



Cristina Enache and Marina Mihaila

Urbanism and Landscape Design Department, Synthesis of Architectural Design Department -
"Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism, Bucharest, Romania
cristinaenache@yahoo.com / arh_marina@yahoo.com

A discussion about new Bucharest ShoppingScapes

Abstract

Because of a multitude of factors, Bucharest has developed in the past 20 years new typologies of shopping buildings and sites, either in the peripheral or in downtown areas. 20 years ago Bucharest has the its "universal" stores like buildings developed in the socialism-communist period of time and well formally designed in a specific local – functional way, but also a few older ones like the former "La Fayette Galleries" actual "Victoria Galleries". Also some small area of shopping (for public or private commerce) were kept in the city center or in some important areas in a ruined built pattern of ground and 1 up to 3 levels – like in the North Railway Station area. In the beginning of these 20 years a phenomenon of reconversion of these "universal" stores has begun, because of the increased need for private commerce spaces, being something in a very new trend for the city. And because these were situated in the cores of the neighbourhoods, some of them have first become compartmented with "small boutiques" (as they were called), but in fact small private shops – small business of different imported and less local products. As a direct result they kept the initial urban image, and restore only the content and sometimes the global function. There are a few in some areas considered more important that have been transformed into showrooms and offices above, like in Dorobanti Street Area, and lost the initial function of "universal" store. From the beginning of these 20 years in empty urban spaces have appeared new buildings constructed by private owners that

were formally enveloped in glass coverings and announcing new attraction points. Most of them were located in the downtown nodes, and at the public space level they aggressed the green available areas. Socialist-communist Era had been left also some finished and unfinished huge structures that were developed initially as “palaces” for the people, huge and with cupolas covering a main atrium. It was in the 2002-2004 when the foreign investors were encouraged to come and reuse these buildings that permit to transform them into city shopping malls. These new malls kept the local volumetric presence and the connections to the urban and neighbourhood space. And because the beginning was made, a long series of city shopping malls has began to emerge in downtown and at peripheral nodes, establishing new interior urban spaces surrounded by another built nature, envisaging a new Bucharest ShoppingScape, but mainly artificial and accepted as a new fashionable space to dress and live for. In fact the notion of urban atmosphere was replaced with an easy way to be and experiment the shopping process in the city: the “non-place” as Marc Auge said in his book. The urban network of commercial areas in Bucharest is present today as a non-hierarchical structure of commercial streets, galleries, shopping malls and large commercial platforms, mixing the old city identity with new icons promoted by the new trends.

Keywords: landscape, post-communist development, Romania, commercial architecture typologies, shopping mall

1 Introduction. Premises about the study



FIG.1 Lipscani area / photo&collage ©Cristina Enache

The last 70 years find us facing a major surprise: the 50 years of communism have separated us not only from the global goods market, segregating us in the Eastern Block, but also the presence of capital's public spaces that would have been propitious for the functional shopping insertions, has been dramatically affected by an unfriendly policy towards society, communication and community in general, along with all activities belonging here. Even if they are still there physically, during these 50 years the public spaces cease their active existence for a significant portion of this interval.

The last 20 years hide other amazements as to the lack of strategic development decision, and sporadic and sometimes contradictory manifestations at the level of urban management; oriented and designed initiatives coexists in parallel at the city level – PUG, master plans, territorial planning – , with real-estate initiatives to insert in the city space and to enclose the spontaneous impulses and pressures of the external market: simultaneous action in the fields of banking and shopping – the local market taken over by Israeli, Turkish, Greek, and finally European products (but the tendency is not finalized in present), and together with these the forced decrease of internal production of market goods of monetary destabilization, and as a consequence the decrease of the purchasing power and consumption.

The power-public space-active urban life-activities and active shopping landscapes relationship seems to be essential for the city space in Bucharest.

The tendencies which are manifested here seem to be a synthesis of all tendencies present in Romanian cities: here they are manifested more violent, begin first and solved first; they find unexplained resources from problems, contradictions and political struggle on urban life space.

The commercial landscape of Bucharest has considerably changed in the last 20 years. If in the socialist – communist period it was present timid and more symbolic (due to the excessive control of that time over the commercialized goods and over the activity itself), with the change of the political system occurs also a commercial “revolution”. The socialist system has refused for too long the offer of consumer society from outside the country; for this reason, the implications of the international market insertion occur not only at the level of commercial infrastructures, but also at the level of society, a society avid for shopping, for novelty and change.

Therefore the fact that a series of commercial chains found here a good retail opportunity, and that the growth rate of the shopping facilities (equipments) is remarkable do not come as a surprise – in the capital city of a country that finds the notion of “freedom” in the opportunity of buying.

2 Bucharest ShoppingScapes design chronology – development stages/ design

– pre-war stage, communist stage, post-communist era.

Bucharest has experienced several stages in the formation of major commercial landscape.

During the city establishment, the commerce had a significant role in its urban and social life. In the 18-19 centuries Bucharest is known for being an important commercial town, situated at the crossroads of several major trade routes of that period. The commerce was generated by the craft and merchant activities of the time. The streets of the historical centre preserve the names of the old guilds and activities which were undertaken in the area (“Șelari” = “Saddlers”, “Blănari” = “Furriers”, “Sticlari” = “Glaziers”). The Lipscani street (name derived from the word “Leipzig” – the zone that supplied the merchants from this area) is currently an urban landmark and a traditional symbol in Bucharest’s commercial history.

Typologies to be noted: “lipscănia”, the landscapes of crafts and manufactured goods, guilds of craftsmen, important fairs of the city, historic city center.

Comments: even the historic center suffers many major physical aggressions until the complete physical disappearance of the architectural fund, the constituted character of manufacturer and selling townlet is kept at every city restoration and reconstruction, even some streets could not find their old positions and the shape from before earthquake, conflagration, etc.



FIG.2 Lipscani area around 1900, source ©Wikimedia Commons, <http://commons.wikimedia.org/>

From the trade based on professional/guild practice, the commerce gradually becomes specialized, responding to the needs generated by the society's evolution. Towards the end of the 19th century appear the market halls, depiction of the

industrial revolution in architecture, inspired from other famous international examples of that period. Generally based on agricultural and food markets, they include also other types of products or services. Among these – the best known are Traian Market Hall, Matache Market Hall, Obor Market Hall and Unirii Market Hall. Also during this period appears the Commercial Gallery concept – inspired by the French model – represented by Victoria Store in 1875 (initially - La Fayette Galeries). Commercial Passage is another typology of incipient ShoppingScape in Bucharest: Villacrosse Passage, English Passage, and Victoria Passage.



FIG. 3 Villacrosse Passage, Bucharest, ©George M.Groutas (Fotopedia – Creative Commons, 2013).

“Between Lipscani and Griviței street, several passageways, some covered, link Calea Victoriei with parallel streets. Well preserved and spectacular even if nowadays rather shabby and used beneath its commercial potential – this double passage with curved aisles is covered by an elegant arched structure. In the 30s, the architects included in new modernist multistory developments patios and walkways flanked by fancy shops.” (Celac et al; 2005: 24)

The human scale and proximity are two characteristics of the incipient ShoppingScares at their time.

Typologies to be noted: the trade specialization and together with it the specialization of the built landscape – the markets and market halls, but also the commercial galleries, and along with this we can talk about a differentiation of ShoppingScares' consumers, about a certain fashionable landscapes for elitist people

– the promenade with shops and stores, small manufactures but also Romanian luxury goods, some brought directly from Paris.

Commercial Passage is another distinct typology that links road and pedestrian routes, and which abounds in small boutiques, coffee shops, even from beginning, and uses from the start the urban and landscape link function.

And because in that period of time Bucharest aspires to its naming as the “Little Paris”, it borrows together with architectural images, French or French educated architects, also the appetite for luxury goods as manifesto of the modernity.

Bucharest becomes in that period of time the main supplier of luxury goods for the cities in the provinces, often providing an alternative to the shopping trip to Paris or Vienna.

Comments: Calea Victoriei Street (Victory Avenue) – the older Podul Mogoșoaia (Mogoșoaia Bridge) becomes the main urban promenade and it is urban-architecturally constituted from built insertions with a commercial ground floor. The same phenomenon also applies to Magheru Boulevard which is drawn at the beginning at the 1900, elitist in terms of urban lifestyle – with high-level affordable residence for capital and also for the province, but with a fashionable promenade – shopping, cinemas or simple for displaying personal outfit and style.

The old center, a fair by definition, gains new connections with market halls and the very new commercial streets.

The change of the politic regime brought from 47 until 89 many modifications in the urban landscapes, successive as the system evolves in practice and directions.

Usual or luxury craftsman, the merchant, becomes worker as the rest of the individuals in society, no matter of social class or education. The guilds become unions and syndicates and are trying to maintain their activities, their spaces and the belonging to the constituted city places.

What is changing in economical field is the lack of openness and goods exchange, the market flows, and the decrease of the appetite for consumption together with the decrease in the standard of living, financial potential and, as a consequence of forced egalitarian salaries, the forced decrease or zero profits.

Even the luxury goods are still a target and a dream of the Bucharest consumer, social and political issues that are etiqueting and evaluating the individuals, the new times poverty and propaganda, the replacing of the financial targets, brings urban life to a scarcity of activities, a replacement of the goods selection criteria (through propaganda which is advertising in this case), the loss of purchasing power and the oppression of the social life in urban places.

The presence of the church as social and urban pole decreases till cancellation from the role of neighborhood centers.



FIG. 4 "Matache Macelaru" Market Hall / ©claudiu nh, source Wikimedia Commons, <http://commons.wikimedia.org/>

Starting with the communist period it occurs a radical change of the commerce. The right to commercialize the products is state exclusive which leads to state monopoly over the market. Thus the competition and also the need for commercial advertising disappear (some advertising still exists in the form of public propaganda)

This is the time when the single design products appear, from toys and furniture to fast-moving consumer goods, and the huge factories are producing several types of products for each category.

The residence is typified, as well as the city civic centers, and uniformity becomes a request of the state policy, as well as the decrease of luxury products, manufactured products for internal country use – the luxury is festinated to export.

At the level of shopping building appear the so-called "universal stores", usually located in the central area of Bucharest – large structures which include various categories of articles – like Unirea Store, Cocor (Crane) Store, Bucuresti Store, Bucur-Obor Store, Titan Store, Eva or Adam.

These universal stores are intended as neighborhoods centers, with standardized products for a uniform population. The memories from those times kept the image as very similar architecture great stores, but also of the standardized products from their interior.

Universal stores from the Bucharest centers retained a diffuse presence of several local fashion houses which are producing for domestic consumption, and to which a whole provincial population comes in shopping pilgrimage in those times.

Stores as Eva and Adam are promoted as places of luxury goods by position (Magheru Boulevard, and on Ion Câmpineanu Street, in the presence of Palace Hall) and products and they also have a brand-like concept: all for her – Eva, all for him – Adam.

Typologies to be noted: universal stores, neighborhood stores, egalitarian, but still a few luxury ones, to differentiate shopping space of the capital. At the same time the second hand book shops are present, and “consignația” (consignment store) appears as new shop typology, where small producers – manufactures or artists – can sell their objects as unique, if they own a guild or union certificate.

As shopping typology we could also mention the standard commerce given by the limited number of products type market.

In these times also emerges a certain “underground commerce” because of the shortage of the typology of goods, and the products that are first arriving from China, then from Vietnam and DDR, are sold “underhand” in great commercial stores.

House for orders, the “economat” and “the shop” (called ‘shop’ also in Romanian) are another three categories of shoppingscapes dedicated strictly to an elite established by the state policy.

Consumer goods, censored to the open market of the universal stores, are now sold in the “house for orders” or “economat shop”, in national currency, or in “shops” using foreign currency, that has to be strictly declared and spent under public control. The houses for orders and the economat shops are generally commercial spaces without storefronts, or with closed ones, and they are not opened to the city communist shoppingscapes.

The “shops” host from “western” technological products to the food products; these are resulted from confiscation or controlled imports. As typology they are common commercial spaces, situated in important or representative areas, with storefronts which display the unique and desired products, sold in inaccessible currency.

In parallel develops a “black market”, individual commerce that can be labelled as a landscape. This kind of commerce is itinerant and illegal, through individuals who manage to travel and sell common or luxury Romanian products, mostly consumer goods clothing.

Comments: these times are characterized also by a controlled (planned) shortage in food products, of any kind, vital resources: sugar, flour, etc. are rationalized, and the “cue shopping” becomes a more common visual landscape – as shoppingscape.

Here we could note also that the “cue shopping” becomes a lifestyle: the “cue shopping” is necessary not only for buying consumer goods, physically, in commercial spaces and/or in the streets, but is also necessary for buying a car, a TV, etc., the “cue shopping” is moving on a particular waiting list.

Practically we can say that the commercial space and its landscape acquires subtle valences and dimensions, which the consumer has to learn to use in order to interact.

The public space becomes inactive as commercial use and real representation of this domain, with the mentioned exceptions.

The end of the communist left us with some unfinished mega-structures, structures designed for large agricultural and food markets – supermarket type, later called “circus of hunger”. Only two of these were completed before the 1989 revolution. One is still presently functions as market (Commercial Complex Delfinul (Dolphin) – Pantelimon area), and the second is part of the Unirea Commercial Complex, being subject of later design development.

These mega structures are a last phase of the elaborated communist thinking, of a sublime commercial technology, as the population had had to adapt. The size could be explained through “people palaces” promoted as essential for the target regime success, but still are the visual instruments through monumental sizes, wishing to be landmarks in urban mass image.



FIG.5 “Hunger Circus” / ©Joe Mabel, source Wikimedia Commons, <http://commons.wikimedia.org/>

With the fall of the communism in December 1989 starts the process of privatization and liberalisation of commercial market; the competition, the commercial advertising, the diversity of products and the possibility to choose reappear. The old shopping buildings are gradually adjusted to the new needs; initially these become clusters of small boutiques, recalling the image of traditional bazaar. The 90s represent a transition in the commercial landscape of post communist Bucharest, a period of adaptation to the international market and its trends. Characterized by improvisation, this period proves favourable to the development of a type of commerce which aims to promote low prices and low end products – materialized through the development of peripheral commercial complexes – “Red Dragon”, “Europa” – areas with cheap products and high crime rate (as typology: cheap products bazaar, or black market bazaar).

Another type of trade which knows an important development in this period is the “wholesale” (en-gros) – the peripheral zones offer opportunities for the emergence of this kind of stores – Metro, SelGros (typology: big peripheral urban boxes, between warehouse and commerce).

In the late 90s appears the first urban mall – adapting one of the existing “hunger circus” structures (Bucharest Mall). From this moment begins the explosion of the commerce – not only in Bucharest, following the development of new shopping malls, commercial platforms, adaptation and modernisation of the old trade structures – a revival of the commercial activity.

3 ShoppingScapes Typologies in Bucharest

3.1 Shopping Streets

The urban structure of Bucharest retained mostly at symbolical level the traditional commercial streets. In the historical centre – now transformed in a pedestrian area with terraces and restaurants, still function small boutiques or shops specialized in fine arts.



FIG.6 Hanul cu Tei - Lipscani area / photo ©Cristina Enache

"Today's image of the trade quarter is based on the atmosphere of a "major street" of the 19th century. It was built on the site of the Pricely Court abandoned at the end of the 1700s, and has retained the medieval routing of the streets. This quarter was recently exposed to dramatic erosion and gradually taken over by the tourism and cultural industries (art galleries, antique dealers, material stores, coffee shops, theaters, street festivals). The facades along the embankment on Franceză str. The old Lipscani trade quarter seems to have become part of a viable process of regeneration, with its partially unexplored archaeological basement and places reminiscent of the 18th century (Hanul lui Manuc, Hanul cu Tei, Hanul Fieschi – restored in the 1970s), in close proximity to the banking district." (Celac et al; 2005; 24)

Calea Victoriei (Victory Avenue) is a traditional street, but mainly intended for luxury shops. A street with a significant history for Bucharest's evolution, Victory Avenue connects a series of urban landmarks.

The large boulevards with high buildings and commerce at the ground floor arise along with the first major interventions of urban systematization of the city – Magheru Bvd, Calea Moșilor (Oldmen Avenue). In trend in the 90s, these suffer a significant decline due to the rise of urban malls which offer other types of shopping spaces for the consumer society. These are still works modest keeping an inertia of a tradition insufficient rooted.

"In Bucharest, people do not come to the traditional shopping streets from the Historical Centre both because the accessibility but also because they have been

transformed into terraces. Victory Way is a dead place. In the capital are too many shopping malls, and some of them are very close to the city centre, which is not good. We still have not realize that the malls kill the street commerce”(interview with arch. Mario Kuibus (Ivanov; 2011; 9).



Fig.7 Magheru Bvd – late 1930s/ © source Wikimedia Commons, <http://commons.wikimedia.org/>

During the realization of the communist's era symbol – the mega structure of House of People – also took place the insertion of the monumental axis called “Victoria Socialismului” (Victory of Socialism) , sustained by high buildings with commercial ground floors. In the post-revolutionary period (the 90s) the whole avenue was established as an attractive space for traders, being for a period an active commercial area. Currently, the too large and expensive spaces, the lack of urban landmarks to ensure the pedestrian flow, the proximity of some major commercial poles have almost determined its abandonment. The current image is one of a large, monumental area without activities and visitors. This offering central area fails to turn itself into a pole of interest and is practically deleted from the Bucharest map of commerce.

3.2 Universal Stores

The Universal Stores have been formed as landmarks of communist – socialist period. Designed in times of significant urban developments, these structures articulated the urban nodes, becoming poles of interest.

The first universal stores were smaller and specialized – for example – Eva Shop for women, Adam Shop for men, Romarta's Children for kids. Arranged into an urban structure, being related to the historical or architectural objectives, these shops animated the public space, generating paths in the urban tissue.

In the 70s appear the large universal stores – urban mega structures located on the great boulevards – like Unirea Store (extended at the late 80s), Cocor (Crane) Store, Bucharest Store. Since 2000, the majority suffer interventions to modernize. Unirea Store – due to its localisation and to the tradition of old Bucharest's commerce (the store is located on the place of an old traditional market) – is converted into a shopping mall.



FIG.8 Unirea Store/ photo ©Cristina Enache

A new concept is experimented for Cocor Store – now restored and extended – in an attempt to attract luxury brands and local designers for promotion. The use of media technology in the architecture of store's façade is intended to create a signal in the urban landscape. But the development of this project in a period of economical crisis leads to a stagnation and a difficult start of investment.

Although with a concept with a strong significance and active urban presence, the nowadays store integration in urban routes doesn't take place. Brand as Bershka, Zara, H&M, situated in Unirea Store are much more popular and accessible that the investment in creators dedicated building landscape.



FIG.9 Cocor Store (inaugurated in 1973, reshaped in 2010)/ photo ©Cristina Enache

Taken over by a private investor in the 90s, Bucharest Store was later closed. Its downtown presence, at the limit of the historical centre – between an area under restoration and one being modernized (Brătianu Boulevard), offers a desolated image. The building appears like a scar, located at the entrance into the traditional commercial area – the symbol of traditional commerce in Bucharest – Lipscaeni Street.



FIG.10 former Bucharest Store/ photo ©Cristina Enache

An original opportunity to develop Bucharest ShoppingScapes was represented by the presence of the massive structures of the communist “hunger circuses”. Their existence in areas with good accessibility, around the city centre, determine their recovery by making the first urban malls. Bucharest Mall, Plaza Romania and City Mall have used the existing buildings, while the fourth one – Liberty Centre – has used only the location, demolishing the old structure.

A “hunger circus” – known also as the new Unirii Market Hall has operated for a period of time as food market / bazaar. It is currently undergoing restructuring, the new design aiming to create a new urban mall that will function together with Unirea Store, proposing a future urban shopping city.

“If there are many shopping malls in Bucharest, the market establishes this aspect. [...] Sure, the city may have a strategy regarding this issue. The shopping mall kills the commerce from the historical areas and does not offer many advantages.” (interview with arch. Gheorghe Pătrașcu, chief architect of Bucharest). (Ivanov; 2011; 8).

3.3 “Shopping City” structures – commercial galleries, hypermarkets

By proposing to use large interior and exterior areas – the “shopping city” structures – prove to be a successful solution in the commercial activity of the city. These are in fact an extension of the urban mall idea, taking advantage of larger areas of land and on the proximity of other zones which promote other types of commerce (sports goods, furniture, bricolage, wholesale store)

Due to the peripheral location, the “shopping cities” have a freedom of architectural expression, trying new games of shapes, textures and rhythms for cancel the massiveness which can prove overwhelming.

“Besides the commercial component, the malls have a major role of public space, of social cohesion. There take place book launches, shows, fashion parades. Walk on Victory Way and you will see that people hardly go there. All the shopping malls have absorbed the people. There they have light, is warm, they can shop, can drink coffee or eat. They represent a meeting place and promenade. Because everything happens inside the mall, the investors ignore the exterior aspect and all the malls look like boxes. The fight is to force them to make them better, to have also exterior public spaces. Otherwise, the malls offer many advantages to the city, especially those built on the former industrial sites, in the dormitory neighbourhoods. It is a civilized place and monitored where people can go, reducing the mobility because they are not forced to cross the city to get to a place where they can spend their free time, remaining close to the home.” (interview with arch. Sorin Gabrea, the chairman of the

Planning Committee of Bucharest) (Ivanov; 2011; 8).

4 Urban location and structures at metropolitan level

Undoubtedly, the commercial landscape is very different depending on location, on the relation with the city centre and with the major commercial infrastructure. It is about several types of ShoppingScapes on territorial level, depending on the location, accessibility and typology of urban tissue. The architecture, the finishing, the technology reflect this typology, often taking images which become symbols or brand at global level.

Central commercial zone – relations, image, services

The central commercial zones are the most diverse as image and typology. Varying from commercial streets, boutiques, universal stores or commercial ground floors, they pay less tribute to the brand type image. Generally they are part of an urban tissue defined by existing buildings, of a historical evolution specific to the area. The shops are either inserted in an existing architectural frame, or propose a new architectural item which has to provide a pertinent answer to the urban context.

The central commercial areas are situated mostly in the area between Unirii Square and Roman Square / Victory Square – structured between the axes generated by Brătianu / Magheru Bvd and Victory Avenue, including the historical centre of Bucharest.

The majority are constituted as urban landmarks, without having a pedestrian connection between them. The lack of structure in the public pedestrian space is the weak link of the commercial landscape of Bucharest. The insufficiently linked nodes cannot build a coherent network of shopping points. This is also a motivation of the fact that some zones develop excessively (those situated in the proximity of a major accessibility point – metro, public transport), while others suffer a continuous decline, despite the quality of services offered. The location is no more an advantage as long as there is no network to cover the space.

Commercial neighbourhood areas

Along with the expansionist trend of Bucharest, emerged the need of urban decentralization. In the commercial areas this has materialized in the neighbourhood commercial centers, using the existing (modest) infrastructure of the communist period. Therefore the old multifunctional complexes began to expand – vertically and as mass, without following any principles. This organic growth has determined the emergence of chaotic images, without rules, of mixed function buildings, hosting shops, services, restaurants, each of them develop by its own inertia.

Became inefficient and insufficient, commercial areas start to be supplemented by new investments as hypermarkets platforms, bringing a new image – much more specific to a peri-urban landscape.

The result is a mixed landscape, of mass insertion in the interior of the existent collective residential buildings, but still a resuscitation of the urban. Much more, these new commercial points have been constituted as a catalyzer of urban development, generating areas attractive to private investors.

Peripheral commercial areas / extra-urban areas – relations at territorial level/ accessibility/ mobility/ services provided (Grand Arena Mall Berceni / Băneasa Shopping City)

The necessity of use plots of large dimensions, but also the lack of facilities to cover a certain market segment, leads naturally to the emergence of large peripheral and extra urban commercial platforms. The result of consecutive addition in the known points – initially a wholesale facility, these platforms have started to attract more than the large sheds of universal stores and hypermarkets.

In several points now become commercial venues, shopping galleries or even malls have been developed. In time, huge Shopping City type complexes have been established, providing a great variety of services and products. Because of the lack of a clear strategy, the image is a cluster of building that promote the brand- image (Ikea, Bricostore, Praktiker, etc.) and try to define an own personality through the proposed architecture of the commercial gallery, which become an attraction point.



FIG.11 Commercial areas in Bucharest. graphic ©Cristina Enache

5 Conclusion – Bucharest metropolitan commercial landscape

Bucharest Shoppingscape is no doubt atypical. The first reason seems to be on one hand the chaos generated by the urban explosion in the context of insufficient urban infrastructure ; on the other hand – the existence of a gap in the continuity of commercial tradition, determined by the long socialist-communist era Romania experienced, favoring the chaotic development of commercial infrastructure, in the absence of prior studies. Subject to an inertia that followed strictly the need for supply and demand of a consumer society in abrupt formation, the resulted landscape is deprived of structure and coherence. The repetitiveness, redundancy, the crowding are somehow its main characteristics.

Evidently, it is yet in a search for identity, strongly threatened by globalization, by iconic images, and by international brands.

Still, the existence of a central nucleus preserving a historically inherited commercial tradition is one of the main strong points of Bucharest Shoppingscapes. The attractiveness of the central area, the initiated projects or the ones underway, the intention to structure public space will also bring a shaping of the commercial infrastructure in the idea of customization and consolidation of an identity.

The promotion of local brands through insertion in an urban landscape that could become iconic for Bucharest, may grow into a strong point of a local development strategy with set global objectives.

The shoppingscape could be more than a tendency. It may be a development strategy in economic context, but also a significant tourist attraction when the originality intervenes. In conditions of a market still in formation and of an urban framework in transformation, Bucharest has the chance to shape its own ShoppingScape.

As a sum of commercial landscapes memory, Bucharest aspires to its glory era/age to be “Little Paris” when its image has been defined and gained a certain recognition; it fights with the physical and political successive hazard tendency, and it lies permanently between two worlds: the one of predefinition and design shape models, and the one of bottom up entrepreneurial influences, towards a double landscape, double reality of the same space – the real one strategically defined, built, and the supra-real defined through uncontrolled tendencies of the forces which coexist in the system, and whose inertia is still considerable.

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