

# REVIEWS

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A BOOK REVIEW OF *NEW URBAN SPACES*

BRENNER, Neil. *New Urban Spaces: Urban Theory and the Scale Question*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019, 461 p. ISBN 978-0190627195.

The current urban landscapes of Slovakia and the Czech Republic were largely shaped in by the territorial planning policies of the former Czechoslovakian regimes of the twentieth century. A copious amount of literature on post-socialist urban studies produced in the last three decades has ranged from focusing on smaller-scale urban issues regarding the aesthetic functionality of specific urban forms to discussing the urban transformations in large cities such as suburbanization. Nevertheless, urbanization is multi-faceted, impacted by globalization, digitalization, expansion and marketization of the economy. The cities of Prague, Bratislava, Košice, Budapest, Krakow and Warsaw underwent massive urban restructuring during state socialism and this further intensified after 1991 under government-backed neo-liberalization projects. In addition, this particular region of Europe was a part of COMECON from 1949 to 1991, and these states then became members of the European Union early in the first decade of the twenty-first century. This significantly facilitated changes in spatial planning frameworks, leading not only to economic prosperity but also to urban changes.

Neil Brenner's *New Urban Spaces: Urban Theory and the Scale Question* offers an interdisciplinary insight in analysing the history of urban transformation of this region from the mid-twentieth century onwards, and how it informs the current issues affecting the cities today. Brenner (2019) essentially argued that it is not enough to define urbanization by the growth of cities, but that it is also necessary to discern its complexity through economic, political and institutional dynamics and to relate to it to a broader hierarchy of scales. Therefore, rather than seeing the changes in cities on an urban scale, the consideration of how they are embedded within the dynamic regional, national, supra-national and hence global systems of interconnectivity would illuminate a deeper understanding of how cities have developed

and are constantly evolving. While the of the book focuses mainly on cases in North America and Western Europe, these approaches can also be applied in Central and Eastern Europe or other parts of the world, within an understanding of how industrialization and the development of national economies affect the urbanization process.

The first part of the book deals with whether the urban question is a scale question. Brenner draws extensively from the theories of Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey and Karl Marx to substantiate his arguments. In the second chapter, "Between Fixity and Motion: Scaling the Urban Fabric", the author highlights Harvey's concepts of spatial fix, and the tensions between fixity and motion when discussing the circulation of capital. Capital accumulation is spatialized when certain geographical locations and urban spaces or forms are viewed as commodities, yet its value is not stable over time due to capitalism's fluctuating nature, rendering some spaces derelict and some profitable depending on the market (pp. 57–59). Brenner pays homage to Lefebvre's *State Mode of Production* on the topic of the spatial logistics produced and managed by the state (pp. 74–77), particularly during the Fordist-Keynesian period (1950–1970). Lefebvre's claim, states Brenner, is that architecture and the urbanization of cities during this period were directly or indirectly affected by the centralized and standardized projects funded by the government (p. 81). The strategies employed by the state in establishing territorial infrastructure and networks between cities on a larger national scale formed the basis upon which to activate urban conditions for the supra-national and global-scale economy in the post-Keynesian era.

This leads us to the second part of the book, which addresses how globalization affects the formation of cities, starting from Chapter 4, "Global City Formation and the Rescaling of Urbanization". As the economies of cities become global, their traditional administrative structures are dismantled as local and regional governments gradually lose control to powerful corporate actors following gradual privatization, as happened after the global economic crises in the 1970s. In this chapter, Brenner introduces the concepts of perceiving cities as nodes of

capital accumulation and as coordinates for state territorial power. The former regards cities as “loci of industrial production, as centres of command and control over dispersed circuits of capital, and as sites of exchange within local, regional, national and global markets”. In the latter concept, as coordinates of state administration, “cities are regulatory-institutional levels within each state’s organizational hierarchy” (pp. 138–139). Brenner gives the example of state restructuring in West Germany in the 1980s, as policies to boost the economy gave way to decentralization. The built environment in cities such as Frankfurt am Main was reshaped as financial institutions grew more powerful. These new approaches spread across the EU, as its cities and regions became “engines” of economic development, eventually integrating them within fortified global networks (pp. 153–158). At the same time that Thatcherite policies took hold in Great Britain, these approaches only served the neoliberalization agenda in the rollback of government intervention in issues such as social housing. Brenner stresses the importance of the EU in “mediating territorial polarization through redistributive regional structural policies” through its spatial planning policies, which its member states were subject to. This meant encouraging economic competition between regions by getting the local municipalities and governments to induce capital investment in major metropolitan cities, and improving transnational infrastructural networks (p. 159). In the first decade of the twenty-first century, as the EU enlarged to include the Visegrád countries, the structural funds programme was reconfigured and economic growth was prioritized unanimously across the trade bloc. Thus, the goals of the EU Spatial Planning policies were not to support a “balanced” national development, but to “favour” certain cities and regions within strategic locations, inadvertently leading to polarization and uneven socio-spatial developments (pp. 159–160).

In the final three chapters of the book, Brenner explores, paradoxically, the limits of the expanding scale in the urban question. In the twenty-first century, cities are linked to one another and major corporations have more influence on urban development,

undermining state institutions and local governments. In quoting Jonas and Ward (2001), Brenner makes a valid point in emphasizing that today’s urban development theories should not be asking the question of who is ruling our cities today, but “At what spatial scale is territorial governance crystallizing?” (p. 229). Clearly, the volatile nature of the market economy and the monopolization of urbanization by private developers have ironically, despite neoliberal beliefs, “provided neoliberal political alliances with new institutional capacities through which to (...) insulate the urbanization process from democratic control, and to normalize the intensified patterns of uneven spatial development” (pp. 231–232).

In retrospect, the urban planning problems facing post-socialist cities today are similar to those of cities in North America and Western Europe. As the world becomes more connected than ever before, challenges arising from segregated communities, lack of social housing and gentrification are commonly found in Prague and Bratislava, as entrepreneurial urban policies take precedence over community- and participatory-based planning all over the globe. This book may not reveal a solution to the current problems because of “planetary urbanization”, and the theories Brenner has put in motion may not fully capture the complexities facing cities today. However, the remarkable breadth and depth of intellectual analysis in the decades’ worth of research shown in this publication does provide impetus to rethink the way we view our cities and how interconnected the global economy has become. In the production and expansion of cities, the abstraction of buildings and urban spaces into commodities renders them vulnerable to the market, leading to further changes in the future as political, economic and social processes influence their value. The theories presented in *New Urban Spaces* would greatly benefit not just urban and architectural scholars, but also professionals in architectural and planning practice and policy makers, regarding the implications of their decisions upon the urban fabric.

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A BOOK REVIEW OF *FLYING PANELS*

ALONSO, Pedro Ignacio – PALMAROLA, Hugo. *Flying Panels: How Concrete Panels Changed the World*. Stockholm: ArkDes, DOM Publishers, 2019, 264 p. ISBN 978-3-86922-563-0.

There could not have been a better time for the *Flying Panels: How Concrete Panels Changed the World* exhibition than in 2019, the one-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Bauhaus school and the thirtieth anniversary of the collapse of the Berlin Wall. These events are significant. The first influenced the way people think about simple forms and function in design, architecture and urban planning in the face of industrialized building techniques and mass production. Prefabricated panel buildings took on a big role in twentieth century urban planning in the rebuilding of cities following the destruction in Europe caused by World War II. The technology soon spread across the globe as countries in other parts of the world sought to urbanize using rapid modern building techniques, in the face of the Cold War and political tensions. Utilitarian mass panel housing estates – built using prefabricated panels – changed the urban landscapes of cities and were later viewed critically through a postmodern lens and negatively associated with communism. Hence, after 1989 when communist regimes fell apart in Europe, this method of building was put aside in favour of more diverse tastes in building styles and restoration of more historic town centres. While prefabricated panel buildings are rarely considered works of art or worth preserving by the general public, the *Flying Panels* exhibition, curated and held from October 2019 to March 2020 at ArkDes, the Swedish Centre for Architecture and Design in Stockholm, aimed to raise awareness about the history and value of these underestimated building styles. The consortium of urbanHIST, which included experts, planning professions and doctoral researchers on twentieth century urban planning history visited the exhibition on October 22, 2019 as part of the second urbanHIST Conference programme.

The artefacts, collections and research results have been captured in the

accompanying book of the same name, edited by curators and authors Pedro Ignacio Alonso and Hugo Palmarola. *Flying Panels* details not just the history and technology of modular systems, but also the ideals, hopes and desires that they embodied, as well as their depictions in media and popular culture. Research in modular housing systems and prefab mass housing estates is not new and has been emerging since the 1990s with books such as Miles Glendinning's *Tower Block: Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland* (1994). It later became a recognizable trend in the 2010s with Henrieta Moravčíková's *Bratislava: Atlas of Mass Housing* (2011) and *The Paneláks: Twenty-Five Housing Estates in the Czech Republic* (2017) by Czech authors. Indeed, while other researchers tend to be provincial and focus on their own regions, *Flying Panels* is unique in the sense that it includes narratives from many countries by authors from different continents.

The book comprises 13 chapters dealing with diverse themes including the history of how modular prefabricated housing systems came into being, how they spread internationally, the significance of advanced technology in the building industry, the inclusion of women in construction, and cultural depictions in films and arts. The first chapter, written by both the editors, discusses the general background and the idea behind the exhibition. The verb “flying” in the title reflects not just the literal meaning of the panels being hoisted up in the air by cranes to be assembled on site; it also refers to the spirit of the mid-twentieth century and the hope of a better life that concrete panel technology could bring, and the technology's mobilization from one country to the next (pp. 13–15). In the second chapter, *Prolegomenon to a Global History of Large Concrete Panel Systems*, Ignacio Alonso recounts how this technology came to be disseminated worldwide, from Germany, France and Poland to Cuba, Chile and China. He charts the unexpected journeys that took place, based on the exchange of knowledge between professions made possible through political alliances, trade corporations, or through technical assistance provided by Western Europe, the USSR and state socialist Europe to other developing countries at the time. Pages 44–53 include

photographs of the staggered and exploded axonometric models of different typologies of modular systems around the world, which were part of the exhibition, including the famous WBS70 from East Germany, Larsen & Nielsen from Denmark and G57 from Czechoslovakia. In the third chapter, *Panels on Film*, Palmarola lists popular films that featured panel housing, including the USSR's well-known *The Irony of Fate, or Enjoy Your Bath!* (1976), Czechoslovakia's *Panel Story or How the Urbanizations are Born* (1980) and *Goodbye Lenin* (2003). These films show that strange encounters, romantic relationships or turbulent marriages in everyday life still take place against the backdrop of the perceived monotonous uniformity of architecture in panel housing estates. Once marketed as a socialist utopia by governments that erected them, often the despair and misery of the protagonists in these films are heightened by the vast visual greyness of these panel blocks.

The next section of the book includes contributions from ten other authors. Jimena Castillo documents the Soviet Union's female workers in the building industry in her chapter, "Women Steering the Wheel... of a Crane: An Interview with Ten Women Who Decided to Swap Their Household Duties for Machines, Screws and Cranes", in which the title says it all (pp. 104–111). In another chapter, Michael Abrahamson reflects on the use of the system in the USA in his contribution, "Rocket Science or Representation? Notes on Concrete Panel Construction in the United States". Despite the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and the study of Soviet Union construction techniques by American architects, implementation of panel housing systems was not as popular in the USA because of the strong consumerist desire for single-family housing, though it was fairly accepted as accommodation for low-income groups. Notwithstanding, Abrahamson demonstrates that concrete panel buildings found a niche in college dormitories and housing for senior citizens (pp. 136–148). Panel housing construction is not just an architectural feat, but an engineering success story, and the modern technologies it employs are attributed to a famous engineer and his company, as recounted by Natalya Solopova in her contribution, "When Panels Learned to Fly: Raymond Camus and his

Panel Factories". In the years 1949–53, French engineer Raymond Camus perfected the methods of panel construction, from production to transportation and assembling. Through his company Le Havre, and thanks to his multilingual personnel, in the late 1950s his patented construction techniques were exported to Germany, Britain, Italy and the USSR, among others (pp. 152–170).

While the editors and contributors should be commended for their efforts, the volume does not mention many of the social, political and economic processes of the 1970s to 2010s that determined the fate of panel buildings long after they were built. It also lacks more nuanced contributions from urban planners on how these mass-produced panel housing blocks changed cityscapes around the world, and the state's failure to maintain or take accountability for their condition by transferring them to private owners or housing co-operatives. Whether from abolition, depopulation, deterioration, income segregation, the problems facing these buildings cannot be solely blamed on architecture or urban planning. Insufficient government support, social infrastructure and belief in neoliberalization projects have only accelerated their demise and unpopularity. In that regard, certain mass panel housing estates have had positive experiences, as rehabilitation through privatization or community initiatives have made these places liveable for years to come. It is only Boris Groys, in his chapter "Genealogy of the Panel", who brings up the topic of postmodernism, insinuating this to be one of the reasons for their demise. The "postmodern aesthetic sensibility" he says, "rejects everything that is universal, uniform, repetitive, geometrical, minimalist..." (p. 100) and instead favours the "classical avant-garde" to paint a picture of cultural and aesthetic diversity. We must not forget that the intentions behind these uniform dull panel housing blocks were based on utopic socialist ideals aiming to provide equal housing opportunities. Groys argues that the postmodern taste is "fundamentally an anti-radical and anti-utopian taste" and that "one needs to have a certain aesthetic preference for the uniform (as opposed to the diverse), to be ready to accept and to endorse radical political and artistic projects" (p. 101).

Despite these shortcomings, readers would be hard-pressed to find another edited collection on panel housing construction that includes a diverse cast of authors, intersecting arts with technology while celebrating the achievements of this often-misunderstood architecture, intentionally produced to solve problems in housing and construction. The book pays homage to otherwise unknown periods, locations and actors in the history of panel housing. Even though the editors and contributors cannot and do not have the capacity to cover all the complex issues related to these “flying panels”, it is nevertheless an informative, multi-faceted book that should be on the shelves of every panel housing enthusiast or anyone interested in the history of modern architecture or urban planning.

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**NEGOTIATING MEMORY, HISTORY AND  
IDENTITY: TRANSFORMATIONS OF POST-  
SOCIALIST URBAN LANDSCAPE**

IRA, Jaroslav – JANÁČ, Jiří (eds.). *Materializing Identities in Socialist and Post-Socialist Cities*. Prague: Karolinum Press, 2017, 180 p. ISBN 978-8024635903.

Over the last thirty years, societies that have emerged from the collapse of the communist states in Europe in 1989–1991 have been mostly referred to as “post-socialist”. While they have certainly had divergent paths in terms of political, economic and societal development, this generalization continues to act as one of the defining historical denominators for most of Central and Eastern Europe. According to Beissinger and Kotkin, the historical experience of communism still significantly influences trajectories of post-socialist development.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, cultural landscapes of contemporary post-socialist cities mirror over half a century of political, economic, social and cultural

patterns of socialism and, as such, display particular systems of values, preferences, beliefs, fears and “truths”.<sup>2</sup>

The urban history of post-socialist Europe has long been neglected by scholars, as it was difficult to nestle research in this field into a particular discipline. Over the last 30 years, several publications have contributed to filling that gap, such as Tsenkova and Nedovic-Budic (2006) on urban space, institutions and policies in post-socialist Europe;<sup>3</sup> Andrusz, Harloe and Szelenyi (1996) on urban change in European cities after socialism;<sup>4</sup> Tsenkova and Lowe (2003) on housing changes in Eastern Europe;<sup>5</sup> Neill (2004) on urban planning and cultural identity;<sup>6</sup> Diener and Hagen (2016) on the politics of architecture and urban planning;<sup>7</sup> Kliems (2010) on continuity and urban change in post-socialist urban space;<sup>8</sup> Czepczynski (2008) on the cultural landscapes of post-socialist cities;<sup>9</sup> Hamilton, Dimitrovska Andrews and Pichler-Milanovic (2005) on Central and Eastern European cities in the context of globalization;<sup>10</sup> and Sonkoly (2017)

2 CZEPCZYNSKI, Mariusz. *Cultural Landscapes of Post-socialist Cities*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.

3 TSENKOVA, Sasha – NEDOVIC-BUDIC, Zorica (eds.). *The Urban Mosaic of Post-Socialist Europe Space, Institutions and Policy*. Heidelberg: Physica Verlag, 2006.

4 ANDRUSZ, Gregory – HARLOE, Michael – SZELENYI, Ivan (eds.). *Cities after socialism – Urban and regional change and conflict in post-socialist societies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

5 TSENKOVA, Sasha – LOWE, Stuart (ed.). *Housing change in Central and Eastern Europe*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003.

6 NEILL, William J. V. *Urban Planning and Cultural Identity*. London; New York: Routledge, 2004.

7 DIENER, Alexander C. – HAGEN, Joshua (ed.). *From Socialist to Post-Socialist Cities: Cultural Politics of Architecture, Urban Planning, and Identity in Eurasia*. London: Routledge, 2016.

8 KLIEMS, Alfrun – DMITRIEVA, Marina (ed.). *The post socialist city: continuity and change in urban space and imagery*. Berlin: Jovis, 2010.

9 CZEPCZYNSKI, *Cultural Landscapes of Post-socialist Cities*.

10 HAMILTON, Ian, F.E. – DIMITROVSKA ANDREWS, Kaliopa – PICHLER-MILANOVIC, Natasa (eds.). *Transformation of cities in Central and Eastern Europe: Toward globalization*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2005.

1 BEISSINGER, Mark R. – KOTKIN, Stephen (eds.). *Historical Legacies of Communism in Russia and Eastern Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

on the historical urban landscape.<sup>11</sup> In “The Post-Socialist City: Urban Form and Space Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe after Socialism”, Stanilov and colleagues explore a variety of consequences of urban spatial restructuring in Europe after 1989.<sup>12</sup> An important contribution on this topic was also published in early 2020 – “A Modern History of European Cities: 1815 to the Present” by historian Rosemary Wakeman.<sup>13</sup>

*Materializing Identities in Socialist and Post-Socialist Cities*, edited by Jaroslav Ira and Jiří Janáč from Charles University in Prague, represents another important contribution to the vast field of urban transformations and symbolic revisions of public spaces in post-socialist Europe. Printed by Karolinum Press in Prague in 2017, the book collects chapters from lecturers, doctoral students and graduates of the Erasmus Mundus Master Programme *TEMA: European Territories – identity and development*, tracing identity struggles in urban landscapes in the aftermath of communism in Europe. The contributors to the volume reflect on the post-socialist city as a laboratory of different, very often contested ideas and negotiated national identities and collective memories. They offer personal interpretations of post-socialist transitions in urban areas and various changes in the organization and meaning of public spaces, especially ones invested with symbolic meaning and emotional potential.

Tracing the dynamic interactions between urban landscape and national identity, the book reveals various layers of socialist urban memories in European cities. It investigates how different political, economic and social processes reshaped socialist cityscapes post-1989. New ideological frameworks introduced new urban forms and dynamics, changing not only urban planning and functions, but also relationships and modes of interaction

between individuals (and societies) and urban spaces. The chapters in the book analyse, in a thought-provoking manner, various forms and consequences of post-communist landscape cleansing and various cases of the instrumentalisation of urban memories. As Ira and Janáč explain in the introduction to the volume, “The memory of socialism has been replaced by a new narrative, predominantly shaped by discourses of national identity. Some authors even argue that the eradication of the socialist past was a result of the nationalization of urban space, rather than a consequence of the transition to capitalism” (p. 20). Indeed, the book provides an interesting account of post-socialist appropriations and manipulations of urban space and different mechanisms for transforming urban identities and assigning new meanings to urban areas.

Due to the common educational and disciplinary background of the authors who participated in the same Master programme, the book as a whole represents a coherent image of post-socialist urban identity transformations, with the exception of the chapter on Minsk which deals with the post-war reconstruction and thus thematically jumps out of the book’s focus. Similarly, the book deals with European cities, but includes examples from Kazakhstan, which geographically belongs to Central Asia, although due to its Soviet history is sometimes considered as post-socialist Europe. Regardless of that, the chapters interact with each other in a meaningful way, using urban identities and urban memories as a “red thread” of the book. They analyse post-socialist identity reconstruction using tools such as urban toponomy, relocation of capitals, modernization and sovietization, various historical references and urban rebranding.

The opening chapter “Society and Space in (Post-)Socialist Cities: Directions in Research” by Natalia Linitzskaya uses papers presented at the conferences of the European Association for Urban History (EAUH) between 2006 and 2014 to trace changing perspectives in research on the socialist and post-socialist city. She identifies three major topics emerging throughout the years: the architectural transformation of socialist cities, local responses to those processes,

11 SONKOLY, Gabor. *Historical Urban Landscape*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

12 STANILOV, Kiril (ed.). *The Post-Socialist City: Urban Form and Space Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe after Socialism*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2007.

13 WAKEMAN, Rosemary. *A Modern History of European Cities: 1815 to the Present*. London; Oxford: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.

and transformations of spatial memories. In the chapter which explores tendencies in urban history scholarship and progress in the historiography of socialist cities, the author argues that the legacy of socialism will be the subject of re-interpretation and re-thinking for generations to come, as we refine our reading of layers of meaning within post-socialist cityscapes. "Urban space tolerates lending itself to diverse stories coexisting one next to the other" (p. 51) and socialist urbanity undoubtedly left numerous traces in the public space which continuously create a palimpsest of memories and urban forms.

Linitskaya's second chapter, "Tractor at the Avenue: Post-War Reconstruction of Minsk, 1944-1960", explores the construction of socialist Minsk and of Soviet Belorussian identity in the city. The paper questions the application of Soviet urbanity methods in reconstruction of the Belorussian capital, resulting in the creation of a "monumental" city centre and an industrial periphery dominated by a tractor factory and various housing, cultural and social facilities typical of socialist urban design. Exploring urban life in Soviet Minsk, the author argues that Belorussians somewhat appropriated Soviet urban identity and the socialist promise.

Two chapters authored by Nari Shelekpavev both address the urban rebranding of the Kazakh cities of Almaty and Astana. The first one, "Public Spaces and Nation Building in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan (1991-2001)" investigates the relocation of the socialist capital city from Almaty to Astana (renamed Nur-Sultan as of March 2019) as a tool in the nation-building process after the collapse of Soviet Union. It argues that ideological re-appropriation of space in Kazakh cities was actively used in order to create physical and social detachment from the past and legitimise new national identity. In words of the author, "If one compares Almaty and Astana, the former transformed its existing material space in order to fill it with a new symbolic content while the latter created the space anew in order to signify, not only by its materiality but also by the very fact of its creation, a desire for a new symbolic order" (p. 96). Removal of the old and the inception of new symbols in urban space as a tool for nation-building is one of the topics

which repeatedly emerges throughout the book.

In his second chapter, "Is Name Destiny? On Some Cases of Post-Soviet Street-Naming in Almaty and Astana", Shelekpavev deals with post-Soviet street renaming as an instrument to "purge" the unwanted past and consolidate the post-socialist national identity. In his analysis of Almaty and Astana, street renaming appears as a practice of legitimation, commemoration and naturalization. He argues that toponymical changes are used to promote certain versions of history and specific local memories, eradicating the Soviet past and referring instead to the history of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in order to foster the identity-building process.

In the chapter "Skopje 2014: The Role of Government in the Spatial Politics of Collective Memory", Ivana Nikolovska questions the reinvention of the Macedonian capital through the controversial *Skopje 2014* project. This initiative of the Macedonian government aimed at rebranding the city and inscribing new layers of history and new heroes into the urban landscape of Skopje, and turned out to be one of the most widely debated urban transformations in the last decade. Nikolovska traces public discourse, including statements from the government and debates within the academic community, civil society, professional platforms of architects, social media, etc. By doing so, she showcases the variety of voices involved in the process of ideological appropriation of public spaces and conflicting memory narratives stemming from the new organisation of urban landscape.

The closing chapter "Searching for Identity: the Cities of Tiraspol and Chisinau" by Olga Niutenko, reflects on the creation of Moldovan and Transnistrian identities in the city. Niutenko's analysis reveals how localised approaches to the use of urban symbols, the politics of monument, industrial development and street names in Chisinau and Tiraspol led to the construction of different urban identities in Moldova and Transnistria. The chapter illustrates how the Soviet past was instrumentalised in Tiraspol and discharged in Chisinau, demonstrating the power of collective memories in reinforcing a particular national identity and urban development.

Urban space has always been a tool for the legitimization of contemporary political agendas, and as such it displays and reflects history and memory in a way that corresponds to the ideological framework of the time. Nowhere is that process as visible and as compelling as in post-socialist cities, in which layers of memory, history and identity interact, dispute and re-arrange the urban landscape. *Materializing Identities in Socialist and Post-Socialist Cities* collects case analyses of urban rewriting as a practice of identity reconstruction in East European cities, where communist legacies have been deeply embedded in the public space. It represents an original contribution to the field, highlighting various strategies of post-socialist urban development which strived to accommodate new political, economic and cultural patterns. Undoubtedly, socialist cityscapes will remain a source of inspiration for generations of geographers, urban planners, urban historians and architects to come.

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#### COMMON PATTERNS WITH INTERDISCIPLINARITY – THE LIFE STORIES OF AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN TOWNS

LOVRA, Éva. *Városok az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchiában: Városszövet- és várostipológia 1867–1918*. Budapest: Terc Kiadó, 2020, 240 p. ISBN 978-615-5445-65-1.

Eva Lovra's great monograph represents a supplementary work not only in the Hungarian historiography, but within the Central European medium, too, due to the voluminous English summary in the final section of the book. It is fair to state that a city is a composite phenomenon. Its architecture and town planning should not be analysed separately but should be studied as equal components of the same entity. For a historian, this could be the most straightforward message of Lovra's monograph, which embarks upon a journey dealing with both the history of architecture and urban development.

This book is an imperative, which recalls for us the importance of interdisciplinarity. Why can we claim that? For the answer, we must understand the actual situation with regards to Hungarian architecture studies and urban morphology research, and must review the subject of the monograph, which is an achievement of a long-term study.

Lovra's work seeks interactions, parallels and common patterns in city planning in the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The era it examines begins in the year of the Compromise – the so-called Auleich, in 1867 – and ends with the First World War and the moment the monarchy finally split up. The urban development of Austria-Hungary took a new direction from the 1870s, partly because of the state-regulated city development of Vienna and Budapest, but economic alignment by that time also had a strong impact on urbanization processes in Hungary. Essentially, the book aims to discuss the urban typology of this eventful era and to create a taxonomy despite the great variation of urban characteristics that can be observed within the monarchical period. The typological research is conducted in order to enable the taxonomic classification of urban forms based on common characteristics. The purpose behind this goal is to define the ideals of the age concerning town structure, and Lovra is successful in reaching a broader classification of towns through her special matrix of variables.

The author examines 70 towns in total, all from the area of the former Kingdom of Hungary, and compares their characteristics with 10 towns from the Habsburg Austrian territories. Nowadays, these places are scattered across 12 different countries. The taxonomy of the selected cities covers the entire expanse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The cities show a diverse range of geomorphological characteristics and a high variety of urban development levels. (At the end of the book the author provides orientation by means of a detailed catalogue of urban tissues and a large classification table.) Lovra's distinct system of classification reveals basic and combined urban categories.

The taxonomic designation of urban types was, by necessity, preceded by the determination of urban fabric types, their various combinations, and the existing

spatial relationships within the town. In this regard, the writer can confirm the possibility of creating an urban typology based on confinable conditions and Lovra's typology distinguishes 41 types of urban tissue, 16 basic urban types and nine main types of town. These types are categorized at the end of the study as stagnant towns, regulated towns, towns with linear urban development lines, four types of town with ring and radial roads, multi-nuclei towns and completely enclosed towns. The formulation of this urban typology contradicts the accepted urban morphological statement that any typology is effectively impossible because of the high variety of forms. The study of the given cities not only explores the urban types but also discovers the factors creating urban identity in a wider context, by means of comparing the towns of Hungary with those in Austria. As we can read in the foreword, this unique taxonomic classification of urban fabric types and urban types from Hungary between 1867 and 1918 has been created and defined by urban morphological methods for the first time in its scientific field.

The results are based on Lovra's own synthesis of two significant schools in urban morphology, namely that of Michael Robert Günter Conzen, the founder of the Anglo-German school of urban morphology, and Saverio Muratori, a disciple of the famous urbanist Gustavo Giovannoni and a pioneer of typomorphological research. Muratori's method was developed further by his former assistant, architect Gianfranco Caniggia. In essence, Lovra's typo-morphological analysis system closely follows the Conzenian cognitive approach, combined with Caniggia's research methodology, which focuses on how built form is influenced by historical processes and inherited shaping.

The book also offers a complex picture of theoretical works and ideals from the era it covers. Camillo Sitte and Josef Stübben's contemporaneous doctrines can be discerned. Lovra also presents a general overview of urban morphology-related studies up to contemporary methods. Camillo Sitte had a vision of the modern and progressive city which could involve the past in its new development. A designer must incorporate the aesthetic point-of-view during the planning process, according to him. However,

while the routes, streets, open squares, and networks must take efficiency into account, the main purpose never should be only symmetry, regularity or the deliberate separation of functions within the tissue. The fluid continuum with the past is accented in his detailed vision. His counterpart was Otto Wagner, who presented a different direction. He tried to organise the city in blocks according to their functional relation, creating sometimes strongly regular and tight cityscapes. Josef Stübben also has a major role in the implied research as his planning guide and city descriptions were accurate impressions from the analysed era. Stübben, among other things, defined the hierarchy of open spaces, a system which is very much central to Lovra's approach.

From specific chapters, we highlight the works of Antal Palóczi, whose work focused on theoretical fields in Hungarian town planning, and who incorporated German and Austrian ideas about dynamics of flow into his practice. Like Stübben, he intended to subordinate public buildings in the system planning. But the essential influence over his thinking was Camillo Sitte's assertion that a continuum with the past is inevitable. Sitte mainly analysed historic remains and old monuments, which he felt should determine the concepts in city drawing. The book offers a conspicuous and stunning example: the planning competition for the Wekerle estate in the early 1900s – a major government intervention to fund housing projects for government employees. Construction began in 1908, and lasted until 1925, producing 1,007 houses containing 4,412 apartments. In the end, Ottmár Gyóri's plan, which followed a symmetrical form with functional organization, was accepted and eventually built. However, the project was initially awarded to awarded Antal Palóczi, whose work broadly followed the philosophy of Sitte, with a plan which would have resulted in a more organic city quarter. In Sitte's opinion, towns are artworks and all should be masterpieces – not just administrative units. Lajos Lechner, another famous Hungarian engineer, declared Pozsony (Bratislava) to be the first fine example of modern city planning in the terms defined by Sitte.

One of the great virtues of this work is that it also offers a complex overview of city

development processes in the Kingdom of Hungary in the medieval age. It presents the types of cities from a geographical point of view, but also separates the systems according to their administrative backgrounds. Knowledge of these early types of urban space is essential, as the analysed era and its associated typographies depend on these historical origins. Without this background analysis, neither experts nor lay readers could follow the conclusions of the book. These sections of the book list all the transformations driven by economic and geographical factors which took place in the age of the Industrial Revolution and under the dualist form of government. In this period, Budapest and Vienna underwent sudden economical development, in which the towns were the most important catalysts. In certain chapters, the writer deploys archival maps as well as various acts and other archival documents originating from the area. As many history and architecture researchers focus only a narrow aspect and too few explore the relevant context and parallel phenomena in sufficient depth, this book represents an essential tool in broadening the range of perspectives on its topic.

Another extremely useful contribution is that it supplies a proper overview of legislation processes – an incomplete and poorly served field in the literature on Hungarian architecture. Effective regulatory systems for urban development and architecture only existed from the 1870s, when the Council of Public Works in Budapest established a basic legislative background on the occasion of the Unification of Pest and Buda. Traffic regulation was of great importance in this legislation, and Lovra lists and compares the various acts and laws established to govern city development. From this, we can gain a complex picture of all the laws' which had an effect on city morphology.

Towards the end of the book, we come to the main aim of the work: the classification system. As mentioned above, Lovra's methodology involves integrating urban morphology and urban typology matrixes. Her complex urban morphological methodology analyses forms and establishes their specific typology. She outlines the system through the formation of a matrix of characteristics,

using the description and combination of basic urban types and urban fabric types which are defined by different features and combination of city forms, taking into account the dominant urban fabric types.

"Towns have a life history. Their development together with the cultural history of the region in which they lie, is written deeply into the outline and fabric of their built-up areas."<sup>14</sup> This research opens a new chapter in urban and architectural surveys: a combination of urban morphology and architectural typology. In Hungary, studies on the architectural historicism during the dual monarchy period is still a developing field, dating from the 1980s, with multiplying studies now extending into all the neo-styles. There are already many publications that report not only on the most significant architects and buildings of the era, but also analyse several lesser-known individuals and their works. However, we still can say that the architecture of the dual monarchy era is a largely unexplored territory. Despite all the academic attention devoted to Hungarian and Central European architecture of the dualist era, coverage of certain disciplines within the field is still strongly deficient, with too few analyses from urbanists and urban morphology scientists, and only rare studies which successfully integrate research into building history and urban history. Eva Lovra's monograph does a great deal to fill this gap, not only for Hungary, but for all the modern states which were part of the historic Austro-Hungarian Empire.

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14 Intra-Visegrad Scholarship research: Lovra, E. Comparison of the Structural Pattern in Case of Different Approach: Typology of the Structural Changes. The Impact of the Technological Development on the Public Spaces. Case Study Parallels: Prague, Budapest, Vienna. 2015.

THE NARRATIVE SOURCES AND THE HISTORY  
OF THE TOWNS

TOŠENROVÁ, Mária – KVĚTOVÁ, Miroslava.  
*Paměť měst. Narativní prameny k dějinám  
Prahy, Českých Budějovic a Litoměřic do roku  
1800.* Praha: Masarykův ústav – Archiv AV ČR,  
2020, 430 p. ISBN 978-80-88304-21-0.

Memory and city are not only two words: they also act as two interesting research problems, the interconnection and mutual relationship of which is reflected in the present publication. Mária Tošnerová and Miroslava Květová present a selected issue within this topic in a monograph entitled: *Memory of Cities. The Narrative Sources to the History of Prague, České Budějovice and Litoměřice (until 1800)*. Topics in ethnology, cultural and social anthropology and history, as well as research in other sciences and social sciences are the focus of attention. In the Slovak and Czech areas, urban ethnology/anthropology began to be discussed more intensively after 1989, but this does not mean that the city was no longer a research topic. *Memory of Cities* is beneficial thanks to its summarization and collection of a large number of narrative sources from the early modern period up to 1800. They represent a rich source of knowledge of the past of the towns and their inhabitants, and both the data and the authors' contemporary literary style complement the knowledge about towns from other sources. It is these sources that help us know the thinking and mentality of those who lived at that time, not only in terms of social functions, but also with regards to individuals and their personal characteristics. Urban chronicles (especially since the sixteenth century) have played a key role in the creation of urban identity, as well as being a source of knowledge of the origin and history of cities. The value of chronicles of urban provenance were initially underestimated in the study of urban history; a change occurred around the middle of the twentieth century, when they began to be considered from other sites. Chronicles are not only of factual benefit: above all, they provide sources for the study of the collective memory of certain social groups.

*Memory of Cities* evaluates the preserved chronicle-type sources and records of the

memory of three Czech towns – Prague, České Budějovice and Litoměřice. The authors state in the introduction that these cities were chosen because they had similar degrees of internal institutional development; from the beginning all three were formed as free royal towns which were part of the Third Land State. Their property situation was similar and, especially in the pre-White Mountain period, they were the richest Czech towns.

The publication is divided into three chapters, the first entitled “Urban Historiography”, with a subchapter on “Narrative Sources in the Past and the Beginnings of their Access”. From the end of the seventeenth century, the attitude of scholars towards historical sources as well as to their value was gradually changing. Criticism of sources was part of the work of the historian, but evaluation corresponded directly to the state of the art and focused mainly on factual studies, while interpretation of events was not considered an aspect of historical knowledge. Representatives of the so-called scholarly historiographies (seventeenth to eighteenth centuries) focused mainly on the study of national history, but there was also some benefit from the perspective of urban historiography. A critical approach to the study of historiographic sources emerged during the Enlightenment, when historicism penetrated into thinking, bringing a new perception of history and a new way of using it. The origins of this movement are associated with Gelas Dobner. In the same period, we also encounter the oldest attempts to declare sources.

By the first half of the nineteenth century, approaches to processing sources had changed. From “rewriting”, the historical science of that time also began to require that the acquired information be placed in a historical context, in the sense of the historical understanding of the past. Most editions of city chronicles were created in the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century; these are the oldest city books that have attracted the attention of researchers. Works from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for a long time attracted little interest, being primarily used by regional historians. Only the second half of the twentieth century brought a change in researchers' approach,

with growing interest in the study of narrative sources for which credibility is no longer the most important criterion in assessing a text's importance. Nevertheless, the issue of urban historiography remained a marginal topic. An increase in the production of monographs on the history of towns has been recorded, especially after 1989, when the older works were being repeatedly published. A number of new histories, created through more modern processes, have also appeared.

In the subchapter on "Urban Historiography of the Early Modern Period and its Sources", the authors present the basic characteristic features of the sources of urban historiography in the Early Modern Period, which, in their words, represents a difficult task. The main criterion was to identify works that captured the past and present of the cities and their inhabitants, in all their forms. This wide definition is represented by a range of sources of varying scope written by authors from different social groups. The benefit is that they preserve both the collective and individual historical memory of the local residents. The beginnings of attempts at the typology of narrative sources date back to the nineteenth century, when an effort was made to clearly identify sources. Historians continued these efforts in the twentieth century, without reaching a clear classification. As narrative historiographical sources contain several genres, the clear classification of sources of urban historiography is currently being abandoned. Early modern chronicles are represented by official city chronicles; the subchapter focuses on explaining the term chronicle, the main function of chronicles, types of chronicles, city commemorative books, city topographies, and the printed flyers that carried news across regions and land borders. Messages in the form of songs were also popular, supplemented by illustrations or Latin occasional verses, the authors of which were members of the city's elite.

The chapter concludes with a section on "Urban Historiography and its Development", with a passage dedicated to the "Beginning of Urban Historiography in Bohemia". The historical memory is known mainly from written sources, but for the oldest period only a limited amount was preserved. At the end of the Middle Ages, the first chronicle reports

appeared in city books, in addition to official records. This oldest stage of historiography, represented by national chronicles, persisted until the Hussite period, when the economic and political power of individual cities was significantly strengthened. That is why it is possible to speak about the origin of urban historiography. The authors describe the development of the town chronicle in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Alongside the territory of the Czech Republic, they also focus on neighbouring countries in Southwest, Central and Eastern Europe. In urban historiography the publication focuses, in terms of time, on the Pre-White Mountain period, post-White Mountain historiography, and urban history at the end of the Baroque period.

The last part, which forms part of a rich summary of narrative sources, is on the "City from the Point of View of Early Modern Authors". Chronicle records offer a broad view of the life of the Early Modern city. The city describes the official city chronicle its own way; another work arises from the workshop of private initiative, other interesting features are described in the encyclopaedic character, and so on. The image of the city was influenced by the social status of the writer. All the authors pursued the same goal but their choices about what they considered important differed.

The second chapter, the main part of the work, is entitled "Historiography in Prague, in České Budějovice and in Litoměřice". All available narrative sources are broken down by city in the reference period. The history of Prague is inextricably linked to the history of the Czech nation, since it was the capital of the Czech State since its inception and also the seat of monarchs for centuries. The oldest written reports on Prague date back to the tenth century. The chapter contains references to manuscripts, chronicles and literature, which are listed in chronological order.

The final chapter presents a summary of all narrative sources used, and on which the publication is based. The title of the chapter, "List of Narrative Sources for the History of Prague, České Budějovice and Litoměřice", informs readers about the archives and libraries of these cities that contain the given sources, together with their specific

collection, signature and brief description. The emphasis, as stated in the introduction to the third chapter, is on the text of the relevant chronicle; in the case of municipal memorial books, entries are omitted without a closer reference to the chronicle. Historical works related to the Jewish city are based primarily on literature. Since there are a large number of sources with appropriate notation, a more detailed introduction would be useful to better clarify this material. The accompanying text for each fund could be also more comprehensive so that the information is more accessible to non-experts.

The publication offers up an extensive list of sources and literature, divided into unpublished and published sources, period print, literature and Internet resources. It is characterized by a high-quality output in the study of urban historiography primarily focused on chronicles, urban memorial books, urban topography and so on. Properly selected methodological bases, as well as the wide range of examined archival material, domestic and foreign literature, underline the relevance of the work.

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#### THE DOMINICANS IN KOŠICE IN THE TIME OF RECATHOLICIZATION

DÓCI, Viliam Štefan OP. *Die seelsorgliche Tätigkeit der Kaschauer Predigerbrüder. Ein Dominikanerkonvent im Ambiente von Pfarrei, Stadt und Staat im 18. Jahrhundert.* Berlin; Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018, 327 p. ISBN 978-3-11-053884-7.

In 2018, the publishing house Walter de Gruyter brought to public attention the monograph *Die seelsorgliche Tätigkeit der Kaschauer Predigerbrüder. Ein Dominikanerkonvent im Ambiente von Pfarrei, Stadt und Staat im 18. Jahrhundert* [The Pastoral Activity of the Friar-Preachers of Košice: a Dominican Priory in the Surroundings of the State, Town and Parish in the Eighteenth Century]. The author, Viliam Štefan Dóci OP, is a historian and theologian and the reviewed book is based on

the research made during his PhD studies at the University of Vienna.

The importance of this book lies in three main dimensions of historical research. First, the monograph represents a very important contribution to the history of Dominicans in Košice. It was in 1932 that Vojtech Wick published in Košice his book on this topic (*Dáta k dejinám košických dominikánov*). After almost a century, Viliam Štefan Dóci carried out deep research into archival documents and historiography in order to bring a broad view on the history of Dominicans in Košice throughout the eighteenth century after their return to the city in 1698. The book contains new historical data about the history of the Dominican cloister in Košice and will from now serve as the primary source for further research in any way connected with Dominicans in Košice in the early modern period.

The second dimension is the history of the Church, of religions and of the Reformation and Counter-reformation/Recatholicization in Košice. The Dominicans left Košice after the Fire in 1556, together with Franciscans, and their properties fell into the hands of the Protestant city council, according to a policy that had lasted from the Medieval, pre-Reformation period, that all properties of church institutions residing in the city actually belonged to the city. The end of the seventeenth century and the rule of Leopold I saw a short but intensive conflict between the royal institutions and the city magistrate over those formerly Dominican properties. The Recatholicization of the free royal city of Košice started at the beginning of the seventeenth century and during this period the orders of Jesuits and Franciscans were supported by the royals to settle in the city in the middle of the century, and the Ursulines and Dominicans followed at the end of this century. The author made a considerable effort to illustrate for readers the previous two centuries of the Church's history in the city and the situation, both political and military, at the time of the Dominicans' return.

One of the main goals of the book is to shed light on the relations between the friars and the parochial ecclesiastics. The competencies were, after the Council of Trent, territorially accorded to the parish priests. In the first chapter of the book, the author pays

attention also to the historical development of this issue. During the seventeenth century, the Catholic priests were struggling to regain previously Catholic churches and other buildings and properties in order to maintain their presence in the city, and no controversies rose up between themselves. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the majority of the city's inhabitants were protestant, but this changed during the first half of this century. The situation for the Catholic Church and its local institutions became stable and discussion about competencies, territory and *piae fundationes* between the orders and the parish church took place. The author gives various examples of instances, including over processions, sermons, testaments, compulsories and funerals, in which the Dominicans entered into some kind of conflict with the parish priests. Some of these cases had to be resolved by the bishops of Eger.

The third dimension represents the secular, civic and lay sphere of life in the city, in which the Dominicans played a part as well. The traditional tools of the pastoral charge connected these two worlds in appointed places, times and occasions. The national, social, political, economical and religious life of the city's inhabitants was partly tied to the Dominican church or cloister. The book covers these research topics by analysing testaments, uses of public space and sacred places, the *Ars Moriendi* spirituality and the brotherhoods founded by the friars. The end of the eighteenth century saw important events in the history of the Dominican cloister in Košice. In 1773, their cloister was transformed from a residence into a convent. In the same year, after the Jesuit order's suppression, the bishop invited the Dominican friars to teach at the University

of Košice. The job was undertaken only with difficulties due to a lack of appropriate persons. In the 1780s, the Dominican cloister in Košice was one of just a few (Dominican) cloisters in Hungary not to be closed by Joseph II. In the 1790s, several sermons conducted by the Dominicans showed the political and national context to be reflecting also the political situation in Europe and the revolutionary changes in North America. A nationwide impact was had by a sermon of 1790 in which a Dominican preacher of German origin addressed some critical notes towards the Hungarian nation. It brought a huge reaction between the Hungarians in Košice and residual baron families still complied with at the highest levels. The sermon was considered a provocation which could lead to turmoil between the Germans and Hungarians in the city.

The reviewed book *Die seelsorgliche Tätigkeit der Kaschauer Predigerbrüder* represents an important and substantial contribution to the history of Košice. Methodologically, the monograph and the research were carried out and presented according to the chosen research topic and to the trends of Church history in Middle Europe, so the structure is logical, being partly chronologically and partly thematically oriented. The research and conclusions specifically highlighted in the monograph are more than suitable for use in comparisons and further broader analyses on similar historical research topics regarding Hungary and Europe more widely as well.

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