

"Belgrade intellectual circles have played one of the most important roles in the Serbian tragedy of the last decade. I see them as a truly rotten, salon type of a political world that is in itself quasi-democratic, full of half-intellectuals that are suspicious professionally and morally. One has to question their political character that is deceptive and greedy. They have built their own crystal balloon in Belgrade, and from there, they look down on the rest of Serbia, which they see as backward, rural, pre-modern, nationalistic, and anti-civil society."



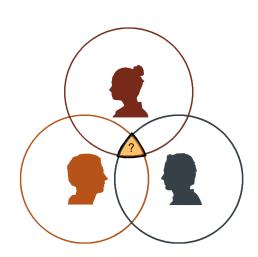
"Belgrade changed a lot as a city the last fifteen years. It welcomed more than 200,000 newcomers, refugees from all parts of Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo. I do sometimes ask myself, where did my old Belgrade disappear? You know, the Belgrade of my youth, when it was really cultural. Now, the newcomers, rurals, changed the city. The way they dress, the way they talk, they are just different. You can spot them easily. ... Yes, they are Serbs, lost souls of the Serbian tragedy, but why did they have to come here, to Belgrade, and destroy it."



"Actually, I really feel more like a Belgrade citizen than a Serb. I kind of have an urban character. ... I cannot associate with the peasants from Cacak area, just because they are Serbs as well. They are the ones who voted for Milosevic, they are the ones who brought misery down on us."



PROBLEM STATEMENT Belgrade's Divided Community



Research Question: How could a core, common cultural trait connect the divided people of Belgrade?

Extrapolating from the knowledge gained on Belgrade so far, it is apparent that the city is defined by divisions – be they geographical (the two separate zones on the sides of the Sava River), historical (the rule of the city by different populations and empires), or socio-political (the more current tensions amongst the people living in Serbia after the breakup of Yugoslavia). Zala Volcic describes one such division in "Belgrade vs. Serbia: Spatial Re-Configurations of Belonging", where she explored Belgrade's residents' views on the social implications of the post-war in-migration to the city. Some answers are depicted on the previous page, demonstrating a very strong degree of tension and segregation amidst citizens.

My group's research was founded upon this interest in the city's divisions and the possibility of a 'gluing' element that could link some of these very separated pieces. By selecting four different ('divided') streets from four distinct areas of Belgrade - with differing configurations, morphologies, and population densities - we investigated the existence of a 'common ground', an aspect that they all have in common. We were intrigued to discover a very informal relationship between dwellers and their streets. People seem to feel comfortable in these public spaces, treating them as an extension of their homes through behavior and physical interventions. This cultural trait seems to be engrained in all citizens, despite their various differences. Our group's research opened doors for further scope, inviting me to look deeper into what other cultural aspects transcend the social, political, and geographical boundaries existing in Belgrade.

Hypothesis: Food practices are vital Serbian/Balkan values in both rural and urban areas, as well as an elemental human necessity - a food-focused space could provide an effective platform for interaction and tolerance in the community of Belgrade.

In order to address such strong levels of division, I believe one must appeal to the people's more basic senses and needs, an underlying common trait present in each person, whether they live in Belgrade or its surrounding rural areas, or whether they were born in Serbia or migrated there during the wars.

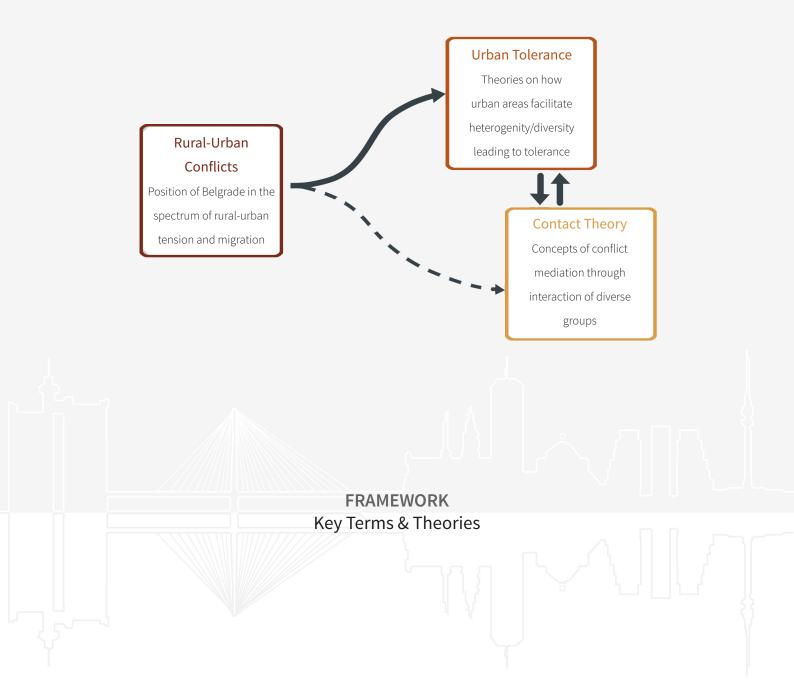
While reading 'A Guide to Serbian Mentality' by Momo Kapor, I was intrigued to learn about the importance of food rituals that still occur in the capital of the country. The author emphasises the importance of plum and grape picking (and their subsequent products of rakia and wine), the grilling of peppers in autumn, and the pickling and storing of food for the winter. Being Romanian, I was very intrigued by these stories, as I can entirely understand the significance of the experiences described by Kapor – the smoky smell (with the scent of grilled eggplants and peppers) of the city in September, the always present palinka (the Romanian version of plum rakia), and the pantry shelves always full of pickled vegetables, jams, and spreads. Despite living in what is assumed to be a 'cosmopolite city', people are still connected to their now-distanced rural origins through this social value of food. While recounting the nostalgia brought by the smell of corn on the cob in the streets of Belgrade, Kapor describes how "the city re-discovers its lost origins, its roots, in the ancient, honest, and dependable taste of corn on the cob"⁴.

¹ Volcic, Z. (2005), pp. 647-648

² Volcic, Z. (2005), p. 649

³ Volcic, Z. (2005), p. 650

⁴ Kapor, M. (2008), p. 120



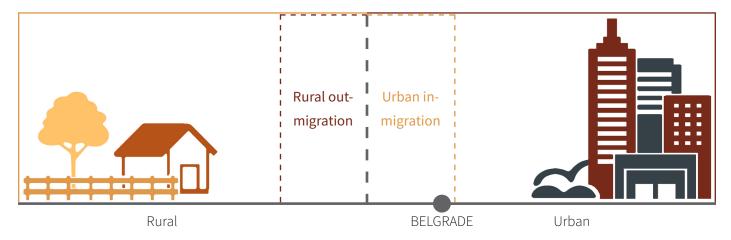
Before delving into architectural research, specific background knowledge and several key concepts must be outlined, to provide a framework and a theoretical context in which the study will be conducted. First of all, it is vital to understand the actors in the existing **rural-urban conflicts** that are at work in Belgrade and Serbia, and why these issues have formed. As such, the current position of the city can be situated in this discourse, and provide a clear foundation for the research's future references to the rural-urban tensions of Belgrade.

These theories then lead towards the subject of urban life, **urban tolerance** and how dwellers who are exposed to significant degrees of diversity are more inclined to interact and create a heterogenous community. Knowledge on such spaces of tolerance can be applied to the study of Belgrade buildings that could act as design precedents. Ultimately, the concepts of urban tolerance would effectively tie together with the **contact hypothesis**, which delivers a basis to support the role of my architectural intervention, as the project assumes that by enabling a platform of shared values, the participants that encounter each other will be encouraged to communitate and forn bonds.

Rural-Urban Conflicts

- Understanding the existing tensions between the rural and urban dwellers of Serbia -

Key Words: rural nationalism; urban cosmopolitanism; in-migration; ethnic differences/similarities



It is difficult to understand the characteristics of Serbia without acknowledging its recent past as part of the Republic of Yugoslavia. The dissolution of the former country was a consequential moment that still impacts the population of Serbia today. As I have always been fascinated by cultural diversity, from the numerous and highly complex factors (i.e. political, economic) that led to Yugoslav wars, the element of ethnic tensions was very notable to me. In his article 'Rural-urban differences and the break-up of Yugoslavia', John B. Allcock delves into these cultural conflicts, pointing out the different treatment of populations particularly in rural areas compared to urban. He argues that the issues experienced in the Balkans transcended the general rural-urban conflicts of other parts of the world, as the state seemed to purposely exclude the countryside in social, economic, and political aspects⁵. Furthermore, the greatest discrepancy is provided by high diversity of populations in cities (Hapsburg, Hungarian, Ottoman, Jewish, etc.), compared to the very homogenous cultures of villages. This caused extremes of perceptions, from urban citizens considering villagers to be "ignorant and backward", to rural dwellers viewing cities as "foreign and oppressive"⁶.

These tensions are explored more tangibly in Zala Volcic's 'Belgrade vs. Serbia: Spatial Re-Configurations of Belonging', where she describes these rural-urban conflicts in the specific context of Belgrade. Starting from the presumption that migrants to the city consider the urban space as cosmopolite and intellectual, while existing residents see the newcomers as nationalist and backwards, Volcic interviews various participants to study whether these views have started to change⁷. Her findings showcase a potential shift in people's perspectives, as several interviewees mention sensing a belonging to a new city identity, one that is more democratic and open to becoming a wider, more heterogenous community⁸.

Tying into the next theory of urban tolerance, the concepts of rural-urban conflicts are taken to a more abstract level in Smith and Petersen's 'Rural-urban Differences in Tolerance', where they reconsider Stouffer's "Culture Shock Hypothesis". They critique his assumption (that city dwellers are more likely to interact in a heterogenous space, unlike rural migrants who experience cultural shock when faced with diversity)⁹ by illustrating how different factors (i.e. socio-cultural diversity of childhood and adulthood locations) could have more significant impacts on one's ability fof tolerance¹⁰.

⁵ Allcock, J. B. (2002), p. 101

⁶ Allcock, J. B. (2002), p. 102

⁷ Volcic, Z. (2005), p. 640

⁸ Volcic, Z. (2005), p. 654

⁹ Smith, L. W., Petersen, K. K. (1980), p. 257

¹⁰ Smith, L. W., Petersen, K. K. (1980), p. 265

Urban Tolerance

- What are spaces of tolerance and how do they work in urban context? -

Key Words: urbanism; heterogenous spaces; tolerance/acceptance; areas for interaction

Before tackling the notion of 'urban tolerance' it is important to define what 'urbanism' actually means, particularly in the socio-cultural context of this research plan. Louis Wirth provides valuable insights in his work '*Urbanism as a way of life*', where he explores the sociology of cities, as areas of density, diversification, heterogenity, lack of personal contact, and frictions. He expains how heterogenous spaces define the urban lifestyle, as they encourage individual differences through a "juxtaposition of divergent personalities" that leads to tolerance and brings people together¹¹. Wirth describes the city as a mosaic of diverse cultures that are linked by indifference and strong contrasts, factors that stimulate people to interact¹². He notes a positive correlation between the number of interactions and the degree of elemental communication regarding basic, shared values of those involved¹³. I found this observation significant, as it provides theoretical evidence to my hypothesis of using core human values as a means to connect different groups.

Both Wirth and Stouffer have mainly been exploring the case of urbanism and tolerance in American cities, which is then generalised as a norm. However, variations can occur when observing a more varied sample group, as reflected in Huggins and Debies-Carl's study '*Tolerance in the city: the multi-level effects of urban environments on permissive attitudes*'. By looking a two scales, a macro societal level and a micro local level, the research investigates which urbanisation factors influence the degree of tolerance (of difference or of threat) in individuals, and whether this effect is positive or negative¹⁴. Their findings show that urban size, employment, cosmopolitanism, and education positively impact people's tolerance, while population size reduces tolerance of difference amongst dwellers.¹⁵

Moving on to a more practical approach to urban tolerance, Bannister and Kearns provide insights into how this process can be increased and improved, by looking at causes and solutions in their article 'The function and foundation of urban tolerance: encountering and engaging with difference in the city'. They initially describe how social traits of culture, religion, and migration create trends that oppose difference, thus leading to segregation and intolerance. Nevertheless, removing spatial barriers between individuals is not sufficient to enable interaction. The reason for these issues is identified as the anxiety of experiencing something that is different from one's self, and perceiving it as threat¹⁶. Subsequently, the research introduces strategies for addressing intolerance, emphasising the importance of verbal rather than non-verbal interaction, as "visual clues and interpretation reinforce intolerance because the visual signals of difference can be a very powerful force"¹⁷. The study concludes on the value of social engagement and the significance of purposeful collective actions (not just coexistence) that reduce prejudice and create respect amongst individuals¹⁸. This observation is in alignment with my research goal of defining a space that can promote empathy and cooperation between the different ethnicities of Belgrade.

¹¹ Wirth, L. (1938), p. 15

¹² Wirth, L. (1938), p. 20

¹³ Wirth, L. (1938), pp. 23-24

¹⁴ Huggins, C. M., Debies-Carl, J. S. (2015), p. 259

¹⁵ Huggins, C. M., Debies-Carl, J. S. (2015), p. 263

¹⁶ Bannster, J., Kearns, A. (2013), pp. 2701-2704

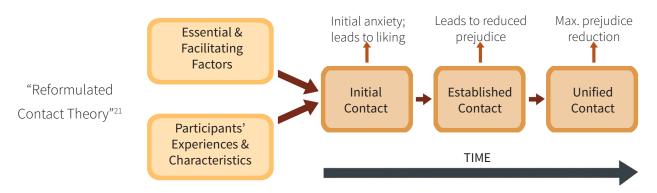
¹⁷ Bannster, J., Kearns, A. (2013), p. 2708

¹⁸ Bannster, J., Kearns, A. (2013), p. 2712

Contact Hypothesis

- Encouraging group interaction in order to increase tolerance in the city of Belgrade -

Key Words: intergroup contact; interaction/collaboration; diversity; ethnicity; conflict mediation



Urban tolerance is symbiotically interlinked to the contact hypothesis, a theory considered to be a process through which tolerance is achieved in a group of people. Studies on this contact theory date back to the early 20th century when Gordon Allport first coined the term in 'The Nature of Prejudice', hypothesising that equal norms, common goals, cooperation, and support from authority can all contribute to improved inter-group tolerance¹⁹. Since then, numerous studies have supported this assumption. One such paper is Pettigrew's 'Intergroup contact theory', in which he also provides insights into the procedure of attaining intergroup contact - aspect that is missing from the initial hypothesis. He notes that for successful contact amongst groups, four criteria must be undertaken: ingroup learning more about the outgroup, changing attitudes through repetitive encounters, the formation of empathetic bonds between group members, and ingroup reappraisal²⁰. Pettigrew's conclusion emphasises the importance of facilitating factors to enable intergroup contact and the groups' diverse characteristics²², as depicted by the diagram above. This observation is very useful to my study, as these two components will be taken into account when planning a potential intervention.

Wessel places the concept of intergroup contact into the context of the city, by investigating how diversity in urban spaces can increase the extents of tolerance amongst groups. He argues that research on contact theory has transcended sociology, reaching the level of urbanism, where the city can be considered a platform and incentive for interaction and cooperation²³. To support his claims, Wessel exemplifies urban areas with the potential to effectively promote tolerance: sport venues, theaters, and game clubs. He particularly highlights the gluing effect of urban gardens, that "stimulate inter-ethnic contact on a voluntary and collaborative basis"²⁴, aspect which I found very valuable to my research.

The relatively abstract knowledge on contact theory depicted in previous literature is grounded into the circumstances of Serbia in Massey, Hodson, and Sekulic's *'Ethnic Enclaves and Intolerance: The Case of Yugoslavia'*. The article describes how to the former country's enclaves were essentially based on intolerance, due to people's susceptibility to political manipulation²⁵. Findings proved how more urbanised and diverse areas, as well as participation in civic organisations were vital factors that positively influenced levels of tolerance amongst enclave members²⁶. These results point towards Belgrade being an ideal potential context for not just introducing, but augmenting solutions of social interaction.

¹⁹ Pettigrew, T. F. (1998), pp. 66-67

²⁰ Pettigrew, T. F. (1998), pp. 70-72

²¹ Pettigrew, T. F. (1998), p. 77

²² Pettigrew, T. F. (1998), p. 80

²³ Wessel, T. (2009), p. 5

²⁴ Wessel, T. (2009), p. 8

²⁵ Massey, G., Hodson, R., Sekulic, D. (1999), p. 670

²⁶ Massey, G., Hodson, R., Sekulic, D. (1999), p. 684

EPISTEMOLOGY & METHODS Answering the Research Question

Anthropology: the scientific study of humanity, which includes studies on human behavior, cultures, and societies, in both the present and past.

As the previously developed theories and concepts are leading towards a culture-oriented architectural solution (focused on traditions, shared values and customs related to food processing and cultivation), it appears that an anthropological methodology would be appropriate to conduct the upcoming research. By concentrating the study scope on the social, cultural, and agricultural elements in the context of Belgrade, this episteme can reveal how to apply and combine these components into an effective architectural intervention.

The research methods would initially comprise an in-depth literature study, to gain insights into the food-related socio-cultural traits of Belgrade, as well as more factual knowledge on the extent of agriculture in the city. Subsequently, the research requires a clear overview of the existing food/culinary situation in Belgrade (markets, commercial zones, production and manufacturing spaces). After mapping these food hubs, they can be individually investigated to observe the various practices, behaviors, and interactions that occur on their premises. Based on this information, a comparative analysis will select several optimal food products and preparation techniques to be used as a basis for the future design.

Literature Study

- Readings about Serbian food culture, its significance, and agriculture in Belgrade -



"A visitor from abroad will discover the true soul of Belgrade only when, in the middle of winter, he is served ten sour salads of pickles, cauliflower, green tomatoes and sour cabbage."

The recurring food theme in 'A Guide to Serbian Mentality' solidified my belief for this solution being effective in mediating the social division of Belgrade's community. Perhaps the book's most convincing argument is Kapor's description of how "there are fewer and fewer houses with pantries" and "modern architects of residential buildings forget about this sacred place". The idea of a public pantry could provide an extension of this greatly valued room in Serbian homes - a new 'sacred' space that would also be shared by many others for whom it bears a similar meaning.

Developed under an anthropological and ethnographic methodology, the 'Food, Family, and Memory: Belgrade Mothers and Their Migrant Children' article provides a scientific approach to the same topics discussed more poetically by Kapor. This research provides empirical supporting knowledge, depicting how food "is instrumental in the process of cultural transmission and in this case in the social re-ordering of the post-communist migrant-sending societies" 10. The interviews conducted for this paper revealed how women in Belgrade are sending fresh or cooked foods to their children living abroad as a way of connecting them back to their Serbian roots and memories of childhood and family11.

A more statistical research was undertaken in the 'Motives for Food Choice among Serbian Consumers' article, where a questionnaire is used to illustrate the factors influencing Serbian people's choice of foods. This survey's results will be highly useful in combination with the participant observation of Belgrade food hubs, where the preferred foods of citizens will be investigated. The paper's conclusions show that sensory appeal, health implications, and natural content are the most significant elements that impact people's diet¹². This information will be vital in the decision of which food products the design project will focus on.

Leading towards the topic of the built environment, two articles from the 'Urban Forestry and Urban Greening' Journal report on the significance of urban gardens in Belgrade. 'Urban garden as lived space: Informal gardening practices and dwelling culture in socialist and post-socialist Belgrade' explores the ad-hoc gardens developed by citizens in order to improve their living conditions, and how these could benefit from a more structured organisation by a public or private body. The authors note that "the gardens were not only a place for producing food in financially difficult times, but above all a place associated with socialisation and a 'sense of home'"¹³. Additionally, 'Is there a demand for collective urban gardens?' describes again the lack of institutional means to facilitate collective gardens, despite an existing need from citizens for such spaces. The article includes data from 300 respondents living in Belgrade on how they would benefit from the fresh food, exercise, and relaxation provided by the introduction of urban gardens into their city¹⁴.

⁸ Kapor, M. (2008), p. 66

⁹ Kapor, M. (2008), p. 66

¹⁰ Bajic-Hajdukovic, I. (2013), p. 47

¹¹ Bajic-Hajdukovic, I. (2013), p. 50, 60

¹² Gagic, S. (2014), p. 48

¹³ Vladan, D. (2018), p. 247

¹⁴ Cepic, S. (2020), p. 1

Literature Study

- Readings about Serbian food culture, its significance, and agriculture in Belgrade -



Personal experience, relating to the situation of Belgrade mothers sending food packages to their children living abroad

Investigation of Food Hubs

Participating and observing agricultural gardens, markets, and productions units

Visiting Belgrade provides opportunities for active participation in the city's food hubs, and learning first-hand about the practices, preferences, and behaviors of people in markets, food manufacturing units, and urban gardens. Specifically, it is important to observe how these spaces enable tolerance and interaction to occur between people of various backgrounds, and to what extent this is achieved. Another study topic could explore which food types are most preferred amongst Belgrade citizens, and what processes or rituals are performed in the production of such foods. As markets are known to be highly frequented spaces, investigating the numerous actions undertaken on their premises could provide an effective starting point for research. If circumstances allow, conducting some interviews with members of the public could also bring further knowledge on the significance of food hubs in the scope of urban tolerance.

By mapping the existing food hubs in Belgrade, the most representative spaces can be identified and selected for participation during the visit. The map also illustrates a concentration of markets and food production units around the older center of the city, indicating areas where there is a possible need for a new food-related space.



Investigation of Food Hubs

Participating and observing agricultural gardens, markets, and productions units



Palilulska Pijaca - a new market hall that replaced an existing outdoor food market

Comparative Analysis

- Selection of primary agricultural resources and products from national ranking -

	Maize/Corn Yield: 900 000 ha Products: cornflour, animal fodder, sweetcorn, corn	Rapeseed Yield: 46 000 ha Products: oil, birdseed, lubricants, plastics
	Wheat Yield: 640 000 ha Products: white flour, whole- meal flour, dough-based food	Beetroot Yield: 45 000 ha Products: juice, pickled/boiled beetroot, food coloring
	Sunflower Yield: 240 000 ha Products: oil, essential oil, edible seeds, birdseed, flower	Potatoes Yield: 27 000 ha Products: boiled potatoes, fries, chips, processed
	Soybean Yield: 197 000 ha Products: oil, sauce, soybean, meat, milk, tofu, sprouts	Apples Yield: 27 000 ha Products: rakia, kompot, jam, dried apples
	Barley Yield: 102 000 ha Products: drink, milk, yeast/ beer	Oat Yield: 27 000 ha Products: porridge, granola, milk
	Plums Yield: 73 000 ha Products: rakia, jam, dried plums, puree	Raspberry Yield: 25 000 ha Products: jam, juice, syrup, wine
1	Mixed Vegetables	Grapes



Yield: 50 000 ha Products: peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, etc.



Yield: 25 000 ha Products: wine, juice, jam, raisins

Comparative Analysis

- Selection of primary agricultural resources and products from national ranking -



Representative agricultural products in Belgrade markets

The Making of 'Zimnica'

- Investigation of subsquent traditional foods and their production process -

Roasted Peppers & Ajvar

Ajvar is a very popular balkan dish, made from roasted kapia peppers, sometimes in combination with eggplants. Roasting the vegetables on a wood-fired stove is vital to obtain a smoky taste in the final paste. The burnt peel is removed before mincing the peppers into a thick spread mixed with oil.



Tursija (Pickled Vegetables)

The process of making pickled food requires significantly less manual labor compared to other 'zimnica' products. Nevertheless, more time is required for their completion, as vegetables must be stored for weeks in jars where peppers and cucumbers are pickled in vinegar, or in barrels where the cabbage can ferment.



Slatko, Jams, & Kompot

Fruit desserts are a vital component of 'winter foods', as fresh fruits were not readily available for people in the past. As such, storage rituals gave rise to slatko, jams, and kompot, where fruits are boiled with sugar and water, creating various desserts from thicker pastes of fruit pulp, to runnier syrups with fruit pieces.



Paradajz (Tomato) Sauce

Tomato sauce is used in numerous dishes and cuisines, and is easily found in stores. However, people in Serbia and the Balkans often prefer using homemade sauces, where they are more certain of fruit quality and lack of additives. Tomato juice extractors are mainly used to squeeze tomatoes and create the sauce.



The Making of 'Zimnica'

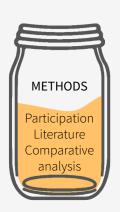
- Investigation of subsquent traditional foods and their production process -



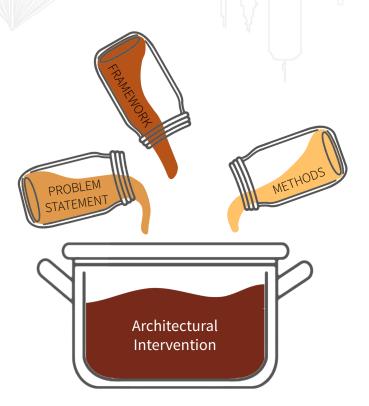
Market stall showcasing various 'zimnica' products, including ajvar, jams, syrups, pickles, and paradajz







CONCLUSION Reflection & Design Implications



Ostava ('Остава')

A Public Urban 'Pantry'

Based upon the theoretical research conducted on rural-urban conflicts, contact theory, and tolerance, it appears that the introduction of a venue for cooperation and interaction could be an effective addition in the ethnic mosaic of Belgrade. It would be highly beneficial to provide a space where people can achieve visual, verbal, and sensory contact, while learning and working together on a specific task that is elemental and valued by each individual. As Belgrade is a densely populated and diverse city, with a gradually changing identity towards democracy and acceptance, it offers an ideal location for an architectural intervention that would not only complement these on-going processes, but act as an augmentation to them. However, it is important to note that emphasising the common elements between individuals could potentially overshadow the fact that learning to respect diversity is a vital aspect of urban tolerance, reflecting Bannister and Kearns' observation to not "confuse finding a common ground with the neutralisation of difference" 30.

Through literature readings, exploration of Belgrade's food-related spaces, investigation of Serbian agricultural practices, and personal experience, I find the theme of food customs to be the most relevant for a potential architectural project that aims to connect the city's divided community. Both urban and rural dwellers would have a significant and shared interest in the contents of a public 'pantry', where they can eat, purchase, or be involved in the traditional practices and preparation of specific food products. This inclusive space would represent an effective platform for citizens to interact and bond over an core aspect of not only their culture, but their human nature. Furthermore, an artisanal manufacturing unit utilising local agriculture for a specific 'zimnica' product could represent a valuable economic asset that would provide employment and locally-produced goods.

In conclusion, the problem statement, theoretical framework, and research methods implemented appear to support the use of culinary traditions as a means of connecting various ethnicities and dwellers in the context of Belgrade. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that food-related values may work in the circumstances of slavic Balkan countries, however it should not be assumed that this process could be replicated everywhere else where ethnic conflicts seems to occur. It is always vital to fully grasp the nuances of a place's socio-cultural context before introducing public platforms for tolerance and interaction.

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