BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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SESSION 1

Eurasian Geography and Economics - Meet the Editors

Craig Young
EGE Editor-in-Chief
Michael Gentile
University of Oslo - outgoing Associate Editor for Russia and the former Soviet Union
Sofia Gavrilova
Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography - Book Review Editor

The journal Eurasian Geography and Economics is a key journal for publishing research on what is broadly termed the post-socialist/Eurasian 'region' (though we acknowledge, and indeed encourage debate around, the inherently problematic nature of these terms) - in other words, it's ideal for CATs! Now publishing eight issues per year, it was ranked No. 1 in Area Studies and has also now entered the top-20 ranked Geography journals. The journal has published an increasing number of articles, book reviews, and guest edited theme issues by CATs, and we encourage more submissions. In this session the Editors will provide an overview of publishing opportunities with the journal, including covering the key topics and various formats of articles we seek to publish, and also opportunities for guest editing theme issues and research colloquia. The session will also cover key strategies to enhance the success of submissions (and key reasons why submissions may be rejected) which will also be more generally applicable to any researcher wishing to learn more about the broader publishing environment, and thus may be of use more broadly for PhD candidates and early-career scholars who are developing a publication strategy. The session is informal and will contain an ample Q+A element.

SESSION 2

CATs and the Green Turn. Are they ready for the third transition?

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The double transition – that includes the local post socialist transition to market economy and the global transitions conditioned by economic globalization – is the key feature of post-socialist change (Sykora 2009). After three decades since the transition started, post-socialist cities in the CEE (often referred now as CATs – Cities after Transition) are struggling with the next big change, this time triggered by climate changes and the subsequent policy responses at all levels which may be labelled as a Green Turn in urban development. The aim of the paper is to present some of the research questions and working hypothesis stemming from the research on Polish cities carried within the Urban Policy Observatory long-term research programme. With the main focus on the problem of compact city development model and urban greenery. Are CATs really after or in transition again? In what way the common (post)socialist characteristics of urban form and processes condition this third urban transformation?

Urban green spaces and local climate - is the connection obvious?

Katarzyna Wrona
Jagiellonian University

It is common knowledge that urban green spaces have an influence on the climate in their neighbourhood. They also help mitigate some negative effects of climate change in cities - for example, they can contribute to decreasing the strength of heat waves, which are becoming more frequent in recent years. But not all urban green spaces have the same effect on local climate. Depending on type of vegetation cover, area, shape, relief, location and many other factors, thermal influence of parks and other green spaces on their surroundings may differ significantly, much more than most people unfamiliar with the topic would expect. In order to find out the patterns that actually show how various urban green spaces react with air temperature, an analysis was carried out. Based on the measurements taken within five urban parks - four of them were located in Cracow and one in Kielce - the analysis' aim was to establish how are green areas different from their surroundings in case of air temperature during sunny, non-windy days in vegetation period and also (only for Cracow) - during overcast, but still non-windy days. The results show that type of vegetation cover is of key importance when discussing thermal conditions within parks. Places with low vegetation or sparse tree cover cause air temperature to reach lower values mainly at night, while a denser tree cover triggers temperature drops below the area's mean during the day and increases its values above the mean at night. High vegetation also significantly reduces temperature contrasts within urban greenery, which was not the case with low vegetation. Also, the bigger and more compact the urban green area is, the more effect on air temperature it tends to have.

URBAN GREEN AREAS, PARKS, URBAN CLIMATE, AIR TEMPERATURE

Newcomers' Residential Satisfaction in a Post-Socialist city: Case of Jelgava, Latvia

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University of Life Sciences and Technologies

Many European post-Socialist cities are experiencing rapid population decline, which negatively affects both the social and economic situation in the cities, as well as urban development in them. The largest cities of Latvia are no exception either, as they have lost a significant number of inhabitants in recent decades as a result of both negative natural increase and migration. One of the options for maintaining the population size in a city is attraction of new inhabitants, however, the successful integration of newcomers is equally essential. According to previous studies (e.g. Van Hook et al., 2006) recently arrived newcomers are much more likely to emigrate compared to more settled immigrants. A driving force for repeated mobility and the search for a new place of residence is low satisfaction with life in the new place of residence. The lower the attractiveness of the current residence, the greater is the desire to migrate (Nowok et al., 2018). The aim of this study is to investigate if newcomers are satisfied with the life in a Post-Socialist city and to identify the most important aspects of the residential satisfaction that can influence the newcomer's desire to change the place of residence. The study is based on the most current CBS survey on the quality of life in the biggest cities of Latvia and Jelgava as the 4th biggest city in Latvia, is chosen as a case study. The results show that newcomers evaluate life in a post-socialist city more critically compared to long-term residents, and such aspects as availability of housing or employment opportunities can play important role for repeated mobility.

The adoption of mobility policies in land-use urban planning practice: State-of-play and future challenges

Jiří Malý

Masaryk University

For many years now, cities and urban regions have been struggling against excessive mobility caused by disproportionate suburbanization and urban sprawl. Visions of urban mobility are often part of the discourse encouraging access-focused urban transformations and sustainable mobility and redesigning existing structures into mixed-use urban space, together fulfilling the concept of the short-distance city (or 15-minute city). Urban visions of reduced mobility needs are being translated into policy instruments (strategies) and spatial planning tools. There are high expectations from urban spatial plans, which are, however, in many respects rigid instruments of statutory regulations. The research seeks to shed light on: (i) how the key visions of urban mobility are adopted by the technical language of land-use planning and applied to the zoning regulations; (ii) the validity of urban policy ethos conceiving urban mobility practices as the result of the physical urban configuration. Empirically grounded in the space of post-socialist cities and using the case study of Brno city (Czech Republic), the research unpacks the interconnected processes of mobility policies and land-use urban planning practice. The empirical research is based on data from a survey of transport behavior in Brno carried out in 2021, data from the last census in 2021, and the regulations of the new Brno land-use plan proposal. The findings not only demonstrate the difficulty of transferring the spatial imaginaries of the compact or 15-minute city into the regulatory framework of the zoning mechanism but also challenges the theoretical assumptions regarding the reduction of motorized individual mobility and the increase of walking or cycling within the land-use planning practice. The results are framed by an ontological and epistemological shift, labelled as "mobilities turn", that foregrounds "moving" as a central part of life within sociological and geographical research and has implications for new urban models and transport planning.

MOBILITY, LAND-USE URBAN PLANNING, TRANSPORT PLANNING, BUILT ENVIRONMENT

SESSION 3

Comparative analysis of urban spaces semiotics in the context of war and peace (the cases of Kyiv and Kharkiv)

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The semiotic structure of urban space is a complex and multifaceted construct shaped by prevailing narratives; which play a significant role in their dissemination throughout the urban environment. This structure combines signs, images, and symbols to convey meanings and emotions, desires, and motivations of citizens. Visual signs, such as architectural ensembles, buildings, monuments, artworks, billboards, and posters, constitute the primary form of information, accounting for over 90% of absorbed stimuli on conscious and subconscious levels. The semiotic structure and its components generate and reflect dominant narratives within urban society, influenced by geopolitical, socio-economic, historical, and other contexts. While the transformation of signs, meanings, and symbols occurs gradually, critical societal junctures prompt proactive individuals to generate new signs, driving the transformation of the semiotic structure. This study aims to characterize the semiotic structure of urban space, examining the transformation of dominant narratives and the evolution of population identity in response to societal upheaval. During a relatively peaceful pre-war period, Kyiv and Kharkiv exhibited distinct semiotic structures. Proximity to the Russian Federation led to external influences dominating Kharkiv's semiotic structure, imposing nostalgic narratives admiring the Soviet past and Russian culture. This caused societal confrontation and a semiotic war in Kharkiv over meanings and symbols. In contrast, Kyiv's society acknowledged decommunization and decolonization processes shifting toward narratives glorifying national heroes and emphasizing humanistic values. Despite a full-scale invasion, Kyiv's semiotic structure transformation intensified, adopting prominent anti-Ruscism narratives. In Kharkiv, Russia's invasion brought urbicide and civilian casualties, which generated cognitive dissonance among the population and triggered a significant metamorphosis in the semiotic structure. The study revealed an unexpected manifestation of pro-Ukrainian identity and a rejection of Soviet-imperial narratives within Kharkiv's semiotic structure. These findings highlight the transformative impact of external aggression on urban semiotics and the profound changes in dominant narratives and identity formation.

URBAN SPACE, SEMIOTIC STRUCTURE, NARRATIVE, POPULATION IDENTITY, RUSSIA-UKRAINIAN WAR

From urbicide to scattered rebirth: Mariupol as a networked wartime city

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The Russian war in Ukraine has created an unprecedented, albeit geographically uneven, need for reconstruction, and for the re-creation of sustainable livelihoods and sustainable demographies. In the first part of the presentation, I will focus on Mariupol's spatial patterns of physical destruction. Mariupol lost nearly three quarters of its population due to wartime casualties and, most notably, forced displacement, and has become the symbol of Russian urbicide. In the second part of the presentation, I will discuss how Mariupol has reemerged as a constellation of virtual and physical communities scattered across Ukraine and even abroad.

Symbolic landscape changes induced by geopolitical conflicts: comparison of Kyiv and Transcarpathia

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It is a well-known phenomenon that power thrives to shape the symbolic landscape by reinterpreting or erasing elements that do not fit its ideology while installing new idols and icons. These shifts have a direct influence on everyday life of people (change ID cards, learn new toponymy, adjust mental map). In Ukraine, geopolitical events of recent years (Euromaidan, war in Donbas and the invasion of Russia in 2022) indued significant changes to the country's symbolic landscape. Previous research have analysed these shifts on country scale or focused on certain cities and regions (e.g. Gnatiuk, Mezentsev, and Pidgrushnyi 2022; Slyvka, Slyvka, and Atamaniuk 2017). However, the multiethnic westernmost periphery, Transcarpathia has received limited attention. We were intrigued to explore how the symbolic landscape has been transformed since 2014 in this region, especially in two aspects: 1) whether we can trace different tendencies in Transcarpathia than in Kyiv; 2) and if there is an altering pattern in transformation following the Euromaidan or the 2022 Russia's invasion. Based on field observations, analysis of statistics and visual data compiled since 2014 in Kyiv and in Transcarpathia, this paper aims to illustrate and compare the major shifts in symbolic landscape in Kyiv and in Transcarpathia. In our definition symbolic landscape is comprised of the official street names, statues and monuments, but also street art (Jóvér 2020) and spontaneous commemorations (Azaryahu 1996). We argue that following the Euromaidan in Transcarpathia the focus was on commemorating local heroes, while in Kyiv the emphasis was on the glorification of national heroes (Erőss, Kovály 2018). However, after 2022 similar symbols have appeared in the centre and in the periphery, with two main features: 1) commemoration of those, who are fighting for Ukraine in the current war; 2) symbols associated with the Soviet past disappeared or were revalued.

KYIV, TRANSCARPATHIA, RUSSO-UKRAINIAN WAR, SYMBOLIC LANDSCAPE

Wartime Malleability: Everyday Geopolitics in Kraków's Galeria Plaza as Mall-Shelter

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University College London

This paper explores transformations in urban space since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine through the lens of the shopping mall. I use the shopping mall for two reasons: firstly, the significant growth of malls since the end of the socialist era means that they are an integral part of the contemporary everyday urban experience in the region; secondly, the mall's inherent flexibility, or 'malleability' (Gosseye and Avermaete, 2018), makes it particularly adept at reflecting ongoing geopolitical shifts. The mall can thus provide insight into the everyday urban geopolitics of Russia's war on Ukraine. Recently there has been recognition of the 'entanglement' of the refugee within wider urban processes (Katz et al., 2018). This situation is reflected in various commercial spaces around the world being repurposed into refugee shelters, an urban transformation which stands at the intersection between geopolitics, warfare, humanitarianism, neoliberalism and the everyday. However, this phenomenon has not yet received significant scholarly analysis. My paper addresses this gap by exploring Krakow's Galeria Plaza which was transformed into a refugee shelter following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. I make use of several methodological tools – interviews, participant observation, photography, video analysis, and analysis of media interviews – to present a multi-dimensional image of the mall-shelter. Starting with an exploration of its physical properties, I take a materialist approach to highlight the material transformations this space underwent when repurposed into a mall-shelter. I then examine the web of actors who were influential in developing the mall-shelter, providing a critique of Latour's (2005) 'flattening' actor-network theory. Finally, I seek to include voices of refugees who spent time in the mall-shelter to understand some of the ways in which this space influenced their experience. Ultimately, this paper emphasises the importance of including the refugee experience in discussions of everyday urban geopolitics during wartime.

MALLS, WAR, HUMANITARIANISM, NEOLIBERALISM

Urban geopolitical entanglements: International actors and the post-war reconstruction of cities

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University of Konstanz

This paper examines the relationship between post-war reconstruction and geopolitics by analysing how international actors are involved in the reconstruction of cities after conflict, particularly in connection to their role in memory politics. It discusses the post-war reconstruction of cities as a process of spatialization of memory battles between groups by tracing how rebuilding favours particular identities and contributes to dynamics of remembering, amnesia and silencing. First, it interrogates the motivations and agendas of international actors in taking part in reconstruction in connection with memory narratives. Second, it analyses the impact of urban and architectural interventions connected to international actors on domestic memory politics. Discussing the constellations of international actors in three urban reconstructions in the former Yugoslavia and the Middle East, it shows that the urban reconfiguration of cities after war has become an arena of international actors who mobilize different narratives of power and memory threads, reshaping conflict using other means. It draws from a variety of situations, including reconstruction of urban sites in Belgrade after the 1999 NATO bombing as an arena of intersections of actors and memory narratives, including EU, Russia and the United Arab Emirates, and the reconstruction of Sarajevo and Beirut, which show the double play between internal nation-building/conflicting memories and an array of international actors and agendas. For instance, through supporting the rebuilding of religious buildings connected with a particular identity, or building memorials, these international actors contribute to the reshaping of memory landscapes. Moreover, it shows the role of non- state actors by highlighting the important role of the municipality of Barcelona in rebuilding Sarajevo and its links with Catalan memory politics, reflecting forms of multidirectional memory. It is based on interviews with architects, urban planners, representatives of the local authorities and NGOs, on an architectural hermeneutic analysis of sites, as well as an examination of local media coverage of such projects. The paper argues that the entanglement of local, national, and international actors in reconstructions play a role in reshaping both memory dynamics and conflict even after peace treaties are signed.

WAR RECONSTRUCTION URBAN GEOPOLITICS ARCHITECTURE MEMORY

A toolkit for rethinking post-socialism through spatial and temporal extensions

Liviu Chelcea
University of Bucharest

During the 2010s, several studies questioned the conceptual stability of "post-socialism." I review some of these critiques, paying particular attention to the contradictions of the "Global East," proposed lately as a substitute concept. Resisting this recent call to abandon it and building on recent scholarship, I suggest three spatial and temporal extensions helpful to explore new questions: documenting the use of "strategic anachronisms," best illustrated by universal anti-communism; configuring post-socialism as a heterochrony and messy temporality; and reorienting the concept from its connection with the past to a connection with a potential socialist future, among other things by provincializing East European/Former Soviet Union post-socialisms. The concept of post-socialism prompts plenty of inspiring questions about theory-making, challenges to neoliberal normalization, shifting notions of value, failure and success, local and global histories and possible futures for socialism, and comparative urbanism, thus allowing further exploration of contemporary and emerging politics, East and West, South and North. Scholars might be better off leaving the concept radically open and using it, selectively, as a toolkit, without relying on deterministic assumptions and putative master narratives. "To let a thousand flowers bloom" might be a more productive epistemological terrain than attempting to rationalize and then eradicate the concept of post-socialism. Post-socialism, some 30 years into its existence, might be in a position to move on to what social studies of knowledge call a "strong program," by which they mean not a standardized and prescriptive settlement of disputes, but rather an anti-normative and anti-prescriptive openness.

Time to bury post-socialism for good. Alive, if necessary.

Michael Gentile
University of Oslo

Arguably, we are currently in the third wave of interest in debating "post-socialism." The first wave, during the 1990s, was mostly implicit. We were still in search for a new and appropriate vocabulary, but "post-socialism" used as either noun or adjective was hardly loaded given it mainly temporal connotations (in the 1990s, everyone knew what was meant by "post-socialist city"). The second wave took place in the second half of the 2000s, and since approximately 2016 or so we seem to be in the midst of a minor tsunami of interest in the concept. Moreover, in between the second and third wave, Sýkora and Bouzarovski produced a post-communist catching-up narrative that has been influential within urban studies. In this talk, I will argue that it is time to bury the concept, forever and for good, even while it is still alive. Although there have been various sophisticated attempts aimed at preserving, revisiting or revamping the concept, I will suggest that such exercises have become increasingly inconsequential because: (a) the diversity in the economic and especially political trajectories of CEE countries restricts and conditions its applicability; (b) state socialism was gone more than a generation ago and its direct legacy effects are increasingly irrelevant and difficult to trace; and most importantly (c) the label is insulting to those who are struggling with the vestiges of the imperialist power that was projected by the socialist-era metropole, and which has merely changed into a different and even darker outfit.

SESSION 4

Development trends of Lithuanian cities: thirty years of shrinkage and four years of slight stabilization. Could regrowth of population become a new development trend?

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Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences

The constant population decline trend was obvious since Lithuania restored its independence in 1990. In thirty years, the country lost around 25 percent its population and in 2022 counted 2,8 million inhabitants. However, the recent years showed the inhabitant stabilization marks and even slight re-growth. Due to the fact that natural change is still negative in Lithuania it might be presumed that the population number increases because of positive immigration (or re-emigration) trends. Firstly, the population number in 2020-2021 slightly raised because of the Covid-19 pandemic (most likely due to lockdown and mobility restrictions, re-emigration trends); and secondly, the Lithuania faced the population growth in 2022 due to the war-refugees from Ukraine. Analyzing the data of 21st century, the greater population loss was noticed in regional and local urban centers rather metropolitan areas. In this presentation the author examines the phenomenon of shrinkage (and the latest trends of stabilization) in Lithuania, especially emphasizing on the case study area – Šiauliai city that is one of the biggest Lithuanian cities and the regional center in North central part of the country. It discusses the general changes population changes in Lithuania in general and Šiauliai city in the last thirty years. The demographic, social and economic indicators and their trends are analyzed more detailed. Also, attitude of national and local authorities towards the shrinkage and recent crises are introduced. In addition, the presentation involves the brief introduction of generalized results of the most recent study that aims to reveal the image of Šiauliai in the opinion of Vilnius (capital) residents.

SHRINKAGE, DEPOPULATION, DEVELOPMENT TRENDS, LITHUANIAN CITIES

Demographic changes of small Polish towns over the last two decades

Agnieszka Kwiatek-Sołtys
Pedagogical University of Krakow

Small towns in Poland clearly dominate in the urban settlement structure as they make over 78% of all urban units, however they are populated by less than 5 million people. In the last two decades, between 2000 and 2023 the demographic potential of small towns has shrinked while their share in the number of all cities increased. The number of small towns in 2023 is by 100 bigger than at the beginning of the 21 century, for the whole set the number of inhabitants is however by 122 thousand smaller. Small towns of Poland are very differentiated both in terms of geographical location (peripheral versus those located in the metropolitan areas), functions and economic development as well as their reaction to the present situation. In the study period 73% of small towns depopulated, for many it is very deep depopulation as the dynamics is below 90. Apart of the global trends associated to the second demographic transition as well as emigration the time of Covid-19 and the high mortality rate has made the process of depopulation much stronger. The previous author's research proof that only in some cases of towns it is already the complex process of shrinkage. Based on the demographic analyses including Webb typology of towns the question of the small towns attractiveness and strategies in the light of new possibilities of development associated to the refugees influx are asked.

SMALL TOWNS, POLAND, DEPOPULATION

The influence of nuclear deterrence during the Cold War on the growth and decline patterns of the peripheral town of Valga/Valka, Estonia

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The presentation is based on a book chapter submitted and accepted for the Routledge book «Urban planning during socialism: views from the periphery» edited by Jasna Mariotti and Kadri Leetmaa. The publishing is foreseen in the early 2024. (full text available for session organisers if requested) This chapter explores the impact of the military sphere on the development of peripheral localities and examines how the spatial needs of the military sector are generally higher priority than routine town planning. We investigate Valga/Valka, adjacent paired towns on the border of northern Latvia and southern Estonia—a peripheral part of the former Soviet Union—to illustrate how small unimportant towns, attracting little or no international attention, were ideal sites for secret military facilities and were thus subsumed during the 1960s and 1970s into the high stakes of the Cold War. We demonstrate that although the development of Valga/Valka was dramatically shaped by its position in the Eastern Bloc and its critical role in the expansion of military capability, these twin towns lacked inherent development potential and entered an inevitable phase of shrinkage when the Iron Curtain lifted and the constant threat of war eased. Small towns will continue to gain importance during military operations and conflict periods, and thoughtful town planning can help ensure that such towns do not shrink or falter when the military withdraws.

SHRINKING FACTORS, MILITARISATION, PERIPHERIES, SMALL TOWNS, COLD WAR GEOGRAPHIES

Demographic change, market failure and the future of Soviet-era housing estates in post-socialist shrinking cities

Alan Mallach
Center for Community Progress

From the 1950s through the 1980s, millions of flats in large multi-family housing estates were built by the then-State Socialist regimes in (now post-Socialist) central and eastern Europe nations. Outside Germany, after 1990 these properties were sold, generally at nominal prices, to their tenants, resulting in the near-total privatization of this housing stock. In recent years widespread demographic decline and migration reflecting both internal and international patterns of uneven development, juxtaposed with increased private sector competition, has led to a cascade of serious issues with respect to the condition and future of much of this housing stock, including physical deterioration, financial instability of condominium entities and centralized energy providers, social relegation (such as the conversion of some estates to Roma 'ghettoes' and others to de facto senior citizen housing), rising vacancy rates, and outright market failure. With continued declines projected for the number of households in many Eastern European countries, all of these problems are likely to become far more severe over coming decades. Focusing primarily on the Baltic nations, I will address the implications of this potential problem cascade, situating it in the context of shrinking city dynamics, offering a contrast with the radically different model of public sector intervention pursued under stadtumbau ost in Eastern Germany, and explore both the possibilities and limitations of future public sector intervention to respond to these challenges.

HOUSING ESTATES SHRINKING CITIES DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE MARKET FAILURE

The socioeconomic and demographic impacts on development in peripheral towns in Latvia

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European urban areas have undergone profound transformations in recent decades due to complex demographic and socioeconomic shifts. This transformation is particularly evident in the widening disparities between economically thriving, globally integrated cities and their surrounding metropolitan regions compared to the marginalised peripheral towns. Among these, peripheral Latvian cities, especially the smaller ones, have been particularly affected by population decline, ageing, outmigration, peripheralisation, and marginalisation.

Until approximately 1989, these towns experienced population growth, aligning with the national trend of independent Latvia. However, over the past three decades, they have faced a sharp population decline, mainly attributable to the pronounced spatial polarisation that has impacted peripheral regions across the country. Today, these towns form a relatively dense network of small settlements scattered throughout Latvia, following a predominantly monocentric national pattern. Demographically and economically, there is a notable concentration in the capital city of Riga and its surrounding metropolitan area. This decline in peripheral towns is also closely linked to the spatial polarisation that has characterised Latvia's peripheral regions in recent decades (Lang et al., 2022).

Significant changes have occurred in the economic landscape of these small towns, with a corresponding shift in the employment structure of urban residents. Since the late 1980s, many of these areas have lost their agricultural governance functions previously tied to major collective farms. Administrative and service enterprises connected to these farms were once a cornerstone of these towns. In the Soviet era, many small towns housed large industrial companies or branches of national firms. These companies were the primary employers for residents and played a vital role in providing essential social infrastructure, including kindergartens, cultural halls, and sports facilities. However, many of these enterprises have since shut down entirely or significantly reduced their output levels.

Furthermore, there are small towns where large companies have shifted their focus to producing export-oriented goods or utilising local resources. This diversification has contributed to the changing economic landscape of these towns, which must now adapt to evolving economic realities and the challenges of globalisation.

SESSION 5

Housing affordability in Lithuania: a case of social housing

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Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences
Kristina Senkuviene
Institute of Sociology at the Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences

Since the collapse of communist regimes, housing policy in Central and Eastern Europe (CEECs) has undergone dramatic changes. The main issue has been the liberalization of housing and urban policies that allow market forces to assume almost full responsibility. This has the consequence, with some variations within the CEEC region, of high ownership (among the highest in the EU) and negligible and marginalised social housing. This paper examines the case of the Lithuanian housing policy system. Lithuania, together with Romania, is the EU country with the greatest number of homeowners. Specifically, it examines access to social housing in Lithuania. It asks the questions: what is the major aim of the Lithuania housing policy in Lithuania? How access to social housing is exercised in Lithuania? What kind of problems exist? Drawing on 5 semi-structured interviews with the policy makers and 15 interviews with the recipients of social housing and shelter, this paper reveals the problems related to access to social housing, management and administration issues of social housing, issues related to stigmatization of social housing recipients, and their satisfaction with the support provided.

SOCIAL HOUSING, LITHUANIA, HOUSING POLICY, HOME OWNERSHIP, WELFARE STATE

Trajectories of housing affordability: the lesson from Łódź, Poland

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Agnieszka Ogrodowczyk
University of Lodz
Bartosz Bartosiewicz
University of Lodz

The dramatic rise of house prices has been noted in many global and ordinary cities around the world in the past decades, and this process has been recently dubbed as growing 'housing affordability (HA) crisis'. Regardless of the continuous scholarly attention that the issue of HA has received over the last decades, there still are theoretical and empirical gaps to be addressed: 1) cases from beyond the English speaking world have largely been absent in the debate on the HA crisis; 2) the great majority of empirical studies on HA focus on interurban differences in affordability levels, thus ignoring the issue of intra-urban patterns and their evolution over time. Consequently, this paper lays special emphasis on the evolution of intra-urban affordability patterns, and illustrates the use of longitudinal methods alternative to commonly used spatial panel regression models. To gain more insights into the full trajectories of local housing affordability patterns in Łódź (2008-2022), and thus into the dynamics of the process, we use sequence analysis along with discrepancy analysis (a regression tree). The discrepancy analysis sheds light on the important effects of urban structure characteristics and amenities on divergent pathways of local affordability. Put differently, the combination of these two methods not only offers and an easy to interpret illustration of spatio-temporal dynamics of HA patterns, but also allows us to identify those factors of spatial structure that drive up (or down) local levels of housing affordability.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS URBAN STRUCTURE POLAND

Access to homeownership in decline – rising housing inequalities for young people in the neoliberal housing market of Tallinn

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University of Tartu
Ingmar Pastak
University of Tartu

The current housing affordability crisis, driven mainly by the financialization of housing and the government's retrenchment of social policies and provision of affordable housing, have affected growing inequalities in access to housing. The crises have hit young people especially hard. The recent trends call for systematic studies on the mechanisms generating such intergenerational inequality, considering the specifics of the prevailing housing regimes. Housing affordability in Tallinn has decreased due to fast-growing housing prices, as a result of an ultra-liberal housing regime, exemplified by housing financialization, capital accumulation, low level of governmental interventions and an overall increase in social inequalities. Based on EU-SILC data, it is shown how the recent trends during the decade between 2010 and 2020 have negatively impacted young people's access to homeownership – access has been greatly reduced for young cohorts, and it has become more differentiated, based on the socio-economic and labour market performance of households, as well as intergenerational transfers. Young households are increasingly residing in private rental dwellings, and many still rely on parental housing until their 30s. Rental housing, as compared to homeownership, has fewer advantages compared to homeownership – it brings no capital gains and is less secure, and rental stock tends to be located unevenly across urban space and to be in slightly worse condition compared to owner-occupied housing. This positions young people in an unfavourable position in the perspective of their housing career, and this can have severe consequences on their social inclusion.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY, HOMEOWNERSHIP, YOUNG PEOPLE, TALLINN

Part 2

Consumption Loans Consuming Homes:
Intersections of Housing Precarity and Personal Debt Overindebtedness

Tomáš Hoření Samec
Czech Academy of Sciences
Anja Decker
Czech Academy of Sciences
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Housing precarity, as a condition referring to insecurity and unaffordability of housing, has been in the recent decade on the rise across Europe. Many studies have focused on the experience of housing precarity from a perspective of various social groups (such as renters, migrants, young adults, subprime-mortgage debtors etc.) while usually exploring the affordability dimension. However, there are gaps of understanding regarding the character of housing precarity in relation to overindebtedness based on the non-mortgage (fringe) debt and on its procesual and affective (emotional) character. In this article, we aim to close this gap through a theoretical framework which adopts the concept of performativity to provide deeper understanding how may seemingly contingent discursive and practical acts with affective potential reify the possible into durable structures and institutions linked to the process of un-/re-making one precarious in terms of housing. Our argument is based on 30 in-depth narrative interviews with the over-indebted people from two Czech mid-size cities and 20 interviews with the institutional actors who deal with overindebtedness and housing, mainly on the local and municipal level (city officials, social workers, local politicians, etc.). Through their analysis and interpretation, we suggest that housing precarity is deeply interconnected with specific moral codes (figure of un/responsible debtor/renter) and variety of emotions (fear, shame, pressures) which are manifested through performance of showing the effort or trying hard enough to show oneself (or suggest that other should be) is a responsible and diligent subjects.

HOUSING PRECARITY, PERSONAL DEBT, OVERINDEBTEDNESS, PERFORMATIVITY, AFFECTS

Related Residential Careers of Parents and Children in Tallinn Metropolitan Area, 1989-2020

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This study explores the probability of 40-year-olds (+/- 5 years) living in neighbourhoods with high socioeconomic status in the Tallinn Metropolitan Region and the determinants that favour it. The study is based on longitudinal data (census, registers), which allow monitoring the indicators of the childhood living environment and tracing what socio-economic situation and environment their parents lived in when they were roughly the same age (1989). The research context is interesting because of the great changes in the socio- economic status of the neighbourhoods in the period 1989-2020. The research population is a cohort that has not gained anything from the privatization of the 1990s. Our results show that children's choice of residence depends on parents' socioeconomic status, and that there are parallel trends in residential choices between parents and children. Also, although Estonian-speakers end up in better neighbourhoods more often than Russian-speakers, their overall logic of parents' influence is similar.

INEQUALITIES, INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSIONS, NEIGHBOURHOOD CHOICES, ESTONIA

Housing rights in the selected EU countries

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Despite having a commodifying nature, housing is considered to be a social right. However, during the last decades the right to adequate and affordable housing has been diminishing in many EU countries. This paper aims 1) to explore the housing rights in the selected EU countries which represent different welfare state types and housing policy traditions; and 2) to examine the instruments though which the EU can support the housing rights. The analysis of the selected EU countries shows that the EU has a very scarce instruments by which it can support the housing rights. The provision and implementation of housing rights are mainly the responsibility of national states', and most often they are being ensured at the local/municipality level. We detect that better social rights exist in those countries in which housing is ensured not only by the municipalities, but also by other providers, such as non-profit housing associations, cooperatives, and non-for-profit organizations. This is the case for Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium. These countries also have larger public/social rental sector (except Belgium, which has higher private rental sector). In those countries, in which social rental sector is small, the government support is mainly concentrated to subject subsidies, e.g., support for home buyers, support for renters at a very low income, and maintenance support to cover housing utilities for people in vulnerable situations. This can be seen in Lithuania, Poland, and also Spain. Overall, our study shows that in order to increase the housing rights and ensure better housing availability, affordability and adequacy, we need to expand the public/social rental housing sector. The tenant's involvement in social housing sector management is crucial to shield the sector from the State (its 17pprox.ts to privatize and stigmatize) and the market (increase in prices).

HOUSING RIGHTS, SOCIAL POLICY, WELFARE STATE, POWER RESOURCES, SOCIAL HOUSING

SESSION 6

The impacts of and local responses to war refugee migration from Ukraine for cities and urban societies in the reception countries: the comparative perspective

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The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has led to the largest refugee migration in Europe since the Second World War. In the receiving countries, the management of arrival and settling of refugees takes place mostly at the local level, in cities and municipalities. The arrival of a large number of refugees within a few months in 2022 represented a large challenge for local decision-makers, actors and societies to provide housing, childcare and school education, job prospects and language training for the refugees from Ukraine. The need to relocate migrants from larger cities, to which they most willingly went, arose at the beginning of the migration crisis and is still present. For many small towns, also in the light of their shrinkage, the influx of migrants may turn out to be an 18pprox.18eity window. In many CEE countries, state and municipal refugee reception systems were previously politically marginal and widely resisted. Therefore, a lot of innovation and non-bureaucratic help was created to cope with the situation. Among the main challenges remaining are the wide-spread uncertainty of how long the refugees will stay and what consequences a longer duration of the war will have for their decision-making. Issues such as rising prices of housing, "compassion fatigue" among the local societies as well as frustration among other groups of refugees and helpers about "selective solidarity" and double standards of treatment have increased and led to conflicts. Given this context, this paper aims to discuss the impacts and local responses of Ukraine war refugee migration for the context of the receiving countries and their cities and municipalities in a comparative perspective. It highlights the impact of contextual factors and on how, at different places, the coping of arrival and settling has been governed and worked.

WAR AGAINST UKRAINE, REFUGEE MIGRATION, CITIES IN RECEPTION COUNTRIES, IMPACTS AND RESPONSES, COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The role of small towns in the war refugee reception. Polish case

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Poland and other European countries have faced an unexpected influx of war refugees from Ukraine since 2022. As a result of the rapid change from the emigration to immigration country new problems as well as opportunities arose. The need to host over 1,5 million refugees especially women, children and old people was a great task. Grassroots help of ordinary inhabitants, non-governmental organizations and local government units made it easier to overcome this crisis. Despite the fact that migrants usually prefer to go to larger urban centers, the scale of the influx and the wide nature of the refugee assistance meant that also smaller settlement centers became important places of reception, temporary reversing negative net migration rate. Having the depopulation of a majority of small towns (73% between 2000-2022) in mind authors are trying to answer the question if the local authorities find the situation as the potential opportunity window for the development of small towns. The qualitative methods like in-depth interviews help to investigate, on the one hand, the barriers and advantages of living in a small town by refugees themselves and on the other, the policies of local authorities to potentially reduce negative demographic trends. The study covered selected small towns of Malopolska Province where a18pprox. 10% of migrants from Ukraine currently reside, which makes it one of the most important reception areas. What is the lesson learnt if any from the present and how it may impact the future. The research and the presentation should become the starting point for the discussion.

SMALL TOWNS, POLAND, REFUGEES

Arrival neighbourhoods shaping the integration pathways of war-refugees from Ukraine

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Since the start of the Russian aggression war in February 2022, in total 135 refugees have arrived at Estonia up to now, and half of them have stayed put. These figures place Estonia in the top of the war refugee's recipient countries in relation to the population size of the country. War-migrants from Ukraine are entitled to the temporary protection, and access to basic services such as housing, education, and medical care, as well as the right to enter the job market. Most of refugees depend on the private housing market thus becoming responsible for acquiring housing as well as employment by themselves. According to the existing studies, there is a high level of ethnic residential segregation by existing Russian-speaking groups in Tallinn and elsewhere in Estonia, and the negative effects of further minority clustering can be anticipated because of the newly arrived war migrants. Furthermore, the residential segregation patterns tend to manifest also in the distinctive educational pathways and labour market outcomes thus shaping social integration opportunities. So far, the extensive evidence-based studies on residential locations and pathways of Ukrainian war-migrants since 2022 are largely absent in Europe. In our analysis, we are interested in the co-ethnic presence in neighbourhoods of residence as there was a sizeable Ukrainian minority living in Estonia before the war. We will analyse how is the ethnic and socio-economic composition of neighbourhoods related to the employment patterns of adult refugees during their first year of stay in Estonia. This study is thus the first among the comprehensive mapping on how the sorting of Ukrainian war-migrants to neighbourhoods takes place. We use data from administrative data sources. Our aim is to provide guidance for policymakers about the causes and consequences of spatial segregation as regards refugees.

WAR IN UKRAINE, REFUGEE MIGRATION, RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION

Part 2

The Distribution of Ukrainian Refugees in Czechia: Regional Disparities and Absorptive Capacity Analysis

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In the first year of the conflict in Ukraine, the Czech Republic received nearly half a million Ukrainian refugees. The majority of them arrived in the initial months following the outbreak of the conflict. The distribution of these refugees within the Czech Republic was highly differentiated regionally, as they primarily sought refuge in selected large cities. While for some regions this represented a significant organizational and financial burden, in other regions, a portion of the offered capacity remained unused. Was it possible to respond quickly in this regard? Was it sensible to coordinate the strong wave of refugees at the regional level? The objective of this paper is to present the results of a research study focused on mapping the distribution of Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic during the first weeks and months of the conflict in Ukraine, as well as analysing the absorptive capacity of Czech regions. The study was conducted through collaboration between academic researchers and a non-governmental organization during the initial weeks and months of the conflict, with the objective of providing relevant information to stakeholders responsible for managing the consequences within the realm of public administration. A set of maps will be demonstrated, documenting the uneven distribution of refugees in relation to available capacities in housing, education, and the labour market. Also, we aim to bring a personal reflection of how and if a cooperation between academics and NGO can influence the responses of political decision-makers.

WAR AGAINST UKRAINE, REFUGEE MIGRATION, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION RESPONSES

Karlovy Vary - turning a "Russian city" into a Ukrainian shelter?

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Karlovy Vary is a world-famous spa town in western Bohemia, renowned not only for its healing waters but also for its strong Russian influence. Russians, especially after 2000, made up a substantial part of visitors, invested heavily in real estate and were also the largest foreign group living in the city. Although the image of the "Russian city" never accurately reflected a significantly more complex reality, it was quite apt in its time. This image began to crack after the economic crisis of 2008 and especially after the start of the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014 when the flow of tourists and investment from Russia to Europe started to wane. COVID-19 stopped these flows almost completely, and the conventional war that Russia launched in February 2022 probably cut them off for good. On the other hand, the number of Ukrainians in the city has been increasing for a longer period, and even years before COVID they were more numerous than Russians. The war then brought thousands of Ukrainian refugees to the city, confirming its status as one of the busiest migration destinations in the entire Czechia. This paper aims to describe the new reality of Karlovy Vary – its position within the migration system of the country, the changes in the spatial distribution of the Ukrainian and Russian population at the city level, and, if possible, the socio-economic characteristics of the incoming refugee population compared to the former inhabitants. The study primarily draws on the unique registers of the Czech Foreign Police. The paper is part of the project NPO_UK_MSMT-16602/2022 „Funded by the European Union – NextGenerationEU".

CZECHIA, UKRAINIANS, REFUGEES, RUSSIANS, KARLOVY VARY

Lithuanian cities as the residential place for war refugee from Ukraine: scale of migration and emerged adaptation challenges

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The beginning of 2022 brought the wave of "unexpected" residents to Lithuania. The beginning of 2022 is associated with the war and mass migrations from Ukraine to Europe and worldwide. Lithuania was one of the countries that is opened for war refugees. In general, in 2022 Lithuania hosted 81 thousand foreigners (85% of all immigrants). Since February 2022 there have been officially registered (in Migration department and Registration center) around 80 thousand of war refugees from Ukraine in Lithuania (Statistics Lithuania, Dashboard: War refugees from Ukraine, 2023). However, the official statistics present only the general number of registered immigrants while there is no additional information how many of them (or how long) stayed in Lithuania. There is no doubt that that for some of refugees Lithuania was just the intermediate stop. The analysis of regional statistical data on population change allows to make an assumption that the majority of war refugees settled in the major cities. The number of permanent residents in the cities comparing the data of the beginning of 2022 and 2023 increased by 52 thousand (around 3%) in Lithuania. Better conditions to settle and easier adaptation (possibility to find the residential and work place, all necessary social infrastructure, e.g., hospitals, schools, kindergartens) were the main reasons choosing to live in a city rather rural area. Even though, the residents and authorities in Lithuania take efforts to help the war immigrants, the adaptation process is challenging. The presentation provides the brief insights about the situation of war refugee from Ukraine from the Lithuanian perspective. Also, it contributes to creating the broader view of overall situation of Ukrainian war refugee in Europe.

WAR REFUGEE, MIGRATION FROM UKRAINE, LOCAL RESPONSES, LITHUANIAN CITIES

Challenges for the local coping with the Ukrainian refugee migration seen from a housing-integration perspective: the case of Leipzig, eastern Germany

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Germany belongs to the main destinations of Ukrainian war refugee migration. Since February 2022, about 1 million people have come to German cities and municipalities. As in the other reception countries across Europe, this massive number of arrivals caused a set of challenges for local procedures and governance mechanisms. German cities and municipalities could build on experiences of the arrival of Syrian war refugees in 2015/16. The legal basis of TPD plus its implementation in Germany provided, however, a distinct context for integration of Ukrainian refugees. Local innovation and a large-scale solidarity by local population enabled the accommodation and initial integration of Ukrainian war refugees despite the price and energy crisis that the war had caused across European reception countries. Yet, from a structural and long-term perspective, many challenges remain. The paper seeks to address them from with a focus on the housing-integration nexus and for the local context of East German Leipzig where about 11,000 Ukrainian war refugees are living today. Among the challenges that persist to exist are double standards for Ukrainian and other refugees and the related risk to play off the interests of vulnerable groups against each other through double-standard practices, the prevailing approach of temporary solution to structural problems e.g. with respect to housing and of individual help schemes that do not resolve structural shortcomings. Apart from this, challenges are also emerging from the societal context in form of anti-refugee protests, xenophobia that slowly includes Ukrainian refugees as well and that is fueled by the polycrisis of war, refugee migration, energy and other prices that affect large parts of the local reception society. After having the presented the challenges, the paper will come up with some thoughts about what can be learnt from them in terms of both scientific debate and policy development.

UKRAINE WAR REFUGEE MIGRATION, HOUSING INTEGRATION, CHALLENGES, EASTERN GERMANY, LEIPZIG

"I simply cannot live like a guest forever...". Housing challenges of Ukrainian refugees hosted by private agents in Berlin

Valeria Lazarenko
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Since the beginning of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, more than 8 million Ukrainians have migrated abroad. Even though the arrival and settling of refugees was governed on both state and municipal levels, ground and personal initiatives contributed significantly to accommodating those fleeing the war. The option of private housing, when people in receiving countries willingly offered their homes for refugees, helped to settle the vast majority of those arriving. However, given the temporal context of the ongoing war and unclear perspectives on how long the refugees will stay, or whether they would return to their country, the overall idea of private housing was challenged. Even though the German government has adopted a decree for compensating the costs of hosting Ukrainians, cases were reported when refugees were asked to move out, resulting in some of them making the decision to return back to Ukraine. Everyday conflicts, misunderstandings, and exposure to potential exploitation resulting from tensions in private households can also further contribute to the well-being of the refugees and their prospects of staying in the receiving country. Such challenges might be a clear manifestation of what is called "compassion fatigue" and represent the overall contestation of the private housing model, which can work as an interim rather than a sustainable solution. Drawing upon the ongoing anthropological research on the personal experiences of Ukrainian refugee women in Berlin, this paper will focus on the impact of private housing contestations on the refugees' decision-making and return perspectives. The overlapping housing crises in Berlin and the ambiguities of German social policies towards Ukrainian refugees will be highlighted as well.

WAR AGAINST UKRAINE, REFUGEE MIGRATION, HOUSING OF REFUGEES, CITIES IN RECEPTION COUNTRIES, HOUSING GOVERNANCE

Foreign Migration and Local Government Policies: A Case Study of the Impact of War Refugees from Ukraine on the Town of Pisek, Czech Republic

Ludek Sykora

Charles University

This paper presents an in-depth analysis of the foreign population in the small town of Pisek in Czechia, with a specific focus on the developments in 2022, which were influenced by the war in Ukraine. Pisek, known as a cultural center with aspirations to develop a creative and innovative economy, has experienced significant changes due to the construction of a new industrial zone, leading to an influx of labor-intensive automotive production and subsequent foreign immigration in Southern Bohemia. Consequently, the town has witnessed the emergence of specific residential patterns, characterized by segregated low-paid workers' dormitories located on the town' periphery. Simultaneously, Pisek is also home to a sizable middle-class population and well-integrated foreign residents. In 2022, a third group of immigrants, war refugees from Ukraine, arrived in unprecedented numbers, dramatically altering the social and demographic profile of the foreign population and presenting significant challenges to local practices of integrating foreign migrants. This contribution provides an overview of the key challenges, both long-term and those that emerged in 2022, as well as the local responses in the area of integration practices.

FOREIGN MIGRATION, REFUGEES, INTEGRATION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT

SESSION 7

Consultants as important policy mobility actors: the evolution of participatory place-making in Czech cities

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Organised public involvement in various projects has become at least rhetorically part of urban place-making understood as good and desirable – in contrast to development led by the interests of oligarchs, developers or local politicians seen as neglecting the needs of residents. One of the leading proponents of participatory approaches in the Czech cities were and perhaps still are the consultants: local actors with various backgrounds (social sciences, architecture, environmental protection), mostly with connections to the western communities of practice and NGOs. As such, they facilitated the implementation and appropriation of specific approaches to urban space and its co-creation in the Czech cities. They served as important policy mobility actors and partially as intermediaries between international donors and local governance. Moreover, it is not merely a matter of the past decades. They actively co-shape urban policies and particular urban plans or designs until today. However, these actors still need more research attention among the many human actors involved in place-making in CEE cities. The presentation will explore their roles through semi-structured interviews with architects and consultants who focus on promoting and providing organised participation in urban projects and plans in the Czech Republic. It will show how their role, means, and notions of place-making have changed in time, thus introducing the temporal dimension into the debate. Last but not least, the presentation will open the question of to what extent the term "consultation" fits when contrasted to the Western urban contexts and literature.

CONSULTANTS, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, URBAN DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING, POLICY MOBILITY

Complexities of Urban Planning and Sprawl in Bucharest: A Study of Planning Processes and Urban Growth

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Bucharest, Romania's capital, underwent significant changes after transitioning from state communism to democracy in the 1990s. The shift towards market-oriented policies and foreign direct investment led to economic growth and transformed the city's socio-economic landscape. However, this political and economic reform also brought about challenges in the planning sphere. This paper explores the consequences of Bucharest's economic growth and planning reforms on its neighborhoods and suburbs. The city experienced a mix of horizontal and vertical development approaches, resulting in significant changes within its administrative limits and sprawling urban expansion in the metropolitan area. Despite a strict planning policy framework, diverse growth patterns emerged, highlighting the complexities of the Romanian planning system. The paper focuses on Bucharest's periphery, specifically Popesti Leordeni and Berceni in Sector 4, to study the evolution of urban sprawl. By analyzing satellite imagery, urban plans, and development tactics, the research aims to understand how planning processes have evolved in recent years and how they shape the local planning system. The study also examines the relationship between urban plans in different sectors, the city's administrative borders, and Ilfov County. The process of administrative planning in Bucharest poses challenges to decision-making and implementation. The ability and possibility to amend the General Urban Plan, which is overseen by local authorities, have led to informal procedures that undermine transparency and hinder effective planning and control of individual planning initiatives. The fragmented structure of local government further complicates coordination and creates divergent approaches to urban development. This research highlights the lack of efficient urban planning regulations and effective implementation guidelines, resulting in a patchwork of urbanized areas and an uncertain urban future for Bucharest peripheries. The influence of community pressure and economic interests further shape the city's growth. By examining these complexities, the study provides insights into Bucharest's planning system and its implications for urban development.

URBAN GROWTH PLANNING URBAN SPRAWL EASTERN EUROPE ROMANIA

What is Left to the State? Discussing the changing role of the state, civil society, and international actors in urban planning

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The paper shows how critical juncture events that have the power to bring about dramatic changes allow new actors to emerge in urban governance, especially targeting place-making in public spaces. Revolution of Dignity of 2014 in Ukraine and Velvet Revolution of 2018 in Armenia are the democratic breakthrough events studied in the paper. The paper looks at how power vacuum left after critical juncture events in urban planning were occupied by civil society and international donor organizations. Revolutions gave those actors agency to get involved in the transformation of public spaces in the capital cities of Armenia (Yerevan) and Ukraine (Kyiv). Through several case study examples in Yerevan and Kyiv, the paper demonstrates how the state is no longer the main producer of space and how in some instances it can be isolated and neglected, being forced to merely formalize the reality created in public spaces by civil society and international organizations.

PUBLIC SPACES, ARMENIA, UKRAINE, CIVIL SOCIETY, PLACE-MAKING

Yerevan Spatial Transformations as a Part of Ethnicity Categorization Toolbox

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Independent researcher

The study aims to depart from the theoretical foundation commonly used in constructivist ethnicity studies. Using this framework, the investigation explores how urban planning activities can be used as a part of the ethnicity categorization toolbox. The case chosen for this study is the Republic of Armenia capital city — Yerevan, which has witnessed numerous "ethnically motivated" urban form transformations since the beginning of the 20th century. During the Soviet and post-Soviet periods Yerevan spatial metamorphosis are examined as a part of symbolic politics through the lens of a descriptive tool: environmental characteristics. In the research this parametric approach was connected to the conceptions of Armenianness as an ethnic category. Scenario ways of connecting ethnic stereotypes with spatial transformations are revealed. In the process of establishing connections between environmental characteristics and attributes of Armenianness, the preceding context of the spatial transformations was examined. Either, an analysis of myths was conducted, serving as a link between the physical and symbolic levels of space. To uncover ethnic processes in the spatial context, a series of in-depth interviews were made within the scope of the study. The selection criteria for respondents was their expert inclusion involvement in the urban planning transformations of Yerevan from both analytical and practical perspectives.

ETHNICITY, CONSTRUCTIVISM, NATIONAL ARCHITECTURE, URBAN ENVIRONMENT, SYMBOLIC POLITICS

Part 2

Totalitarian Flower Pavilion: between the imaginary and actual effects of post-socialist factors on urban policymaking in Ukraine and Poland

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Although post-socialist cities are often perceived as relatively homogeneous, they differ greatly in their spatial form, social composition, economic structure, and historical experience due to pre- and post-socialist factors. This paper presents two case studies seemingly arising from the consequences of post-socialist processes in two types of cities in the CEE region, which differ in terms of their size, current level of development, and the course of transformation after 1989/1991. The first example is a protest movement against the demolition of a modernist pavilion in Kyiv by a real estate developer (2021), and the second concerns the liquidation of systemic spatial planning in Poland (2003), with a particular focus on Krakow. In fact, in both cases, post-socialist factors play the role of an additional variable of limited importance and the emphasis on the particular importance of this period in the past seems to be a more Western-oriented way of thinking. The latter also seems to make reliable analysis difficult, as it represents a kind of simplistic inversion of the views of the anti-communist far right. The presentation shows the results of research based on in-depth interviews with urban policymakers conducted shortly before and after the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

KYIV, KRAKOW, KVITY UKRAINY, SPATIAL PLANNING, URBAN POLICY

Discourses and practices of making and remaking places in Ukrainian cities: the mixture of post-socialism and neoliberalism

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Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv
Anatolii Melnychuk
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

During a protracted period of transition, post-socialism manifested itself in Ukrainian urban areas as a challenging mix of "still socialism" and "anti-socialism" when it is concerning the approaches and the ways of producing urban spaces as well as the outcomes. This was inevitably accompanied by searching for answers to the questions: how decisions on urban development are made and who is involved, what approaches and concepts underlie these decisions, what instruments and procedures regulate the processes. For many urban areas in Ukraine, post-socialist transition has became a period of remaking and rethinking the forms and structures of socialism, as well as a phase of search for new meanings, new ways for production of space and relations through this process, when the outcome depends on the interactions between many parties involved. Therefore, it is a stage specific by its forms and structures, when on the one hand, the discussion on remaking the places arouses interest and becomes a subject of public and even political debate, and on the other hand, when the instruments and institutions are still quite weak to balance the specific vision of highly influential stakeholders. This talk will be focused on the analysis of the implementation of several specific place-making activities and urban projects basing on both the public discourse around them and the main concepts they appeal to as well as the practice of implementing these projects. Thereby, we aim to illustrate different dimensions of making the places in cities after transition: the search for new approaches and concepts, the attempts of public dialogue and interaction between different parties, the involvement of urban planning instruments in the development and implementation of these projects, and the results of these efforts. Thus, this talk will contribute to the discussion on how urban is produced in cities after transition.

Beyond Office Walls: Exploring Proximity, Collaboration, and Urban Place-Making of Coworking Spaces

Katarzyna Wojnar
University of Warsaw

This paper addresses the question of urban impacts of coworking spaces (CSs) on the city from a sociology and economic geography perspective. It combines the concept of proximity with the growing body of literature focusing on the spatial aspects of CS operations and their role in fostering collaboration as well as impacting urban innovation ecosystems. The study examines the significance of various proximity dimensions within CSs, highlighting their variations across different spaces. To provide empirical insights, the study employs covert participant observation research conducted in Warsaw in summer 2022 using the mystery shopping methodology. It encompasses a comprehensive analysis of 21 CS locations, including top-down, bottom-up, independent, and flex CS organisation models. The study utilizes qualitative analysis to investigate different aspects of CSs, including the typology of users, occupancy rates, interior design, and work atmosphere. It also explores the dimensions of proximity, encompassing cognitive, social, organizational, institutional, spatial, and temporal aspects. Additionally, the research employs qualitative, spatial, and quantitative analysis to examine urban surroundings of CSs, considering factors such as diversity, multifunctionality, and prestige. The findings reveal that CSs leverage diverse urbanization and agglomeration effects, which are contingent upon their specific business models and urban locations. Moreover, the results indicate that only a limited number of CSs fulfil the criteria of being a 'third place,' facilitating spatial and symbolic accessibility, seamless integration of public and private spaces, and fostering the diffusion of innovation within urban innovation ecosystems.

COWORKING SPACES, PROXIMITY, URBAN PLACE-MAKING, MYSTERY SHOPPING

SESSION 8

They're building, but for whom? The social structure of the inhabitants of new residential areas in Prague.

Jiří Nemeškal
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Six thousand newly built flats a year in Prague seem to be sufficient from the point of view of statistics, considering the population growth of ten thousand people. Even so, the issue of housing is one of the main problems of contemporary Prague, and for large socio-economic groups of the population, such as young people, owning their own housing is almost impossible and they often have to choose the path of long-term rental housing or moving out of Prague. The paper therefore considers the socio-economic and demographic differentiation of client groups of new residential developments and through this assesses the current housing construction in Prague. The aim is to describe and explain the disproportions in the Prague real estate market. The research combines the analysis of citywide trends with the presentation of specific locations. The analysis is based on data from the 2021 population census and internal migration data. The paper is a part of the project NPO_UK_MSMT-16602/2022 „Funded by the European Union – NextGenerationEU.

PRAGUE, NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION, SOCIOECONOMIC STRUCTURE

Public services and facilities in new residential estates: The case of Vilnius and Budapest

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In terms of the availability of public infrastructure, the post-socialist new residential estates are dramatically different from the large housing estates constructed in the period of state socialism. That time, schools, kindergartens, social and medical services were usually planned and established as an integral part of the newly developed residential areas. By contrast, the profit-driven housing investors, who appeared after 1989/1991, were neither willing nor obliged to build infrastructure. They have constructed larger and larger residential estates (especially since 2000), which has obviously increased the demand for public services. The new dwellers are typically young families for whom the availability of kindergartens and elementary schools is crucial. Thus the lack of these institutions within the new residential estates and the resulting overuse of the old facilities in the neighbourhood affect a large part of the local population. There is every reason to suppose that the new residential areas do not fit the concept of 15 min cities. This hypothesis is tested in two different cities, Vilnius and Budapest. The presentation focuses on two cities; Vilnius and Budapest. In the Lithuanian capital, new residential estates are concentrated in certain areas, they constitute homogeneous urban quarters. The pattern in Budapest is different: investors exploit every vacant plot within the city; consequently, the number of new estates is high, while their size is smaller than in Vilnius. The authors explore how these spatial differences influence the availability of public infrastructure. They map the old and newly established educational and medical institutions providing services to the inhabitants of new residential estates and analyse how far the closest institutions are, how much the customers have to travel in order to reach them. Comparing different generations of the new residential estates, the authors also examine whether the earlier or the later built estates have better facilities.

NEW RESIDENTIAL ESTATE, PUBLIC SERVICES, URBAN FUNCTION, BUDAPEST, VILNIUS

The issue of regulating suburbanization, case study of Łódź

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Suburbanisation is common phenomenal in many cities all over the world. In theory, because of it many rural areas become urban and, after time, are incorporated to cities. But in many cities of Central and Easter Europe, the spatial development was planned many years ahead and the authorities incorporated small villages before building city-like infrastructure connecting them with the centre. However due to political changes in the 90. many of these projects were never executed and outskirts of the cities remained rural. That is why the suburbanisation process could start both in and out of the city border. Example of this kind of situation is the city of Łódź in central Poland. The new residential suburbs have been forming in districts, which were incorporated in 1988 and were never fully developed. Suburbanisation also takes place in the surrounding communes. The biggest difference between these two areas is the fact that first ones are under control of Łódź authorities. In 2019 city council adopted a spatial development study, the purpose of which was, among other things, to slow down urban sprawl within the city borders. However, this new law has been heavily criticized by local communities, which cannot develop as quickly as their neighbors outside city borders. Many people even have signed petitions to disconnect their district from the city (e.g. Wiskitno or Wziniesienia Łódzkie). In my presentation I will show the arguments of city council in favor of spatial regulations and of the local communities against them. I will also present the possible effects of the new law and the lack of them in case of disconnecting the districts. This topic is important because the problem of urban sprawl is common in CEECs. The obvious solution is regulations, but ill-considered law may create new problems, as in the Łódź's example.

SUBURBANISATION, REGULATION, SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT, ŁÓDŹ

Images of a "good life" in the post-socialist city: the case of the new housing estates in Vilnius

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This presentation delves into an analysis of the marketing messages of the new residential complexes constructed in Vilnius city municipality between 2014 and 2022. The research presented in this paper is built upon a previous study conducted on housing estates spanning from 1990 to 2014. The post-2000 period of mass housing construction, without a centralized urban development and housing policy, has brought with it a commodification of production and distribution. These newly established estates have significantly altered the city's spatial structure and contribute to a narrative surrounding what defines a good life within a post-socialist city, along with how one's home and the city ought to be perceived and lived. This presentation analyses the marketing messages of these housing projects as representations of space, following the definition by Henri Lefebvre (1991), as the motif of the city developed by planners, government officials and architects. The marketing images of housing estates suggest a system of values and preferences of life in the city and are related to the time-specific utopia this research aims to reconstruct. The ideology of home and life in the city suggested by these new structures bears upon the general form of the city, its connections, everyday functioning, and relationships between its inhabitants. As with all utopian urban images (e.g., radiant city, garden city, green city, happy city etc.), they don't have to be fulfilled and often aren't. Yet, they are usually inevitably accompanied by unintended consequences.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, URBAN IMAGES, REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE, VILNIUS, POST-SOCIALIST CITIES

SESSION 10

Towards multicultural gentrification: ICT sector worker residential choices in Tallinn

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ICT (information and communication technologies) sector workers are an occupational group which has experienced significant benefits from digital transition in the society. With high salaries and high prevalence of remote work (Milasi et al., 2020), they are able to exercise freedom in housing market. However, urban-rural divide in digital transition is widely recognized (Salemink et al., 2017), and the high and middle socioeconomic class is growing at least in global cities, a trend which supports gentrification (Hamnett, 2021). Therefore, the influence of ICT workers in urban housing markets may lead to broader impacts on urban socio-spatial inequalities. This may be particularly relevant in post-socialist countries, where the ICT sector has been perceived as a gateway towards Western values (McElroy, 2020). The ICT sector is also known for its international orientation, and ICT companies are thus likely to attract a more ethnically diverse body of workers. In a dual-ethnic city, such as Tallinn (Tammaru et al., 2016), this may bring about the necessary conditions for ethnic desegregation. In this study, we aim to assess whether the ethnic diversity within ICT workers' residential choices leads to diverse gentrification pathways in Tallinn. To achieve this, we use individual-level Estonian census data, with the population groups of interest being programming and consultancy professionals and managers, as well as Estonians, Russians and other ethnicities. The reference group is urban residents with comparable occupational status and cultural capital, which allows us to evaluate whether ICT sector workers are notably distinct in their residential choices. Through identifying gentrifying neighbourhoods, calculating ethnic segregation levels and mapping the results, we propose a new understanding of cities in digital transition.

DIGITAL TRANSITION, OCCUPATIONAL CHANGE, ETHNIC SEGREGATION

The regeneration of inner cities as the indicator of different forms of gentrification

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The contribution deals with the urban regeneration in the inner city of Pilsen, a post-socialist city of 170,000 inhabitants, which is then compared with Prague. We aim to determine whether gentrification is actively occurring in these areas and to identify differences in the manifestations of this process between these cities. Gentrification is closely related to the revitalisation of neglected buildings, therefore the degree of modernisation was chosen in this thesis as the main indicator of potential gentrification. The assessment of the physical environment was based on a field survey in which photos of individual buildings were taken. The current condition of the buildings was compared with the Street View images and according to the appropriate classification, the buildings were distinguished based on their external condition. More than 5,000 buildings were monitored in a total of 10 neighbourhoods (5 in Pilsen, 5 in Prague). There are significant differences between those two cities regarding the spatial distribution of gentrified areas and the level of urban regeneration itself.

GENTRIFICATION, PHYSICAL UPGRADING, INNER CITY, PILSEN, PRAGUE

Temporal displacement and spatial unbinding of commute in the case of the Brno metropolitan area

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Commuting as an important element in individuals' daily lives has been undergoing gradual changes. In connection with the increasing importance of the tertiary sector in the economy and the flexibilization of working hours and work location, the redistribution of commuting flows in time and space is observed. This contribution is focused on the spatiotemporal loosening up of the commuting patterns in Brno's metropolitan area. This contribution aims to characterize and further understand these changes in commuting behaviour by using a questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews in order to describe the specific practices of the individuals that are behind it. Attention is given to individualization and flexibilization of commuting. This contribution uses the terms temporal displacement and spatial unbinding of commuting to express the current nature of commuting. The results indicate that the commute is spread out over several hours with that the return commute home from work is more deconcentrated. It turns out that a number of individuals have the ability to take journeys to work and from work flexibly, according to their needs and preferences. This makes specific journeys more complicated. Simultaneously the phenomenon of the daily commute clearly weakens. A three-day or four-day commute within a week has proven to be a common occurrence. The spatial dimension of commuting is also changing. As the semi-structured interviews with the participants showed, in addition to the home, cafes, means of transport and other originally non-working places become conventional commuting centres. This contribution summarizes the changes and emphasis qualitative changes in commuting patterns that become visible at the individual level.

COMMUTING, SPATIOTEMPORAL PATTERNS, TEMPORAL DISPLACEMENT, SPATIAL UNBINDING, FLEXIBILIZATION

Gentrification behind suburbanisation in functional urban areas of Hungarian regional centres

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Under the umbrella of a larger long-term research programme sponsored by the Hungarian National Research Fund (Long-term processes of local housing markets in Hungarian regional centres) suburbanisation was one of the investigated topics. Following Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz et al., 2017; Kubes and Kovács, 2020 works in post-socialist genrification and the recent dispute on rent-gap theory (Slater, 2017; Addie, 2019; Boulay, 2022; Shaw, 2023; Christophers, 2022) we argue for the class-based meaning of post-socialist suburbanisation process around the second-tier cities in Hungary, after 2000. Our presentation has a methodological basis, as well, that we use housing market indicators to describe the gentrification processes around the cities in space and time. The primary result suggest the existence of the phenomena, however its spread in space is fairly limited, even in the case of rapid deconcentration of population and emerge of out-of-urban housing markets. Combining the quantitative results with in-dpeth interviews in such cities, we are able to find the connection with the turning points of housing (social) policy and even the global trends (such as GFC, COVID-pandemic, energy crisis).

SUBURBANISATION, GENTRIFICATION, HOUSING MARKETS, SECOND TIER CITIES, VARIOUS PATHS

Suburban gentrification and the post-socialist transformation – colonization of an agglomeration village near Budapest

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As an anti-continuity of the post-socialist transformation process, local authorities gained high level of independence after the regime change (1989), while the mezzo-level of territorial governance lost significance in Hungary. This meant complete lack of cooperation among the agglomeration settlements around Budapest as well as with the capital city. However, the high level of local political sovereignty was increasingly under-financed by the state, forcing municipalities to sell out their real estate assets and attract new residents and investments. This caused rapid population increase, conflicts with existing residents, and in certain cases the takeover of local power by newcommers. This latter local political change meant that rural/subrubran gentrifiers formed the settlement according to their perceived short term personal interests while longer term and broader political, environmental and planning rationales were neglected. In our case study these mechanisms caused the transformation of a small, underdeveloped agricultural village into a mono-functional, hyper-segregated "sleeping village" for high status families with young children, displacing and excluding other social groups and causing extremely high fluctuation of residents in the last few decades. Besides market processes and investors' interests highlighted in "Western" cases, we analyse this "privatism" of the local policy as a feature of the post-socialist transformation, where particular personal interests are often satisfied by cooperation with political power in a patrimonial manner. In our case, potential land rents were strongly restricted by the deeply patriarchal and hetero-normative political imaginary of the (upper-)middle class newcomers (defined mostly by relative economic advantages but missing the habitus of political responsibility and cultural capital beyond narrow expertise). However, exclusion was realized also by political control besides the prices. These local events echo the national level oppression of minorities and vulnerable groups by the dictatorship of (relative) majority, and the neglect of planning rationales and sustainability on the state level.

GENTRIFICATION, POST-SOCIALIST, SUBURBANIZATION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, COLONIZATION

SESSION 11

Assembling ordinary futures in, with and around large cultural buildings: a study of the European Solidarity Center in Gdańsk

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University of Lausanne

Theorisations of cultural urbanism tend to fall short when exploring cultural city-making policies in Central and Eastern European cities (Ilchenko 2020; Ferenčuhová 2016). The focus on the past in "post-socialist" spaces reinforces the tendency in urban studies to reduce large cultural buildings to memorial spectacles and materializations of representational politics (Asavei and Králová 2023; Kapralski 2011), or to simple catalysts for regeneration and icons for cultural branding (Kaika and Thielen 2006). This study questions these understandings of urban cultural politics and the futures they shape as fixed, linear, and imposed. Building on "ethnographic presentism" (Ringel 2016), it explores the ordinary futures assembled in, with and around the European Solidarity Center (ECS). Drawing on empirical material gathered through mobile and ethnographic methods, this paper focusses on the ECS – an iconic and politically controversial cultural center in Gdańsk, Poland. The building has an ambiguous position in the local urban politics as it both preserves the memory of the Solidarity movement and catalyses the redevelopment of the shipyard with the "Young City" district project. This paper analyses the ways in which the affective experiences and socio-material assemblages of the ECS give rise to ordinary futures – everyday modes of practicing and imagining the future. It shows how the assemblages of the ECS enable different scales (intimate, urban, national) and temporalities (pasts and futures) to collapse in the present. For example, it explores how the project "Understanding August", funded by the ECS, negotiates alternative futures for the shipyard, local inhabitants, and the ECS. In the rapidly changing context of Gdańsk, this study describes and analyses how a large cultural building can shape multiple urban futures.

ORDINARY FUTURES, CULTURAL URBANISM, EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CENTER, GDANSK

Mobile phone network data – just a buzzword or a gamechanger in data-based urban planning?

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Mobile phone location data are now seen as a potentially powerful base providing information for urban and planning and decision-making. The use of this type of data is no longer the exclusive domain of academic research - various public bodies are purchasing aggregated outputs and analyses from mobile service providers. This market is driven by the increasing mobility of urban society as well as the complexity and temporal variability of urban structures. A major motivation for planning mobile city is the shift towards data/evidence-based urban policies, using data that represents the non-static urban population. Mobile phone location data has thus become a planning buzzword, often discussed by politicians and planners. At the same time, it is not only the technical qualities of this data, but also its symbolic value and political expectations that make it an interesting phenomenon in planning urban futures. Our paper, empirically based on the situation in the Czech Republic, assesses from a socio-geographical perspective the data and analytical products of mobile operators offered to public institutions. Using the example of the two largest Czech cities - Prague and Brno - we aim to explore not only the technical aspects of the products, but also the strategies of using mobile data in urban and metropolitan planning. By mapping the transition from a scientific topic to a commercial planning product, we draw attention to the limits of interpretation and weaknesses of the use of similar datasets, as well as to the importance of the role of professionals in refining and contextualising them.

DATA-BASED URBAN PLANNING; EVIDENCE-BASED URBAN POLICIES; LOCATION DATA; PLANNING BUZZWORD

Urban resilience as community capacity under conditions of existential threats: The case of Slavutych city, Ukraine

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Urban community resilience affects the city's future. We understand resilience as the capacity of local residents to do community as practice to overcome adversities by adapting, and transforming in accordance with new post-crisis realities. The community resilience of Slavutych city in Ukraine can historically be traced in the overcoming of challenges from the closure of the Chornobyl nuclear power plant in 2000 to the two weeks blockade and partial occupation in Spring 2022. Our paper discusses the strengths and weaknesses of community in Slavutych that influence its resilience. We draw on semi-structured interviews with city residents in May-June 2023, a wider residents survey in 2019 and further observations. We highlight that urban resilience combines individual and collective capacities to adapt. Many public and non-governmental organizations have charismatic leaders, and citizens tend to trust local authorities. Efforts of individual activists at critical moments find support among residents because of self-organization and local networks. We argue that the resilience of Slavutych must be understood in relation to its collective memory and to its urban development. The collective memory of its history as it is re-created in the present, and its planning and design, reflect an ideal of a livable city; the unique social composition of the residents; paternalism and nostalgia for the Soviet past; and local patriotism. Despite significant transformations, residents have maintained tolerance toward the Soviet era values. Market approaches to managing the city economy are difficult to implement, but the troubles of the neoliberal economy are also weakly manifested. While continuity lies in the community's mission of servicing the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant, the city is in search of its future, but it is not ready to give up the traditional patriarchal way of life. Its collective understanding of past and present celebrates these specificities as resilience.

RESILIENCE, URBAN COMMUNITY, THREATS, WAR, CHORNOBYL, SLAVUTYCH, UKRAINE

Localizing Smart Cities in Post-Soviet Context: Case of Azerbaijan

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The smart city concept became a very popular term in recent years, especially in countries of the post-Soviet Eurasia. Russia, Kazakhstan, and recently Azerbaijan launched processes notoriously dubbed as "smart city/village" development, hoping to solve the current problems of overpopulation, urbanization, and infrastructure inadequacy with this magic concept. In many cases the initiatives did not bring any breakthrough and failed due to misunderstandings, and mismatch between vision and strategies of implementation. The following article discusses the problems of conceptualization of smart city in Azerbaijan, its implementation as well as challenges associated with it. Article explains the problems of smart city concept in the country and discuss how to adapt general visions and global aspirations for smart and sustainable cities to the given context of post-Soviet Azerbaijan.

SMART CITY, SUSTAINABLE CITIES, DIGITALIZATION, AZERBAIJAN, POST-SOVIET STATE

SESSION 12

What is the difference: signs of human-oriented urbanism or authoritarian illusion?

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In my paper I would like to dwell on the controversy of what we (me and my closest colleagues), former urbanists in St.Petersburg, once considered material and symbolic manifestations of human-oriented urbanism, and what eventually turned out to be items of state hegemony over the civil and expert societies' values and knowledge. Incorporation of "expressive" formal signs of new urbanism, such as cycling lanes, green public spaces, waste sorting initiatives and promotion of healthy city life in Minsk, new skate parks in Baku, glorious and "hipster" public spaces, digital participation platforms and micro mobility infrastructure in St.Petersburg and Moscow, to name a few, are now clearly seen as an alienating and illusive mechanism of the authoritarian urbanism, especially since the meta-level event of February 24th happened. From this new standpoint we try to view what went wrong in our professional practices, when we were cooperating with stakeholders who had governmental or financial power and made participatory design workshops and pre-project studies, developed conceptual language of new urbanism at urban forums, curated MA programs in urban studies, etc. As a Ukrainian scholar I am very much interested in what kind of mistakes my country has to avoid in urban redevelopment and renewal, while authoritarian urbanism can manifest itself in the democratic contexts as well (hence state-private capital cooperation to control and capitalize the territories is happening overall). In my paper based on different empirical examples in the cities I mentioned above I will try to tackle the process of creating a simulacre of public good by playing with the signifiers of human-oriented urbanism in the context of its complete deficit, of ruining quite proper participation efforts during international architectural contests by delimiting the participatory governance over their results, of faking the essence of public space design by substituting it with massive but speculative beautification projects.

HUMAN-ORIENTED URBANISM, AUTHORITARIAN REGIME, ILLUSION, FAKE PARTICIPATION, CRITICAL URBANISM

Producing language of urbanism in highly digitalized environment: citizen media and (un)acknowledged urban voices.

Oksana Zaporozhetc
Humboldt University of Berlin

The presentation focuses on where, how, and by whom the critical languages that resist or subvert the dominant urban narratives are produced and used. The languages and perspectives of city authorities, corporations, experts, activists, and "strong publics" (Fraser 1990) attract researchers' attention due to their visibility, availability, institutional support, and influence. At the same time, there are diverse languages of urban citizens that are often overlooked and under-researched since they are considered vague, individualized, and not fitting the mainstream or critical agenda. The development of online social networks and digital platforms brought to life digital citizen media (Rodriguez 2011; Stephansen, Trere 2019) – online groups of urban citizens on Facebook, VKontakte, Telegram, or Instagram united by common interests and shared agenda, usually related to particular urban territory or issue. In highly digitalized cities, digital citizen media with thousands of subscribers and content producers (Lim 2015; Zaporozhets, Bagina 2021) became significant urban agents allowing non-institutionalized actors to challenge dominant discourses (Stephansen, Trere 2019) and develop their own languages and critical perspectives. Digital citizen media comprise digital infrastructures, groups administrating and moderating content and discussions, practices, and performances, including protests, related to urban issues. The language they create is often localized, problem-centered, and cannot be easily applied to outside cases. Despite these limitations, there is a strong demand from wider localities for peers' perspectives and colloquial language, allowing to discuss urban issues. Relying on my research on digital citizen media in Moscow in 2019-2021, I will elaborate on the specificity of the agency of digital citizen media, the (critical) language and frames they produce, and how their perspective tends to be appropriated by local authorities and overlooked by potential civil allies such as activists, participatory planners, etc.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE, DIGITAL CITIZEN MEDIA, AGENCY, APPROPRIATION

Agents of change and the contribution of expertise: the case on the discontinuation of the world's biggest trolleybus system.

Egor Muleev

Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography

It's been a relatively long history of how city officials rely on expert knowledge in decision-making. Neoliberal epistemology suggests that only the "marketplace of ideas" is able to deliver the "truth" in an expertise of any sort. That leads to depoliticisation of the decision-making process that receives a title of a technocratic approach. Such a framework of decision-making suggests bureaucratic procedures of knowledge production. The concept of "orchestration" deals exactly with such a constellation of knowledge, governance, institutions, and social response.

The case study of the discontinuation of the world's biggest trolleybus system in Moscow, helps to contribute to the critical analysis of neoliberal epistemology with an argument that the market embodies itself in the form of bureaucracy. The last one takes over the function to deliver the "truth".

"City as a service" vs. city as a "political stage": present and absent discourses in Russian urbanism of 2010-20s

Oleg Pachenkov

Humboldt University of Berlin

"Urbanism" (urbanistika) as a discourse and a practice came to Russia in 2000s and became trendy in 2010s. Since that time the discourses of the "city for people" and "comfortable city" has become dominant ones. An "urbanism with a human face", an architecture "of a human scale" etc. have been developing in 2010s with the support of western consultants, and were considered a progressive approach counter-posed to the previous forms of the planning and architecture "from the bird-view" ignoring "scenarios of urban life" etc. What stayed unnoticed all this time, was the fact that this discourse of new Russian urbanism has the "city as a service" model behind it. City was seen as a complex of services provided to the "clients" or "consumers". The idea of a "city as a service" was presented in the ways that the city administrations described their duties, the ways that city politicians positioned themselves at the election campaigns, the ways that city-zens interpreted the tasks of the city authorities. This model could be identified in the titles of the professional events (like sections at the Moscow or St.-Petersburg or other "urban forums"), in the digital services that have been developed both in a top down (smart city, etc.) and bottom up (apps like "Beautiful Petersburg") ways. The "the city as a service" model has pushed out other interpretations of what a city could be. Among many others, political dimension of urban life has been ignored and never problematized. de Tocqueville considered individual an enemy of a citizen, and perhaps consumer is the worst enemy of a city-zen. Russian urbanism did not treat a city as a political "stage", a space where not power, not "police" (Rancier 1994, 2001), but the "politics proper" (Žižek 2002, 2005) could be practiced.

URBANISM, CITY AS A SERVICE, POSTPOLITICAL, RUSSIA

SESSION 14

Tracking the Evolution of Czech Housing Estates: Unveiling the Long-Term Population Shifts from 1970 to 2021

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Post-war large housing estates represent a significant part of the housing stock in post-socialist countries. Shortly after their construction, they were mostly clearly defined urban neighbourhoods, both in spatial terms and in terms of their specific population structure. However, the differences between housing estates and other urban areas have been gradually diminishing over the last decades, and they have become relatively heterogeneous group of neighbourhoods. So far, several studies have attempted to capture the diversity of their trajectories in the post-socialist period (e.g. Kalm et al. 2023; Kovács and Herfert 2012). However, there is still a lack of research that fully captures the heterogeneity of their trajectories from a long-term perspective. This paper aims to analyse the development of housing estates in Czech cities between 1970 and 2021 and identify types of their development trajectories. Concurrently, we aim to capture the mechanisms that influence their development, reflecting the broader social, economic and political context of socialist and post-socialist urban development. We use data from decennial population censuses on the socio-demographic structure of the population and housing stock characteristics. The results of the analysis show a variety of development trajectories both in different local and regional contexts and in terms of their magnitude (dominant vs. marginal trajectories).

HOUSING ESTATES, TRAJECTORIES, POPULATION STRUCTURES

Neglect and Allure: Gentrification of the Concrete Utopia

Sara Nikolić
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New Belgrade blocks have a contradictory reputation. On the one hand, they are large housing estates constructed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, lacking maintenance over the past half-century. Due to the giveaway privatization of the public housing stock, limited capacity of public utilities and the unresolved status of open block spaces, the dwelling units, common areas and the public spaces within the estates have been poorly maintained. The ageing buildings have leaky roofs, flooded basements, and deteriorating thermal insulation. Nevertheless, despite these drawbacks and the long-standing portrayal of a "concrete ghetto" in Serbian cinema, New Belgrade still is a desirable place to live. Based on the ethnographic study of two residential blocks, this paper delves into the contentious realm of urban transformation, focusing on the gentrification process in New Belgrade. Through a meticulous ethnographic exploration conducted between May 2020 and December 2021, this research sheds light on the complexities of "soft" gentrification and offers insights into the lived realities of young professional parents. This paper suggests that the YUPPS, attracted by the architectural value and infrastructural qualities of the socialist-modernist housing estates, are affluent in both the economic and the social capital and thus represent the forerunners of the gentrification process in New Belgrade. Furthermore, by analyzing the transformation of public spaces, the research uncovers the growing trend of childification, reflecting the new values and preferences of the emerging creative and technocratic middle-class residents that displace poor homeowners of the socialist-middle class. In summary, the paper argues that New Belgrade, although gentrified, is still living up to its founding ideal of becoming a family-friendly middle-class utopia. By emphasizing these insights, this paper contributes to the broader discourse on gentrification, urban transformation, and the complexities of class dynamics in post-transitional cities.

GENTRIFICATION, NEW BELGRADE, LARGE HOUSING ESTATES, LIVED-IN MONUMENTS, CLASS DYNAMICS

Different paths of social changes in post-socialist LHEs in the mirror of long-term and short-term housing market trends

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Under the umbrella of our large-scaled and long-term research program sponsored by the Hungarian National Research Fund ('Long-term processes of local housing markets in Hungarian regional centre's) the transformation of second tier cities' inner structure was one of the core investigated topics. While the housing estates were the focus of a certain trend of the post-socialist literature (see e.g. Hess et. al., 2018; Šimáček et al., 2015; Warchalska-Troll, 2012; Herfert et al., 2013; Nedučin et al., 2019 and recently Kalm, et al., 2022;), the investigations in Hungarian LHEs were mostly written only for domestic readers and researchers, and only a small part of the papers was available in prestigious international journals. We feel useful to demonstrate, that two different periods concentrate the key publications, the late 1990s, and the 2010s. In the first period, the topics of papers analysed the weaknesses and threats, the negative trends, such as ageing, segregation, social downgrading, crime, overcrowding tendencies, individualisation, isolation, low quality of public spaces, and problems with flats and buildings (Kovács and Douglas, 1996; Douglas, 1997; Egedy, 2012). In the later phase, when the LHEs became interesting research spaces again, the publications tried to find their potential role in the urban structure and, of course, in housing markets, as well (Kovács and Herfert, 2012; Benkő, 2015; Drémaite, 2017). In the late 2010s, a new phenomenon emerged in post-socialist LHEs literature, the effect of regeneration programs – in capital cities (Szabó and Bene, 2019; Szabó and Burneika, 2020; Vasilevska et al., 2020). The thematic focus in research of LHEs in other second-tier cities in Hungary was the transformation of residential areas before and after the socialist period, the transformation of urban space led by different phenomena (e.g. retail chains), reproducing of urban space by local and international actors. The other important issue was classifying the residential, or the LHEs areas (e.g. Gyenizse et.al, 2014; Karancsi et al., 2018). New topics emerging, such as the reproduction of urban space (Nagy E., 1998 and 2017; Nagy G., 2019; Timár and Nagy E., 2019). From the urban sociology literature, the most impressive results discussed the social-spatial inequalities in urban space (Páthy, 2014; Csizmadia and Tóth P., 2014; Nagy G., et al., 2023). The consequence of the thematic literature was, that not only the direct information (data) are available to investigate the changing face of LHEs, but housing market indicators were highly useful tools, as mirror of location decisions (buying flats and moving into LHEs). The most important results of our desk research and field-studies were: • the changing negative image of LHEs, particularly the so called 'panels' in longer term • the connection of turning points on changing image and policy actions, even outer shocks (COVID-pandemic, Russian aggression against Ukraine, energy crisis) • the different image of LHEs even in one regional centre • the reasons behind more preferred and less preferred LHEs.

POST-SOCIALIST URBAN DEVELOPMENT, LARGE-SCALED HOUSING ESTATES, SECOND-TIER CITIES, SUB-LOCAL SCALE, HOUSING MARKETS

SESSION 16

Center-periphery relations: attitudes from the peripheral regions

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The intensive peripheralization is common for most post-communist states o Central and Eastern Europe. The resulting social polarization, often facilitated by intensive migration flows, became a new but widespread phenomenon when growing and sprawling metropolises contrast with shrinking periphery. However, the relations between metropolitan centers and their hinterlands aren't one-sided. Cities play not only a widely recognized role in the backwash effect. Cities also become a major growth pole factor in peri-urban areas. They also start to play the role of provider of human resources as emigration from urban areas is growing, especially since the Covid pandemic. Shrinking places become more and more dependent on bigger cities, which also become the major working places for residents of rural regions in Lithuania. Shrinking public service networks in rural places mean that cities become increasingly important service providers for rural populations. All these processes are being represented by local and national media and politicians as highly negative but the changing nature of urban–rural relations provides an alternative way for the prosperity of peripheral places. The paper presents a result of the research on establishing development trends of peripheral places in relation to major cities of Lithuania. The statistical analysis helped establish the distribution of urban and peripheral regions, their socio-economic development trends, and migration flows between cities and peripheral regions. Qualitative research based on semi-structural interviews was carried out for the establishment of attitudes of local leaders and newcomers toward the future development of such places, their factors. Though the negative perceptions of the development of peripheral places prevail in the mass media, the local communities have mostly optimistic views on the present and future of such areas. This research was funded by a grant („Peripheral regions in Lithuania: migration and local communities". Nr. S-MIP-21-57) from the Research Council of Lithuania.

CENTER-PERIPHERY, LITHUANIA, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, REGIONAL POLARISATION

A Harder or Better Life? Bangladeshi Student Migrants in Hungary

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European countries have become the hotspot for young and educated out-migrants of Bangladesh. Several studies on the socio-political and cultural issues of migration in destination countries primarily focus on Western countries. There are also few studies on Bangladeshi migration but not on the socio-cultural and geographical aspects. This shortcoming would be partially filled by the author's Ph.D. research, which applies world systems. postcolonial, and feminist approaches to reveal the life, problems, and attitudes toward integration of Bangladeshi migrants in Hungary. In this presentation, the author would concentrate on some data analysis of a questionnaire survey conducted on the subgroups of Bangladeshi student migrants temporarily living in different cities in Hungary highlighting the migrants' economic conditions, networking, and integration with host societies and their background situation. The sample was collected from the final nomination lists of Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship holders (2019,2020,2021 and 2022) uploaded by the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh. The conceptual framework describes Hungary as a semi-periphery of the world systems getting importance for the migrants from the periphery like Bangladesh. The applied theories also help to understand the migrants' different experiences and attitudes depending partly on economic, cultural, and gender relations at different geographical scales. The preliminary results of the survey show that though student migrants think that there are inequalities and problems regarding othering, their integration, and cultural and religious issues in Hungary, there are also better opportunities for earning money, getting a better education, and moving to third countries.

HUNGARY, BANGLADESH, (SEMI)-PERIPHERY, MIGRANTS' PROBLEMS

Time-space mobility within Prague's suburbs: local centers, commuting areas and autonomy of hinterland

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This contribution analyses the spatial pattern of commuting to work and services in the suburban zone of Prague. Using mobile phone location data, we identify commuting flows and their variations throughout the day, considering two key timeframes that are different in proportion of the main commuting purposes. Additionally, the hierarchical classification of mobility relations is introduced. The resulting synthetic maps, that represent local centers and their commuting areas, serve as the basis for theorising current forms of urbanisation processes. Overall, the focus upon tangential commuting in the Prague Metropolitan Area brings two key outcomes. Firstly, we delineate the local centers within the suburban zone and their associated commuting areas. Secondly, we observe distinct patterns of human activities when comparing two timeframes. These findings demonstrate deconcentration of functions within metropolitan area and resulting growth of autonomy of Prague's hinterland. Having relevance for CEE cities, that are still reshaped by late phases of suburbanisation, this research contributes to theoretical understanding of the role of mobility in urbanisation processes of contemporary metropolitan areas.

SUBURBANIZATION, MOBILE PHONE DATA, MOBILITY, PRAGUE METROPOLITAN AREA, TIME GEOGRAPHY

Intergenerational differences of educational attainment in small towns of Latvia: intersections of age, ethnicity and geography

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Growing socio-spatial and economic inequalities across the European countries have been accompanied by shifts in residential segregation and polarisation among population groups with various socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. The role of individuals' educational attainment in determining their chances of intergenerational social mobility has been the subject of extensive research but relatively little analysed in Latvia, especially given the high share of ethnic minorities in urban areas. Previous research confirms that socioeconomic segregation in Latvia largely overlaps with ethnic residential segregation. This is further reinforced by the more pronounced ageing of the largest groups of ethnic minorities. Thus, social and demographic changes may make intergenerational differences of education an even more important contributor in perpetuating existing inequalities and geographical disparities. Using the most recent 2021 Latvian census data, this study examines intergenerational differences of educational attainment of four birth cohorts dating back to the 1960s. The analysis focuses on group (cohort) differences by majority/minority ethnic groups in two aspects relating to social mobility: (1) intergenerational progress in educational attainment, which indicates the ability to achieve higher education regardless of parents' education, and (2) the relationship between educational attainment and settlement type, which revealing geographies of urban social change in Latvia. In general, our results imply that improvements in educational attainment are the key to explaining social changes in Latvia. However, some ethnic minorities and settlement types experience low education mobility. These results suggest that there are divergent paths of socioeconomic integration among the analysed generations.

Patterns of international retirement migration in Hungary – with special attention to the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region

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Hungary is not a typical destination country of international elderly migrants; however, recent statistics show the growing number of immigrants retired people. The uniqueness of the immigration of retirees in Hungary lies in its direction: elderly come both from the "East" and the "West". Approximately 70 percent of the immigrants, mostly ethnic Hungarians came from the East (more specifically from neighbouring Ukraine, Romania, Slovakia, and Serbia) in the last decades, while a rapidly growing number of immigrants from Western European countries select Hungary as a target country. There are significant differences between these two groups in terms of sex ratios, urbanization rates, territorial distribution and motivations for migration.

In this paper, we aim to show the spatial and socio-demographic characteristics of the elderly migration in Hungary dividing the retirees into two distinct groups, and analyse its impacts on the main target regions that are mostly peripheral, underdeveloped, ageing, and depopulating areas. We pay special attention to the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region which was transformed by the active cross-border mobility and resettlement of Ukrainian elderly, induced by geopolitical events of recent years.

Based on the analysis of available statistical data, semi-structured interviews and field observations conducted in 2022 and 2023, we noticed the interdependence of migrant's aspirations and the geopolitical, economic, and social structures which fuel and maintain international retirement migration in peripheral settings. In the Hungarian-Ukrainian border zone, migrants from Ukraine contributed to maintain (or even increase) the region's population, especially in urban settings, which have benefited from migration in terms of economy as well. Furthermore, after the outbreak of the war in 2022, the resettled retirees have provided "shelter" for their family members torn apart by the war, and thus the region has become an important meeting point, forming a liminal space.

Diversity of population change and international migration in the pre- and post-Covid era: the case of post socialist countries

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Post-socialist countries had to tackle negative effects of population loss in the last two decades. Not only ageing problems, but permanent and massive out-migration hit hard these countries, more especially the border regions. While the most dynamic economic centres (e.g., the capital or regional centre and its agglomeration) were focal points of investments and enjoyed the increase of population, border regions suffered from the opposite outcomes. The loss of population, whether it happens due to natural change or out-migration, means a real threat for the region, both in an economic and in a demographic context. Though, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted a massive halt in the field of international migration, and the revaluation of rural places were visible in population dataset, the start of vaccination programmes allowed the relief of restrictions in (international) mobility. However, do we find the same trends in population change and migration, or there are new patterns at the regional level (NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 level)? This research aims to compare the available dataset from the so-called 'pre-' and 'post-COVID era' and highlights those regions which are suffering the most from population decline, with a special attention to out-migration. Furthermore, the impact of population loss or increase on FDI trends will be also examined at the regional level. Using statistical data analysis, the change and intensity of population change will be also presented, and different types of regions will be detected.

Ethnic Diversity in the Inner-City Core of Riga

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The demographic landscape of European cities is experiencing substantial changes linked to shifts in their ethnic compositions. These socio-spatial changes are not uniform and have implications for age structures, as newcomers typically have younger age profiles within the broader context of population ageing patterns in Europe. Post-Soviet cities possess distinct characteristics in terms of their ethnic compositions, shaped by historical events that led to the formation of their multi-ethnic societies. Nowadays, these societies are being transformed again by global events that facilitate migration. Although the city of Riga is facing ageing and shrinking population, its inner-city core presents divergent patterns, including a decreasing age profile and a relatively stable population size. Consequently, the aim of this research was to examine the dynamics of ethnic diversity in the inner-city core of Riga between 2011 and 2021, by applying quantitative methodologies and entropy measures. The findings reveal that representation of Latvians remained predominant within the inner-city core. However, Russian-speaking and other older communities experienced a decline, while other previously smaller communities, in particular Indian and Uzbek, are emerging as leaders in their population growth. Overall, both ethnic minorities and Latvians are ageing, although variations arise when examining specific age groups. For instance, the share of young adults has significantly decreased among Latvian men and women, as well as ethnic minority women, while remaining stable for ethnic minority men. Moreover, significant divergences were observed among children and middle-aged inner-city residents – an increase in their share among Latvians but a decrease among ethnic minorities. For adults, there was a positive trend for both Latvians and ethnic minorities, yet it was more pronounced among Latvians. These emerging trends highlight the necessity to further investigate the new immigration patterns and their effect on age structures within the inner-city core, as well as the contrasts between the inner and outer city.

ETHNIC DIVERSITY, INNER-CITY CORE, POPULATION COMPOSITION, RIGA

Varieties of voting behaviour and 'left-behindness': the case of non-metropolitan small towns in Latvia

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This research delves into the dynamics of electoral choices made by residents of small towns and seeks to understand how feelings of being 'left behind' impact their voting decisions. Like many other countries, Latvia has experienced significant rural depopulation and economic shifts toward urban centres. This phenomenon has left non-metropolitan small towns grappling with financial challenges, limited resource access, and marginalization. This study focuses on towns to uncover patterns of voting behaviour that may differ from urban areas. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the political dynamics in non-metropolitan small towns, offering valuable insights into the complex relationship between socio-economic conditions and voting behaviour in the Latvian context. It also has broader implications for understanding similar phenomena in other regions that experience rural decline and similar urbanization trends.

SESSION 17

A burden or business? The contested responsibilisation of municipal property maintenance in deindustrialised monotowns

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While real estate markets in postsocialist contexts have been marked with large-scale privatisation and transition to homeowner markets, the property maintenance sector has experienced lower commodification and liberalisation. In Latvia, the maintenance sector has sparked a lot of controversy with both municipal and private maintenance companies being both praised or heavily critiqued for their efficiency or inefficiency in renovation as well as corruption. Nevertheless, the dominant narratives of widespread lack of renovation focus on a lack of capacity and willingness to make collective renovation decisions by homeowners. In this paper, we explore housing maintenance in two Soviet-built industrial monotowns, Vangaži and Seda, that have transitioned to satellite towns since the 1990s. By such comparison, we juxtapose how municipal maintenance and ownership of apartments have been central to pursuing renovation in one town, but detrimental in the other. In Vangaži, where municipal maintenance company has built on established trust and resisted private maintenance companies entering the market, one of the highest renovation rates in Latvia are recorded. In Seda, where municipality owns a high share of affordable apartments, but the town has been emptying due to deindustrialisation, municipal maintenance company is at the centre of public critique for inaction. We argue that the interplay between socialist, neoliberal and European Union notions and fragmentations of responsibility performs itself as a contested active nostalgia for more centralised planning and welfare as well as longing for a more entrepreneurial municipality and citizen's desire to increase the value of their real estate.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE, ENTREPRENEURIAL MUNICIPALITY, MONOTOWNS, RESPONSIBILISATION, NON-LIBERALISATION

Exploring Internal Migration within Latvia's Urban Hierarchy during pandemic period

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The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on our daily in ways that might have far-reaching effects on societal norms and human behaviour. In addition to the initial focus on its impacts on mortality, fertility and mobility restrictions imposed because of the pandemic, the global coronavirus pandemic has generated growing interest in studying internal migration as the main driver of population redistribution within countries between urban and rural areas. Therefore, within the scope of this research, we analyse the extent of change in the patterns of internal migration across the urban hierarchy of Latvia. To assess the dynamic, we compare migration flow statistics from the three pre-COVID-19 years (2017-2019) and three successive years since the COVID-19 outbreak in Latvia (2020-2022). The analysis identifies increase of overall in-migration intensity towards Riga and its suburbs, with slight decrease among other forms of urban hierarchy.

Talking about left-behind (urban) places. The methodological advantages and challenges of photo-elicitation group interviews

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The proposed paper is part of the project Social and political consequences of spatial inequalities which aim is to explore the social and political consequences of spatial inequalities in three Central European countries – the Czech Republic, Poland and the eastern regions of Germany. The research objective is to understand the logic of left behind state (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018; Psycharis et al., 2020) as defined by the subjects affected, as well as to map the potential political agency and bottom-up responses the processes of spatial inequalities in the municipal areas of the regions studies. The study includes the qualitative research approach (FGIs, using visual stimuli) designed to explore the subjective meanings and viewpoints of those living in the urban places considered (along with whole regions) as left-behind, facing the problems of depopulation, rural-urban migration, deterioration of socioeconomic conditions or peripherisation. The proposed paper discusses the methodological advantages, potential developments and challenges in talking about difficult stigma-prone topics with people with lower cultural capital, living in the "left behind places". Using visuals, through photo-elicitation method (Harper, 2002; Wladyniak, 2019; Wood et al., 2023; Wladyniak and Trlifajová 2023 [forthcoming]) deployed in the group interviews, we plan to allow people to talk openly and without fear of judgment about their own perspectives on the sensitive topics. At the same time, it reduces the power imbalance, usually present at the most qualitative research sites.

SPATIAL INEQUALITIES; LEFT-BEHIND SPACES; URBAN COMPARATIVE RESEARCH; PHOTO-ELICITATION METHOD

Understanding the paradox of urban mobility in Cluj

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In our research we are focusing on the current state of urban mobility in Cluj, Romania, and the perceptions of its citizens. In previous years, Cluj has invested both in the development of public transport and in the rethinking of urban mobility patterns: expanding the area served by public transport, renewing the car fleet, digitalisation, but also supporting alternative transport. The urban mobility strategy approved in 2021 also contains investments with the aim to improve the quality of public transport and to reduce the traffic congestion, and focuses on the integration of the public transport with other means of transportation (walking and cycling) and the development of a sustainable transport system... A study carried out by members of our faculty underlines the paradox: urban mobility policies do not seem to be fully effective. On one hand, the city has a well-developed public transportation system, on the other hand, the appetite of Cluj residents for transport by personal vehicles is very high, the number of personal cars continues to increase, causing problems related to traffic congestion and limited parking. Facing this paradox our study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences and perceptions of urban mobility in Cluj. Using qualitative research methods (in-depth interviews and focus-group interviews) this study explores the perceptions and attitudes towards the transportation system in the city with a focus on understanding the challenges faced by residents including issues related to accessibility, safety, and sustainability. Additionally, the study explores the role of technology and innovation, and how residents engage with these new technologies. This study hopes to contribute to the ongoing conversation about how to improve urban mobility for all residents of Cluj, and will be of interest to city planners, policymakers, and researchers in the field of urban studies and transportation.

URBAN MOBILITY, PUBLIC TRANSPORT, TRAFFIC, PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS, QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

SESSION 18

Income poverty, social exclusion and segregation in Czechia: Did the Covid-19 pandemic and the War in Ukraine affect geographic patterns and development trajectories?

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This paper explores the spatial concentrations of income poverty, social exclusion and segregation in Czechia, addressing the urgent need to understand and mitigate these issues. Despite a period of general economic growth and increased well-being between 2015 and 2019, the concentration of the most vulnerable populations in areas marked by social exclusion and segregation has intensified. In light of recent events such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the War in Ukraine, which have introduced social and economic uncertainties, high price inflation, and declining real incomes, this study specifically focuses on the years immediately impacted by these developments. The central objective is to identify any distinct trends in the development of spatial concentration of social exclusion and segregation in Czech cities and regions that may differ from the period between 2015 and 2019.

SEGREGATION, SOCIAL EXCLUSION, SPATIAL INEQUALITY

From small-scale informal to investor-driven urban developments. The case of Tirana/Albania

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Tirana started its urban transition processes after the fall of communism in a small-scale and mostly informal manner. Three decades later, urban development in the metropolis with its tripled population has generally formalized. The built fabric experienced a metamorphosis into globalized urban structures. An impressive number of megaprojects (in Albanian scales) arose in the city, such as mixed-use skyscrapers, high-rise apartment buildings, shopping malls and other commercial buildings. In this context, three topics seem to be of interest for CATs: (1) The scalar dimension of the projects and the randomness of function and design are overwhelming. Tirana's skyline shows more and more elements of globalized structures, but from an organizational point of view, there is no corresponding functional internationalisation, for example, via the global financial market. Quite the opposite is true: both investors and capital are mainly of Albanian origin. (2) In such contexts, the powerful role and position of national elites cannot come as a surprise. The key players are close to politics. Political representatives are actively involved. Overall, there is no transparency in decision-making. (3) It is highly problematic that some of the large urban developments are organized as public-private partnerships: the public sector provides the property, applies for approval and then transfers the responsibility to private developers. This model fosters urban development and renewal, but at the same time, the profits will be privatized. All in all, we note in Tirana – and with a grain of salt this is true for the ex-socialist period as a whole – an urbanism of exception that can only be partially explained with common theoretical approaches, but rather requires an appropriate consideration of the evolutionary background, thus a relational perspective. We take up the concept of the 'ordinary city' and discuss the scope of socialism and post-socialism as explanatory concepts.

LARGE URBAN DEVELOPMENTS, TRANSITION, POST-SOCIALIST URBANISM, ALBANIA, TIRANA

Suburbanization in Riga and Vilnius: a comparative analysis of recent trends

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All post-communist states of CEE experience highly polarized development of their territories and the growth and weakly controlled sprawl of capital cities is the most manifested feature of the polarization. The liberal economic policies, technological changes, and absence of adequate policies are often named as the most obvious reasons for these trends. However, Latvia and Lithuania have almost identical experiences of post-communist development, there are no major differences in countries' economic or social policies. At the same time, the capital cities of these countries have different positions in wider urban or settlement networks, different geographical locations, and develop in different regions. Riga is the long-lasting center of Latvia developing in the most advanced region of the very centralized country. It was by far the biggest Baltic metropolis serving as a macro-regional center during the Soviet era. Vilnius is located in the multiethnic and the least developed peripheral part of the multimodal country, where the capital city used to play an almost equally important role as smaller cities. After the restoration of independence soviet cities began to gain physical features common for all western urban settlements and suburban development was one of them. This paper presents a comparative analysis of the most recent rural-urban transformations in the sprawl zones of Vilnius and Riga. The research is mostly based on data from the last population censuses and aims to establish the scale and character of transformations of both cities' suburban areas during the second decade of the 21st century. We expect to find some similar trends as processes are driven by similar macro-level forces. However, at the same time, we expect to see some differences related to different local factors such as the much bigger periphery of Vilnius, faster growth of the economy in Lithuania or different geographical features of sprawl zones.

VILNIUS, RIGA, SUBURBANISATION, RURAL-URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS

Changing Suburbanization Patterns in Romania

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The phenomenon of suburbanization has witnessed significant transformations in Romania in recent years. The presentation will focus on examining the evolving suburbanization patterns in Romania by analyzing and interpreting the newly published census data, to gain insights into the dynamics of suburban growth. By examining population growth, housing characteristics, employment patterns, and commuting behaviors, the study sheds light on the multifaceted nature of suburbanization in Romania. Preliminary findings from the census data analysis reveal several noteworthy trends. Firstly, Romania's urbanization pattern seems to be reversing: the rapid growth following the years of state socialism was followed by stagnation and now decline. Currently, 52.2% of Romania's population lives in an urban environment, which has decreased by almost two percent compared to the data measured in 2011. The largest population decrease can be measured mainly in the big cities of Bucharest, Timişoara, Cluj, Iaşi, Galati. Secondly, there has been a notable increase in the population residing in suburban areas compared to previous census periods. The most dynamically growing settlements are usually the villages in the immediate vicinity of these cities: Floresti (Cluj), Popesti Leordeni (Bucharest), Bragadiru (Bucharest), Miroslava (Iaşi), Giroc (Timisoara), etc. Thirdly, the study examines change of lifestyles in the growing suburban areas. It reveals shifts in housing types, including an increase in multi-unit residential complexes and mixed-use developments. The census data also provides insights into employment patterns and commuting behaviors of suburban residents. Understanding the changing suburbanization patterns in Romania is essential for urban planners, policymakers, and researchers to develop effective strategies for sustainable urban development. This research contributes to the existing literature on suburbanization by providing insights into the specific context of Romania and its implications for future urban planning and policy-making.

SUBURBANIZATION, URBANIZATION, ROMANIA, SPATIAL PATTERNS, HOUSING PREFERENCES, INFRASTRUCTURE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT