces, while the market driven developers were putatively more interested in high quality urban amenities. Therefore it became easier to negotiate the production of public spaces with the big developers: roads, public utilities, green areas, kindergartens and spaces for convenience stores. It was a win-win situation: the politicians could pose as agents of change and development, the planners had some public spaces, and the new capitalists could invest on their terms. Even if the expert bodies had to give up to some regulations, making more flexible the conditions for giving permits, it was still a win-win situation; the politicians could pose as agents of change and development, the planners had some public spaces, and the big capital could invest on its term.

However, there was a category for which this situation was not an advantageous one: the buyers of the new houses. Sometimes the quality of the construction was very poor, or the neighbourhoods of villas of the 90s. These houses were supposed to be luxurious, yet there were invaded by the blocks of flats.[10] The reaction was very bitter from the part of those who where living in the new areas. "There is no concrete urban planning, they are building chaotically, no respect for the already existing neighbours" (F, 23 years, economist, mother of one).[11]

The inadequate urban planning provisioning and the power alliance between big investors and the politicians was translated by this frustrated middle stratum into a complex discourse about the immoral economic game played both by the developers and by the local state[12]. The market was imagined as a space dominated by private interests and unethical behaviour and misconduct, while the City Hall was held responsible for the chaos represented by the unordered geometry of the space and the unfair

spatial relations. That is because the "state" should intervene to moderate any misconduct, and when this does not happen the state is suspected to be corrupt and unable: *"The circumstances that allow the urban plans to be disregarded is the corruption. The bureaucracy is moving very slowly"* (F, 30, economist). Moreover, both institutions "the market" and "the City Hall" are permeated by supposedly private interests because at this level the actors know each other and form a local network. As the people from these new neighbourhoods see it, the muddy waters of the local interests can be avoided only at the 'higher' state levels. *"The interests are on both sides. Both the City Hall and the developer! Here some higher authority should intervene, because here, locally, the City Hall, the County Council can do their dirty tricks, it is easy, they know each other"* (M, 21 years, student, resident in a new development).

The existence of 'the state' becomes problematic in itself, not only in the eyes of the inhabitants of the neighbourhoods, also in the eyes of those who are supposed to embody it. The control commission is a special administrative department, which checks out if the buildings are constructed in conformity with the approved plans. Yet, in practice, the building inspector has merely a formal role because the authority that she or he is supposed to enact disappears when faced with the materiality of the building. Once a building was erected, it becomes "private property" and it cannot be demolished any more. This is why generally the inspector instructs the developer to submit for authorization a second round of plans that incorporates all the changes of the initial plan.[13] Paralyzed by the self-governing property rationality, 'the state' dissolves 'the state'.

In the second postsocialist decade, the state idea came to represent an incoherent structure plagued by corruption, structure which hinders consistent accumulation because of its absence from the economic game and the development processes. Although this is an important departure from the pure self-governing property political rationality, it was not a radical move. The administrative agents were still stunned when facing the reified private property dismantling state authority in the process of enacting precisely this authority. For the residents of the villa neighbourhood the new waves of unrestrained developments create strong disaffection with the 'market', and the need for a regulatory state. Observing the inability of the state institutions to enforce the urban plans, the sole explanation is to attribute to the state agents a continuity of interests with the market agents, and a systematic favouring of big capital. For the politicians and administrative apparatuses, 'the state' should take advantage of

the available capital to develop and extend the city. Historicizing the state (Mitchell 1992?) means in this case contingently defining it as the aggregation of the forces which are facilitating the development of the city by putting the market forces on the right track.

The State Idea and the State Effect

The building inspector's fading away state certainly is a different state when compared with the politician's state, lost when facing the smilingly opaque expertise of the urban planning commission. The state is a situated effect emerging from within the power assemblages that lashes together in the planning process experts, developers, politicians, administrative bureaucrats, villas, blocks of flats, lands, notary public, real estate agents, workers, offices, procedures, official forms, etc.; the distinctions between state/non-state vary depending on the position of the subjects in the power networks and their changing form. Nevertheless, behind the spectres of multiple state effects, one can still discern the idea of a fictive body that gives coherence to the assemblage put in motion by the urbanization process. But in what relations stands the multiples positioned state effects with the fictive body of the state?

In an attempt to explain the perceived unity of the institutionalized political power, Abrams argues the state-idea becomes the veil that masks the actual disunity of the institutionalized political power. Abrams retains Poulantzas insistence on the state as institutional system constituted by a set of interconnected arenas that derives their unity from power transformations and class struggles. Therefore Abrams argues that 'the state-idea' is an effect of these class struggles that provides a unified symbol, "the state", that misrepresents the volatile political power in order assure subjection. Notwithstanding some important theoretical differences, Bourdieu, in a similar move as Abrams, conveys unity to the complex power apparatuses through the concept of symbolic capital. The unity around the interconnected strategic power fields is established by struggles over the right to name or to consecrate. The validity of a document is given by the one who certifies it. However the issue here is to certify the one who signs the official act, yet this creates a causal chain that has to stop somewhere; for Bourdieu the state-idea breaks the *regressus ad infinitum*: one "gives the name of 'state' to the last (or to the first) link in the long chain of official acts of consecration" (p.12). Both Abrams and

Bourdieu link the state idea to class struggles and retain the classical Marxist concept of state-idea as a veil over the class struggles enacted in the state-system. These perceptive interpretations, put class at the centre of the social processes that composes the state-idea, linking the state idea with the workings of modern power. In this reading, the state-idea is far from just a hallow entity with an epiphenomenal existence; in fact is a nodal point that gives unity to the fractures produced by the workings of class struggle - a device that constitute the very field where the processes of power transformation may occur.

In my reading however, even if class is an important part of the state-idea formation it still does not capture the fundamental social relations that underpins it. The beginning of neoliberal policies in Romania can be traced already in the 1990s. Unemployment soured, violent social movements disrupted the fragile social fabric, and marginality and social inequalities became highly visible. The first postsocialist debates concerned the logic and pace of privatization, regarded as the main means to create capitalist property and responsible management. They were fueled by the Washington Consensus, IMF and World Bank, and the neoliberal prescription to deregulate and roll back the state. In advanced neoliberal democracies, the modern experience of power is a result of the rules of ordering put in motion by complex networks of political apparatuses and non-political organizations. The rolling back of the core capitalist states, while supposedly the market takes over, is in fact a new way of organizing state power (Rose and Miller, 2008), in which self-regulated locales achieve increased importance. In the Eastern European periphery, the new power technologies display severe disfunctionalities. The infrastructurally weak Romanian administrative-system lacked the power instruments to penetrate society and economy, directly impacting its capacity to access resources and collect revenues. It thus forced new waves of regulations, which ended up thickening the bureaucratic procedures, without actually enhancing its infrastructural penetration. Their effect was to weaken administrative-system's extraction capacity even more, calling for further tides of national regulation strategies. As a consequence, the back-and-force administrative-system became a constant presence throughout the national space, creating bounded spatial effects on a faint vision of self-regulating market. In addition, the local structures of micropower subverted, altered and remodeled the wider forces at work, producing particular local ontologies and epistemic readings of the social world. The self-managing property enacted at local level was supposed to

produce self-regulating market outside of localist power relations, a neutral institution that will allocated in the best way possible the land resources and housing opportunities. Such a system supported an ontological reading of the social as a centrally organized container space, inhabited by clear-cut objects, and determined by causality. The state idea is the social form that stabilize this world of objects in a given spatial container, city/nation. Any instability is only attributable to the uncertainties of improper enactment of the self-governing property on the self-governing market. The state-idea itself can have various enactments, yet its contour is linked with the ontologies that underpin class relations.

In the second postsocialist decade many Romanians benefited from the opportunities offered by the European labor market, academic institutions or tourist resorts. The Romanian national space though was still not vanishing. The European Union put pressure on central state institutions to devolve regulatory powers to the market and intermediate bodies, similar to its core capitalist states. This only added to the chaotic back and force waves of institutionalization and retreatment of the first postsocialist decade . The political discourse of 'big corruption' that prevailed during these years insisted that had the state been managed by law-abiding politicians, the whole nation would have had a different fate. Here is the same logic of a centrally dependant world of objects sustained or destroyed by centralized forces: an imaginary world that makes possible ontologies where objects inhabit contained spaces, with clear prime movers and fields of causality. The urbanization process was the place of producing new neighborhoods that with adequate public amenities, where the big developers negotiated directed with the local administration. Even if there are multiple state effects, the very practices of enacting the class struggles produced an ontology whit stable object in clear spaces.

Conclusion

The new postsocialist neighbourhood is a complex product of the postsocialist dream for a private home far from the putative urban postsocialist ills. The weak infrastructural administrative-system was colonized by the 'self-governing property' imaginary and suburban desires. The market came to be imagined as the real salvation and the answer to all social problems after the demise of the socialist regime, and was transformed in foremost mean to attain the suburban single-family

house. The effects were urban-sprawl and ill equipped areas with public amenities, with practical no public areas and services. However, the very mean to attain the suburban housing fantasy was the Trojan horse through which the entrepreneurial-capital colonized in the second decade the new neighbourhoods. The new projects and blocks of flats of the second postsocialist decade were erected wall-in-wall with the postsocialist villas. The hope of the public planner were that in this way some public spaces could be produced, even with the cost of scarifying some regulations (building highs, densities, distances between constructions, mixing of villas with blocks). Yet, this solution only depend the lack of genuine public spaces and services; most of the developers actually sold 'the public spaces' to their clients.

The postsocialist urbanization summoned for the various actors involved in the process various contours of what is the state, where the state begins and where society starts. The common point of these positioned state effects is that the fictive body of the state-idea looms in the very way the state is imagined. One way to imagine this is to place the state idea as an emerging effect of the class struggles over the functioning of the power arenas. In order to evade such facile resolutions and rescue the stake of the state as a power transformation locus of contending groups and hegemonic projects I situated the discussion at the level of the ontologies produced and favoured by class struggle. The very process of remaking the national state-system and enacting the local urbanization process produced a specific ontology and favors particular practices and ways of organizing practices. While rooted in socialism, self-govern property has been enforced by the postsocialist transformations of the administrative-system. This imagery suffered some transformations along the two postsocialist decades, yet it offered a particular world with stable objects smilingly instituted or destitute by traceable acts or practices, while all social ills originated in corrupted practices. As Mitchell argues the forces at work in the structuring of everyday practices come to recompose as state, a structure containing and giving order and meaning to people's lives. The fictive body of the state-idea is an emergent effect of the way power is composed and recomposed through the struggles inside various assemblages. The power assemblage of the postsocialist urbanization process is a revealing vantage point from which to observe the way power is amassed by the planning networks and class actors.

NOTES

1. The dramatic effect of these practices is captured in an interview by Bekis et. al. Dennis Belkis et al., "Urban, Social and Symbolic Constitution of the Manaștur Neighborhood," *IDEA Arta și Societate* 15 (2003).. The subject recalls her last night in her house before demolition in the Manastur neigborhood "Our house wasn't demolished yet and I said to Paul: come, let's spend the last night in the house together, as I knew that the next morning the bulldozers would come. Paul and I broke the windows with pleasure so that we don't leave that pleasure for the bulldozers. We parted, Paul and I, like in the Indian movies: as if he went to another world ... He wove at me, we cried our souls out. We hugged, the houses were torn down."

2. This logic of coordination is excellently explained with the aid of an example by an interviewee: "and then [during communism] this forest [from Cluj called Făget] was well organized, managed. Of course the City Hall through FSA – Forest and Street Administration – did not have any power to take care of the forest.. But the local party chief [ro. Secretarul de partid] gave these orders to the Forest Agency, because they have the experts to manage the forest as a resort forest. In communism this story was very simple. The local party chief gave orders, and the job was done. And the forest was well managed, cleaned, planted, trimmed, etc. (M, 68, architect, urban planner).

3. A frustrated local politician argues: Yes, Yes, yes, this is the situation. They win also in the court. We have a lot of litigations and we lose. Those who started to build an illegal constructions obtain through the our lawsuit a kind of legalization. I don't know any more… here it's the society who has to draw together, because both the authorities and justice, and even the civil society, and … the environment, health authorities, …and what ever…do we rather want to live in a healthy environment, or just live anybody to make illegal constructions where ever they want to?…" (56, M, high ranking administrative position).

4. In addition when a big plot was split up to be sold, the owner was making pressure on the notary to use any legal means to maximize the marketable surface. The notary without some guiding urban plan usually was giving up to such request. The buyers of the smaller plots were reluctant to give away expensive land afterwards in order to facilitate the construction of proper roads. The effect is a bent and narrow street structure or sometimes no access streets at all.

5. „Here, in our country, if someone laid two bricks one over anther, nobody demolish them anymore. But when you look and see the chaotic placements, without any alignment, with no....urbanism, no systematization… So, effectively, the one who is meant to live there is uncomfortable. If someone buys a plot, given that in this condition of already such sinuous lands as

were the grazing fields before… and everyone chooses a corner anywhere, disturbing the neighbors around him… we cannot even map out a road any more." (56 years old, B, politician and resident of a villa neighborhood).

6   The shifting perspective is excellently synthesized by an architect at the beginning of 2002: "Normally, the licenses should be Issued like this> whether the building is located in our own town, they should require the owner to build the sewerage as well. Or a stretch of road... Why should they issue a license knowing that you propose to alter the local regulation of the area, maybe also the allowed use, or even building higher and so on? But then at least, they should oblige you to pay for a part of the infrastructure. In my opinion, this is how the council should have done" (M, 56, architect).

7   More than six thousand files were not addressed and given a solution until the beginning of the September 2008.

8   "The official time span for obtain the building license is 30 days. This is theoretically, yet practically this never happens. We managed the situation differently… our managers went directly to the City Hall, at the mayor office and requested a meeting. They explained their construction plans and our idea, and that there are some developers that have obtain the license in due time and that we did not received it through the normal procedures. They told him 'we really want to build something beautiful, why do you forestall us?' and then we obtain with no pain the permits" (F, 29, construction engineer).

9   "There is this Mass-Media and Protocol Department that handles with the big developers, those interested in urban development rich the higher level and from there through their paper work they are sent to the department that can really speed the stuff" (F, 45, urban planner at the City Hall).

10   An official from the City Hall observes: "The positive side [with the derogation from the rules] is that lots and lots of apartments were built; the downside is that they disturb their neighbors. At this point I do not know what's best".

11   And she continues "[…] the flats are built very close to the nearby houses. That is not ok. Just an example, our neighbor built for himself a very nice house, with great efforts. He suddenly fond himself with six storey block of flats in front of the house and with half of his alley collapsed in his foundation. Once the block has been erected, he's going to find himself with a lot of people staring directly in his house." An important detail is that she and her family are living in a block of flats, which was causing the same problems to her future neighbors.

12   "The town hall plan was not complied with, the builders dug right under our fence; our fence is now running loose, the electricity pole is loose, as well. We sent official litigations to the City Hall, one complaint after another, yet nothing was solved. After we will sue them, we hope will manage to solve part of the issues. At least, they should comply with the plan, and not to exceed the surface they were approved to built on, obey the working

timetable and the silent hours during the day and they should not destroy our foundation. I don't' know, but ig they continue building like this, we think of moving to someplace else, where no further building is possible" (F, 23 years, economist, mother of 1).

13 A public servant working at the urban planning department from the City Hall recalls:

Public Servant: In this case, the inspector, my workmate here, goes on the site and ascertains whether the building was compliant to the actual official building license. And if he finds out it didn't comply, he will not relapse a fine

Me: He'll make a notice…

PS: He won't make any notice. The errant comes with a new project to modify the building license following his advice. What should he do, demolish the errant's house? No one dares to do that if the errant comes with an amendment to the project and sets it legal; this is what I am saying…

Me: And why doesn't it get demolished?

PS: Because when private property is in matter, you need trails…

Me: So sue them and you go in court.

PS: Of course.

Me: And in court, as usual, the demolition won't be approved. Is there a reason for this? Why?

PS: Yes…why should we tear down the man's house? Because of the 40 cm he exceeded by? (M, 53, engineer, public servant in the planning department).

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