THE CAPITAL – CITY AND ITS ROLE IN THE INTERNAL ORGANISATION OF THE STATE.
A CASE STUDY: BUCHAREST

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Abstract. The capital determines a specific organisation of the state territory, as materialised in a certain pattern of communication routes and a specific layout of the other urban nuclei with macro-territorial functions. Bucharest has relatively recently acquired (in 1862) the status of capital. The city’s demographic, socio-economic and technical-constructional evolution has rapidly surged as against the second-in-rank town, coming to represent psychologically a national symbol. On a macro-territorial scale, it shaped a characteristic periurban structure, hindering the development of some strong regional metropoles in its vicinity engaged in redistributing demographic and economic fluxes, outlining instead a deeply rural area marked by dire poverty, and cultural backwardness. Bucharest’s peripheral position within the national territory calls for the decentralisation of its functions concomitantly with remote regional metropoles (Iaşi, Timişoara and Cluj-Napoca) becoming more important as spatial structuring nuclei.

Rezumat. Rolul capitalei în organizarea internă a statului. Studiu de caz: Bucureşti. Capitala determină o organizare specifică a teritoriului statului, reflectată prin o anumită configurație a căilor de comunicație și prin o dispunere specifică a celorlalte nuclee urbane cu funcții macroteritoriale. Deși relativ recent investit cu statutul de capitală (1862), Bucureștiul a cunoscut o evoluție demografică, economico-socială și tehnico-edilitară rapidă distanțându-se net în raport de orașul situat pe locul secund al ierarhiei urbane și căpătând o valoare psihologică de simbol național. La nivel microteritorial, a determinat o structurare caracteristică a spațiului periurban împiedicând dezvoltarea în apropierea sa a unor metropole regionale puternice cu rol de redistribuire a fluxurilor demografice și economice și conturând o arie profund rurală caracterizată prin externalități negative, reflectată prin un grad avansat de sărăcie, îndeosebi culturală. Poziția periferică a capitalei în raport de teritoriul național impune descentralizarea funcțiilor acesteia, concomitent cu amplificarea rolului de nuclee de structurare spațială pentru metropolele regionale situate la mare distanță de acestea (Iași, Timișoara și Cluj Napoca).

Key-words: capital-city, territorial-planning, regional metropoles, macro-territorial functions, Bucharest
Cuvinte-cheie: capitală, planificare spațială, metropole regionale, funcții macro-teritoriale, București

1. THE CAPITAL AND THE SPATIAL ORGANISATION AT MACROTERRITORIAL LEVEL

The larger a state’s territory, the more heterogeneous it is. Romania’s surface – area of 238,391 km² and a population of nearly 21.7 million inhabitants places it into the category of relatively large European countries, occupying position 11 by surface-area and
position 8 by demographic potential\(^1\). In the Central and Eastern parts of the Continent it is only Ukraine and Poland that hold better positions. Romania is one of the ethnically homogeneous European countries. The state was formed by the unification of some territories which, in the course of time, had been under foreign rule. The March 18, 2002 Census data show that 89.5% of the population are of Romanian nationality.

The capital of Romania, Bucharest, reflects these particularities. The city is situated in the south of the country, which has a compact Romanian population, hence the specific organisation of the territory reflected by the pattern of communication routes and the location of other regional metropolises. The gap existing within the urban system between the capital and the second town in the hierarchy has determined the expansion of Bucharest’s influence zone, there by preventing the development of some strong regional metropolises in its vicinity through which the economic and demographic fluxes are distributed. The influence zone surrounding Bucharest, particularly that in the south of the city, is deeply rural and marked by poverty and a low cultural level (little education, high infantile mortality and deficitary technical-urbanistic endowments). Although certain local polarisation centres situated near the city were granted a town status (Buftea in 1968; Budești, Mihăilești, Bolintin-Vale, Fundulea, Lehliu-Gară in 1989; Otopeni in 2000; Popești-Leordeni and Voluntari in 2004; Pantelimon, Măgurele and Bragadiru in 2005), yet Bucharest’s polarisation area goes far beyond the administrative boundaries of the Ilfov County\(^2\) also including the western limits of the Ialomița and the Călărași counties, the communes from the southern part of the Prahova and the Dâmbovița counties (north of the town of Titu), coming very close to the Danube in the south.

There is an obvious macroterritorial disparity at the top of the urban hierarchy between Bucharest and other four regional metropolises (Iași, Cluj-Napoca, Brașov, and Constanța) that occupied the second rank in the urban hierarchy after 1950. Although Bucharest became the capital of the two Romanian Principalities (Moldavia and Wallachia) only in the latter half of the 19\(^{th}\) century (1862), it used to discharge almost the same function as some old European capitals surrounded by strong centralised states, whose capitals represented a symbol and had indisputable priority before any other large urban centre (Table 1).

Choosing Bucharest the capital of Wallachia, instead of Iași the capital of Moldavia, to be the capital of the two United Principalities, was based on political considerations, firstly because it held a more central geographical position within the new state territory; secondly, because it offered a better control over the Danube line where from any potential conflict threatening the state unity was thought to occur and thirdly, because it had a better demographic potential given the almost equal population record of the two cities in the early half of the 19th century.

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\(^1\) With the exception of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey.

\(^2\) The polarisation area was assessed based on the migratory fluxes attracted to the Capital.
Table 1. The hypertrophy index and the particularities of some European capitals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Hypertrophy index</th>
<th>Proportion (%) of total population</th>
<th>Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>Old capital of France, the symbol of a centralised state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Capital of Italy (1871) designated by political decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>14.3*</td>
<td>Old capital of England, the symbol of the centralised state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Capital of Germany (1871, 1990), designated by political decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moscow</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Old capital of Russia, whose function had been discontinued and taken over by Sankt Petersburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vienna</td>
<td>6.61</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>Old imperial capital of Austro-Hungary, turned into federal capital (1918)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bern</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>Federal capital of Switzerland designated by consensus on the boundary between the Francophone cantons and the Germanophone cantons (1848)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrid</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>Capital dating to the Mediaeval times (1561) when Spain was a regional state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helsinki</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>Recently declared capital of Finland (1821, 1919)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>Decentralised capital of the Netherlands beside The Hague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>Capital of Greece (1834), the symbol of a centralised state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budapest</td>
<td>9.43</td>
<td>19.45</td>
<td>New capital (1872) of Hungary, the symbol of a centralised state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copenhagen</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>Capital of Danmark dating from the Mediaeval times, the symbol of a centralised state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warsaw</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Capital of Poland dating from the Mediaeval times (1576), the symbol of a centralised state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucharest</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>New Capital of Romania (1862), the symbol of a centralised state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Percent from England’s population
- ** The capital is the fourth town in terms of size

Bucharest had a significant advance over the 1831-1859 period due primarily to some urbanistic developments (which improved the living standard and reduced infantile mortality) rather than to natural or migratory increases. So, as shown by the hypertrophy index, the demographic gap between the two cities became wider, from 1.21 in 1831 to 1.85 in 1859. Besides, 35% of Wallachia’s population lived in Bucharest. That political decision had a major importance on the evolution of the city, its population growing by 8.5 times in less than a century (1859-1948), and the difference against Iaşi increasing from 1.85 to 11.07 (Table 2).

That was the time when Bucharest was clearly ahead of any other Romanian urban centre, a position it has constantly maintained to the present day. On the macroterritorial level, the old capitals of the Romanian historical provinces (Iaşi, Cluj-Napoca, Craiova and Timişoara) and later Braşov, Galaţi and Constanţa, which discharge industrial and industrial
and port functions (the last two cities) represent regional polarisation centres. However, they all hold the same demographic rank which is by some 6-7 lower than Bucharest’s.

Table 2 A comparative view of demographic evolutions between Bucharest the capital of Wallachia and Iaşi the capital of Moldavia (1831-1948)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference year</th>
<th>Bucharest</th>
<th>Iaşi</th>
<th>Hypertrophy index</th>
<th>Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>58,794</td>
<td>48,514</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>Natural increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>121,734</td>
<td>65,745</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>Urbanistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>developments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>282,078</td>
<td>77,598</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>CAPITAL – 1862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>341,321</td>
<td>75,875</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Migratory fluxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>639,040</td>
<td>102,872</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>Idem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>1014,807</td>
<td>94,075</td>
<td>11.07</td>
<td>Idem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The competition among these regional centres makes it impossible for any of them to become a strong regional metropolis and strike a balance between the Capital and the rest of the urban system. This situation will presumably be corrected by future evolutions. Let’s look at the east of Romania where two large county-capitals – Galaţi and Brăila, are situated at a very small distance between them. In view of prospective development trends, they are expected to form the first bipolar conurbation in Romania, with an estimated population of some 600,000 – 700,000 inhabitants within the subsidence area between the Danube, the mouths of the Siret and the Prut rivers. This will represent the second largest urban agglomeration in this country liable to creating an equilibrium between Bucharest and the other regional metropolises.

Another debated solution for rehabilitating the upper ranks of the urban system is to move the country’s capital to another city. The main arguments in favour of this solution are that Bucharest is an over-agglomerated place and besides has a peripheral location in the country’s territory. The argument upholding this solution is distance: Bucharest-Oradea 592 km; Oradea–Budapest 259 km; Cluj Napoca–Bucharest 440 km; Cluj Napoca–Budapest 410 km; Timişoara- Bucharest 562 km; Timişoara-Belgrade 180 km; Reşiţa–Bucharest 500 km; Reşiţa–Belgrade 268 km. The situation is similar in the case of Arad, Satu Mare, Baia Mare, Carei and other towns, which tend to gravitate rather towards the capitals of neighbouring states to which they stand closer in space.

Proposals to change the Capital had been made also in the past, the targeted towns being Târgovişte, the old capital of Wallachia, or the Transylvanian towns of Alba Iulia, Cluj-Napoca and Braşov. The choice of Alba Iulia and Cluj-Napoca was based on history and tradition, while centrality was an asset for Cluj and Braşov. Târgovişte lies only 78 km away from Bucharest, on a secondary thoroughfare which makes it a very poor alternative for Bucharest’s peripheral location. In terms of location, the other three towns seem more appealing, but their economic and demographic potential falls short of Bucharest’s. Moreover, the experience of highly centralised states like France, or of federal states like Germany, Austria and Belgium shows that they all have preferred to have the largest city as capital and make it a symbol of the whole country. An exception is Switzerland, one of the oldest states in Europe (1291), which chose its capital as late as the mid–19th century, and
opted for the bilingual canton of Bern, the symbol of the unity between the two main linguistic communities. This model, which is characteristic of the North-American continent (see Washington and Ottawa) has been exported worldwide, with the exception of Europe. Taking up this model now and implement it in Romania where Bucharest has been its capital for the last 140 years is not only a costly enterprise but also a very disturbing move for the functions of this city, for its ways of communication and the infrastructure, generally and no less so for its socio-economic components. Moving the capital, as some suggest, to one of the two poverty pockets (north-eastern Moldavia – especially Botoșani and Vaslui, and the Romanian Plain) might benefit the rural south and attenuate regional imbalances, but it might as well enhance these imbalances. We consider that in the present socio-economic conditions, moving the Capital elsewhere would be a very costly and unrealistic step.

On the other hand, decentralising some of Bucharest’s functions and transferring some subsidiaries of the national institutions to certain regional metropolises (Cluj-Napoca, Iași, Galați-Brăila) would be a good and necessary decision, bridging the gap between the capital and the second town in the urban hierarchy. Such a development is expected to have positive effects on the structuring of the macroterritorial space.

2. THE CAPITAL AND THE SPATIAL ORGANISATION AT MEDIUM TERRITORIAL LEVEL. BUCHAREST’S METROPOLITAN ZONE

The distinctive position held by the city of Bucharest within the national and the regional urban systems has created the largest urban polarisation area in Romania, overlapping the Ilfov County, most of the Giurgiu County, the western half of the Ialomița and the Călărași counties and the south of the Dâmbovița and the Prahova counties. However, with the exception of the Bucharest limitrophe ring, this is a highly rural zone, but since the price of land is lower than in the city, a number of urban functions have developed here, e.g. small industries, commercial and storage spaces and residential sites. Therefore, Bucharest’s metropolitan zone displays all the characteristics of a polarised rural space, the urban settlements existing there (Budești, Mihăilești, Fundulea, Bolintin-Vale, Buftea and Otopeni) being unable to act as space polarisation nuclei. Tracing the boundary of the capital’s metropolitan zone was a matter of debate between geographers and politicians. A first delimitation, which was based on a high polarisation area, resulted in the formation of 88 local administrative units (81 communes) within 5 counties: Ilfov (34), Călărași (25), Giurgiu (23), Dâmbovița (5) and Ialomița (1) (Tălăngă, 1998, p. 56).

This territory, which falls into Bucharest’s urban influence zone, is far wider than the city’s periurban area (Iordan, 1973, pp. 20-25).

Another possible delimitation of Bucharest–polarised administrative structure (Iordan, 2003, p. 85) suggests the formation of a Bucharest District scheduled to

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3 Granting some towns a capital status was meant to be a symbol of the reconciliation between two spaces with distinct characteristics: the site for the construction of the new US capital was chosen by Congress (July 16, 1760) in an area edging the north-east of the US dominated by small landowners with liberal views and the south featuring large slave plantations. The Canadian capital (1858) was placed at the contact between the French-speaking Quebec and the English-speaking part of the country, as a symbol of the unity between these two large linguistic communities.
encompass, beside the city proper, a number of 9 sub-urban areas, 8 towns (of which six are currently communes to be granted town status) and 30 communes (3 of which – Bălăceanca, Copăceni and Sinteşti – will have a new administrative structure). This organisation model is frequently found in states with a federal or regional structure in which the capital represents a symbol of the country’s political unification (Australian Capital Territory, Districto Federal in Brasil or Mexico, Brussels Region in Belgium, Comunidad Madrid in Spain, District of Columbia in the US).

The Ilfov Agricultural District, which falls into the administration of Bucharest’s limitrophe zone, was initially conceived to become the city’s proximal supplier with farming products and be subordinated to it. In 1997 the District turned into a county (Law No. 50) with the Municipality of Bucharest its seat. That decision was unconstitutional because the county-seat was situated outside the city’s administrative territory proper (Popescu, 1999, p. 163).

Moreover, its asymmetrical expansion (much more developed northwards) does not correspond to Bucharest’s agricultural supply area, nor to its periurban zone which is by far larger (Iordan, 1973, pp. 20-25). The Ilfov Agricultural District was created by amputating the former Ilfov County (from 8,225 km² in 1968 to 1,593 km² at present) and the formation of two new counties: Giurgiu and Câlăraşi. In the beginning the District had 26 communes (with 70 villages), which means a deficit of 7 communes compared to the smallest county (Covasna). Subsequently, it received another 9 communes from the Giurgiu County (Berceni, Ciorogârla, Clinceni, Cornetu, Dărăşti-Ilfov, 1 Decembrie, Domneşti, Dragomireşti-Vale and Vidra) and 3 communes from the Ialomiţa County (Grădiştea, Nuci and Petriţchioia) so that at present it numbers 1 town, 38 communes and 100 villages. When given county status (Law No. 50/1997) the Ilfov Agricultural District was to include 2 towns, 37 communes and 103 villages.

The draft-law of Romania’s Capital in the future attaches the Ilfov County to the Bucharest Metropolitan Zone formed after the model of Rome (Italy), from a metropolitan centre (the present city of Bucharest) and the pre-metropolitan zones (the communes and towns located in the Ilfov County) headed by a governor in the rank of a Prime-Ministe and by a general administrator of the metropolitan zone. Each locality is to maintain its present administrative structure, development programmes and projects which shall be implemented in a unitary manner throughout the metropolitan zone. This zone is to cover about 2,050 km², of which 1,800 km² in the rural area and 250 km² in the urban area. Bucharest’s great polarising capacity is highlighted by the structure of its population (nearly 2 million, as against 400,000 in the pre-metropolitan zones) and especially by the striking socio-economic and technical-urbanistic disparities between the two components of the proposed Metropolitan Zone.

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4 Câţelu, Chitila, Dobrogeaşti, Dada, Fundeni, Jilava, Roşu and Voluntari.
5 Buftea and Otopeni (currently towns); Brădărie, Brăneşti, Copăceni de Sus, (1 Decembrie), Mâgurele, Popeşti-Leordeni and Snagov (currently communes proposed to the granted town status).
6 Afumaţi, Balotesti, Bălăceanca, Berceni, Cernica, Chiajna, Ciolpani, Ciorogârla, Clinceni, Copăceni, Corbeanca, Cornetu, Crevedia, Dascălu, Dărăşti-Ilfov, Domneşti, Dragomireşti, Gânea, Gîlna, Grădiştea, Gruiu, Moara Vlăsiei, Mogoşoaia, Periş, Petriţchioia, Sinteşti, Ştefăneşti, Tunari and Vidra.
7 The Ilfov Agricultural District, together with the Călăraşi and the Giurgiu counties was formed by the administrative reorganisation of the Ialomiţa and the Ilfov counties, a reshuffling that affected also the administrative subordination of some communes from the Dâmboviţa and the Teleorman counties.
8 Law No. 2/1968, Article 8, Paragraph 2.
The optimisation model suggested by us as an alternative to the above proposal proceeds from the idea that a general conceptual review of the present administrative-territorial organisation is necessary, bearing in mind the relationships existing between the human settlements themselves in Bucharest’s influence area (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - A proposed structure for the Bucharest Metropolitan Zone

Structură propusă pentru Zona Metropolitană București1.
(Teritoriu administrativ al Municipiului București, 2. Teritorii administrative ale nucleelor de polarizare locală, 3. Teritorii administrative urbane, 4. Limite de localități, 5. Graniță de stat.)
The Capital City and its Role in the Internal Organisation of the State

Table 3 A proposed structure for the Bucharest Metropolitan Zone*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Localities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giurgiu A.</td>
<td>1 Bolintin-Vale, 2 Mihăileşti, 3 Adunaţii-Copăceni, 4 Bolintin-Deal, 5 Bucşani, 6 Bulbucata, 7 Buturugeni, 8 Călugăreni, 9 Colibişi, 10 Comana, 11 Crevedia Mare, 12 Floreşti-Stoenesti, 13 Gâsieni, 14 Gostinari, 15 Grădini, 16 Iepureşti, 17 Joia, 18 Mârşa, 19 Ogrezeni, 20 Roata de Jos, 21 Singureni, 22 Sulina, 23 Valea Dragului, 24 Vălăcuţa, 25 Vârâştii.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilfov</td>
<td>1 Bolintin-Vale, 2 Mihăileşti, 3 Adunaţii-Copăceni, 4 Bolintin-Deal, 5 Bucşani, 6 Bulbucata, 7 Buturugeni, 8 Călugăreni, 9 Colibişi, 10 Comana, 11 Crevedia Mare, 12 Floreşti-Stoenesti, 13 Gâsieni, 14 Gostinari, 15 Grădini, 16 Iepureşti, 17 Joia, 18 Mârşa, 19 Ogrezeni, 20 Roata de Jos, 21 Singureni, 22 Sulina, 23 Valea Dragului, 24 Vălăcuţa, 25 Vârâştii.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Călăraşi A.</td>
<td>64 Fundulea, 65 Belciugatele, 66 Frumuşani, 67 Fundeni, 68 Ileana, 69 Plătăreşti, 70 Sârşu, 71 Sohătia, 72 Târmăcăi Mare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dâmboviţa</td>
<td>73 Brezoaiele, 74 Butimanu, 75 Ciocâneşti, 76 Cătălina, 77 Lunguleţu, 78 Niculeşti, 79 Poiana, 80 Potlogi, 81 Răcari, 82 Slobozia-Moara, 83 Târgu Mureş.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ialomiţa</td>
<td>84 Fierbânti-Târg, 85 Drâgoeşti, 86 Movilea, 87 Siretul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teleorman</td>
<td>109 Bujor, 110 Pietroşani.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giurgiu</td>
<td>131 Greaca, 132 Hotarele.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ialomiţa</td>
<td>133 Urziceni, 134 Adâncata, 135 Alexeni, 136 Armăşeşti, 137 Axinte, 138 Bărcăneşti, 139 Brazi, 140 Ciocârlia, 141 Coşereni, 142 Dridu, 143 Ion Roată, 144 Jilava, 145 Mănăsia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The numbers in the Table correspond to the numbers in Figure 1.
The great majority of the rural settlements in the Ilfov County, together with some from the Giurgiu, Călărași, Dâmbovița, Ialomița and Teleorman counties, lie in the area of direct influence of the Capital. Its area of indirect influence includes the settlements located at greater distances, which gravitate towards Bucharest through the intermediacy of some local convergence centres (Giurgiu, Oltenița and Urziceni). Proceeding from these centres, three under-department administrative units (similar to the small rural districts of the interwar period), encompassing the settlements from the present counties of Ialomița, Giurgiu, Călărași and Teleorman, are outlined. In this way, a macro-county (Ilfov) will emerge containing four under-department units (of the interwar rural district-type), and 145 local administrative units (towns and communes). This macro-county is to include 455 human settlements that overlap Bucharest’s metropolitan zone and are even comprised into its polarisation zone (Table 3).

3. THE CAPITAL AND THE SPATIAL ORGANISATION AT MICROTERRITORIAL LEVEL.
OPTIMISATION PROPOSALS

The heterogeneous size and the features of the present sectors (which encompass both the central and the peripheral areas), the range of problems confronting them lead to the fragmentation of their general development framework. Besides, the present inter-sectoral boundaries divide just that which is homogeneous, namely the central space, while the decline of some peripheral industrial zones made a number of polarising nuclei of the new residential quartiers which disappear. Moreover, the scarcity of services at the periphery directs fluxes of people towards the central zone, thus creating severe transport problems, at rush hours in particular. Therefore, we would suggest to have the Capital divided according to a multiple nuclei model residual districts centres liable to attract these fluxes, moreover, the problems specific to each district are far more homogeneous and may create a much more coherent framework.

At present, Bucharest’s 32 residential districts are not clearly delimited. They are far too numerous to form lower-rank local territorial communities by themselves, but they can associate (about 3–4) and form homogeneous sectors in terms of the categories of urban tissue they include, namely, residential quartiers with apartment-blocks, villas, one-storey dwelling-houses, districts with special social problems, others dominated by industrial or services zones.

Devising an optimisation model of Bucharest’s administrative-territorial organisation could start from the present electoral circumscriptions, from the numerous

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9 With the exception of Ciołpani and Nuci communes situated in the northern extremity of the county and thus coming much nearer to the city of Ploiești.
10 This model was substantiated by Ch. Harris and E. D. Ullman (1945) given that the terrain of large cities is organised around several nuclei (Ianoș, 1987, p. 117).
11 This model of administrative organisation of the built-up area has been successfully implemented in other European capitals (Paris, Brussels, Warsaw, etc.).
areas of discontinuity left in the built-up perimetre by the massive demolishing campaigns of the 1970s-1980s, and set up 12 sectors: four internal (central) and eight external (peripheral) (Figure 2):

✓ **Sector I** – between Splaiul Unirii and Splaiul Dănescu in the south, the Unirii, Decebal and Muncii Blvds in the north up to the vast discontinuity zone represented by Titan Park and the empty terrains between it and the Dâmboviţa River in the east;

✓ **Sector II** – the largest in terms of area and number of inhabitants could be located in the central-north of the city, between Unirea, Decebal and Muncii Blvds., the National Stadium, the railway line starting from Obor Station (in the east) and Regie-Orhideelor streets, North Station zone (Calea Griviţei – Buzeşti streets), Kiseleff Avenue and Herăstrău Park in the west. The northern and southern bounds could be the Colentina and the Dâmboviţa rivers, respectively;

✓ **Sector III** – Griviţa–1 Mai perimetre, situated between the western boundary of Sector II and the North Station – Urziceni town railway line;

✓ **Sector IV** – the last to encompass Bucharest’s central districts, would be situated in Cotroceni – the Parliament Palace, between Libertăţii Blvd., Calea 13 Septembrie road, Șoseaua Panduri highway and Ion Mihalache Blvd. up to the discontinuity zone of the Polytechnic University, with the Dâmboviţa River representing the northern limit.

The external sectors (V-XII), listed counterclockwise, are limited by the built-up line of the city of Bucharest:

✓ **Sector V** – could extend in the eastern extremity of the city, between the Dâmboviţa River (the eastern limit of Sector I) and the Colentina River;

✓ **Sectors VI and VII** – both north of the Colentina River, separated by the present boundary between Sectors I and II;

✓ **Sector VIII** – including the residential districts of Pajura, Dămăroaia and Bucureşti Noi and bounded by railway line to the towns of Ploieşti and Urziceni;

✓ **Sector IX** – between Regie-Orhidee streets and the Dâmboviţa River (Ciurel Lake);

✓ **Sector X** – south of the Ciurel Lake might encompass the greatest part of Militari, Drumul Taberei and Ghencea districts. This sector would extend west of the Polytechnic University, and Lujerul and Braşov streets;

✓ **Sector XI** – with Rahova and Ferentari districts situated between the eastern boundary of Sector X - the southern boundary of Sector IV and Piaţa George Coşbuc square, the discontinuity zone being represented by Carol I and Tineretului parks and Șoseaua Giurgiului in the east;

✓ **Sector XII** – including most of Berceni district east of Sector XI.

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13 Let’s look at the Dâmboviţa River axis. Whereas in other European capitals (Paris, London, Prague, Vienna, and Bratislava) waterways represent social polarisation nuclei, the Bucharest river is an axis of urban segregation.
These delimitations would make it easier to elaborate clear-cut unitary urban development policies required by the problems, specificity and functioning capacity of each zone in the built-up space.

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