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# Studying the Post-Socialist City in Yugoslavia: An Examination of Multi-Disciplinary Methodologies and Theoretical Approaches

## Abstract

Since the end of the state-socialist era in the early 1990s – and effectively, since the end of the Yugoslav federation and the subsequent wars that had engulfed the Western Balkans for almost a decade – the study of the twentieth-century South-Eastern Europe has intensified. The scholarship on the region’s twentieth-century architecture has been prolific since the early years of the new millennium, and the new generation of urban and architectural scholars has further amplified this trend. However, an inquiry into the post-socialist city in Western Balkans has been relegated largely to the secondary position to the study of the Yugoslav modernist architecture and its role within the socio-political mechanisms of the Cold War era. In this discourse, the study of the post-socialist urban space remains lacking in architectural and urban history – it is mainly conducted within the methodological and theoretical frameworks of sociology, socio-cultural anthropology, and urban geography.

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To bridge this scholarly gap and identify possible new trajectories of inquiry, I probe into the different scholarship dealing with the post-socialist city and the urban, ideological, and social remnants of the state-socialist era in former Yugoslavia. I argue that the study of the multi-disciplinary nature of the scholarship examining the state-socialist and post-socialist city serves as a vital step in the more comprehensive understanding of the (post-)Yugoslav architectural space, its particulars, and idiosyncrasies. Methodologically, I identify and outline the different disciplinary strands in the study of the post-socialist space in general, and post-Yugoslav space in particular, followed by an analysis of the established discourses and their points of interference and overlap. By investigating qualitative methodologies and different theoretical approaches in the study of the Central-East European and Yugoslav post-socialist city, I explore the post-socialist urban space in former Yugoslavia in a wide-ranging manner, ultimately identifying conduits for future research.

**Keywords:** socialist city, post-socialist city, Yugoslavia, Yugoslav successor states, ideology and architecture, socio-cultural heritage, Western Balkans.

Since the fall of communism in Europe in the early 1990s – and since the end of the Yugoslav wars by the end of the decade – the study of the state-socialist South-Eastern Europe has intensified and expanded and continues to do so.<sup>1</sup> Scholars in social sciences and humanities have pored over the particulars of Yugoslav communism of self-management, the socio-political aftermath of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and the wars that had defined the last decade of the past century in the region. The scholars exploring the architecture of former Yugoslavia have been prolific in their work since the early years of the twenty-first century, both in the region and internationally. The new and upcoming cohort of urban and architectural scholars has further amplified this trend in knowledge production: their aim to expand and challenge the previous generation's work allows for further development of knowledge on the architecture of former Yugoslavia and its successor states. However, an already modest inquiry into the post-socialist city in the Western Balkans and its urban and architectural particulars

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, I use the concepts of 'communist' and 'state-socialist' interchangeably. I refer to them as signifiers of a political and economic concept employed by countries in Eastern, Central, and South-Eastern Europe in the second half of the twentieth century; the main characteristics were a centrally planned economy (in CEE) and the economy of self-management (in Yugoslavia), and the one-party political system on the Marxist-Leninist path toward communism.

has been relegated to the secondary position to the ever-expanding study of the Yugoslav modernist architecture and its links with ideology in the Cold War era. In this discourse, the inquest into the post-socialist urban space in the field of architectural history and architectural studies at large remains only fragmentary: architectural and urban scholars have focused mainly on post-Yugoslav and post-war destruction of heritage and the contemporary ramifications of these events. Consequently, the analyses of the post-socialist city in former Yugoslavia have been conducted mainly within the methodological and theoretical frameworks of area studies, political sciences, art history, sociology, and socio-cultural anthropology.

In this article, I aim to outline and briefly analyse the different disciplinary strands and their focal points in the study of the post-socialist urban and socio-cultural space in post-Yugoslav cities. I argue that the study of the multi-disciplinary scholarship examining the post-socialist city in the former Yugoslav region serves as a vital step in the more comprehensive examination of the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav architectural and urban space and the particulars and minutiae of its transformations. My goal is to explore how the Yugoslav post-socialist urban space is examined and theorised; I aim to identify the points of intersection of different theoretical and methodological trajectories, and I intend to hypothesise the possible conduits for future research. I will develop this paper in several sections. Firstly, I will analyse the distinct trends that have surfaced in the last two decades in the study of the architecture of socialist Yugoslavia; I will further analyse the established discourses on the notion of the post-socialist and post-Yugoslav city in the region; I will finally offer an analysis of academic trends that scholars have followed in the study of the post-socialist built environment in the countries of Central-East Europe, where an inquiry into the post-socialist city had originated a decade earlier than in post-Yugoslavia. In place of a conclusion, I will propose possible trajectories for future inquiry into the post-socialist and post-Yugoslav city in the Western Balkans.

An essential part of this paper is an overview of research on the topic of the post-socialist city in Central-East Europe. Scholars in the fields of sociology, urban geography, and socio-cultural and urban anthropology – both those from the region and international academics working on the subject – have been prolific in their research in the last thirty years. My analysis of evolving trends and trajectories in the scholarship on the post-socialist city in Central-East Europe—both their advantages and shortcomings—can be discussed in regard to the future urban studies in the post-Yugoslav space. By investigating qualitative methodologies and different theoretical approaches in the study of the CEE and Yugoslav

post-socialist city, I will explore the post-socialist urban space in a more comprehensive and critical manner, ultimately opening the discussion for identifying conduits for future research.

The scholarship analysed in this paper is by no means exhaustive, nor does its selection presume it is without flaw and beyond reproach. However, the examples outlined are representative of the state of the field. The aim of this article is not to simplify the questions of who studies architecture and within the confines of which field, and whether such distinction is possible at all – quite the opposite, I make the claim that although lacking in the field of architectural history, the study of the post-socialist city is an inherently interdisciplinary project conducted at the intersection of humanities and social sciences.

## Architecture of Yugoslavia

In 1991, as the Yugoslav federation ceased to exist, the built environment of the former Yugoslav cities – now cities of newly democratic and capitalist countries – maintained the pivotal role it held in the socio-political constellation of the former state-socialist union. Ever since the war destruction of the cities in the Western Balkans ended in the late 1990s with the end of the conflict in Kosovo, the scholarship on the modernist architecture of the Cold War Yugoslavia continuously proliferated. The final wide-ranging Yugoslav publication on the topic was Ivan Štraus's 1991 *Arhitektura Jugoslavije* [Architecture of Yugoslavia]; for over two decades, his work stood as a singular survey of dying Yugoslavia's architectural oeuvre. While during the 1990s the scholarship on the topic of the architecture of Yugoslavia was all but non-existent, the 1999 Dijana Alić and Maryam Gusheh's journal article, "Reconciling National Narratives in Socialist Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Bascarsija Project, 1948–1953", is amongst the earliest post-Yugoslav works dealing with communist ideology and architecture in former Yugoslavia. In examining the treatment of Ottoman heritage in Sarajevo during the early post-war period, Alić and Gusheh (1999) analyse the nuances of the early Yugoslav socialism and the problematic of the 'national' in the architecture of a multi-national union. In 2007, the Serbian architectural historian Ljiljana Blagojević published – although only in Serbian – *Novi Beograd: Osporeni modernizam* [New Belgrade: Contested Modernism] (Blagojević, 2007), a book dealing with the construction of New Belgrade, an urban unit that was to become the capital of newfound socialist Yugoslavia. In *Novi Beograd*, the author inquiries into the shifts and processes that took place over the

four decades of the planning and construction of New Belgrade.<sup>2</sup> The authors of both publications engage with particulars of single and singular cities, Sarajevo and Belgrade, further linking them with the broader context of the ideological and urban processes unfolding in the country. Alić and Gusheh, and Blagojević, show us the cities engaged in social and political mediations of the post-war period, negotiating the financial constraints of the era and the ideological constrictions characteristic of a communist country in South-Eastern Europe.

Publications comparable to Ivan Štraus's only came in 2012, with a study and an edited volume by Maroje Mrduljaš and Vladimir Kulić, a Croatian and Serbian architectural historian, respectively. Mrduljaš and Kulić's *Modernism In-Between: The Mediatory Architectures of Socialist Yugoslavia* (Kulić et al., 2012), accompanied by Wolfgang Thaler's photographs, provides the first comprehensive post-Yugoslav summary of the former union's architectural production. Unlike Štraus's 1991 book, a publication more descriptive than analytical, Mrduljaš and Kulić's volume offers both an overview and an analysis of the architecture of Yugoslavia, with a particular focus on ideology, modernity, and the analytical tool of 'in-betweenness'. *Modernism In-Between* covers the architecture of all six republics and two autonomous provinces: this approach provides an exploration of both the similarities and distinctions between urban spaces in the country, the transfers of knowledge between the republics, and the significance of vast and distinct urban heritage. Kulić and Mrduljaš's second contribution from the same year is an edited volume, *Unfinished Modernisations: Between Utopia and Pragmatism* (Mrduljaš & Kulić, 2012).<sup>3</sup> Unlike *Modernism In-Between*, the *Unfinished Modernisations* features contributions from an array of mainly regional authors: architectural, urban, and art historians from the successor states of former Yugoslavia examine and explore topics of modernist and post-modernist architecture in Yugoslavia, links between architecture and ideology, themes of socialist urban planning and housing, and architecture of the Non-Aligned

<sup>2</sup> Due to the length restrictions of this article, I only provide a short analysis of a few key publications.

<sup>3</sup> The list of contributors to *Unfinished Modernisations* is exhaustive; most of the region's scholars of the architecture of Yugoslavia provided their contributions. They are: Dejan Jović, Nika Grabar, Petra Čeferin, Robert Burghardt, Irena Šentevska, Dubravka Sekulić, Lana Lovrenčić, Ivan Kucina, Milica Topalović, Marko Sančanin, Divna Penčić, Biljana Spirikoska, Jasna Stefanovska, Nina Ugljen Ademović, Elša Turkušić, Matevž Čelik, Alenka di Battista, Ana Džokić and Marc Neelen, Nebojša Milikić, Jelica Jovanović, Višnja Kukoč, Vesna Perković-Jović, Marko Sančanin, Martina Malešić, Luciano Basauri, Dafne Berc, Dinko Peračić, Miranda Veljačić, Bogo Zupančić, Jelena Grbić, Dragana Petrović, Luka Skansi, Dražen Arbutina, Hela Vukadin, Ines Tolić, and Tanja Damljanović Conley.

Movement and ‘export’ of the Yugoslav modernist and modernising know-how. Both publications depict a country and its architectural production as complex, and its architects – as prolific visionaries; they also show the entwined notions of architecture and ideology as fundamental in creating the state’s built environment.

In 2014, Brigitte Le Normand published her treatise on New Belgrade, *Designing Tito’s Capital: Urban Planning, Modernism, and Socialism in Belgrade* (Le Normand, 2014). The volume studies the intersection of urban planning, modernism, and Yugoslav socialism as exhibited in the construction of the federation’s would-be capital between 1950 and 1972. The author outlines the idealism of the early utopian projects for New Belgrade and follows their disintegration after the fallout with the Soviets in 1953. Similar to Kulić and Mrduljaš’s volumes, Le Normand conducts her research by investigating both the urban planning projects and the socio-political background of Cold War Yugoslavia, ultimately painting an image of a country on the path of modernisation and industrialisation, dealing with the financial strains particular to its unique political position after 1953.

This brief overview illustrates the main focal points of the recent research on the architecture of state-socialist Yugoslavia. The researchers predominantly examine the notions of modernity and architectural modernism and concepts of urban and political utopia intertwined with pragmatism and socio-political realities of the Cold War era. Throughout these themes, the recurrent narrative of negotiations of the nation, national, and nationalism in Yugoslavia proved unavoidable and inextricable. The publications briefly outlined above further address the particular links between Yugoslav politics and the architectural heritage of the earlier periods. The authors exploring these topics have focused on the vast role of heritage in the creation of the Yugoslav identity, as negotiated with and within the republics’ singular national pasts. In the recent decades, the notion of national history and heritage has proven a significant factor in the creation of local national and urban identities.

In the late 1990s and the early years of the new millennium, another feature of architectural scholarship on the region came to prominence: war destruction of heritage during the 1990s in former Yugoslav states became a focus of academic inquiry. Thematic of urbicide as illustrated in Martin Shaw’s “Urbicide in Bosnia” (Shaw, 2004), and violence in Kosovo in Andrew Herscher’s *Violence Taking Place* (Herscher, 2010) were first juxtaposed with works such as Emily Gunzburger Makaš’s 2005 treatise on the meaning of heritage in the case of the Mostar’s war-demolished Ottoman heritage, “Interpreting Multivalent Sites: New Meanings for

Mostar's Old Bridge". The last decade saw another series of publications on the topic, now also dealing with the case of Belgrade's modernist Generalštab, demolished in the NATO bombing of the city, "A Heritage of Resistance' – The Changing Meanings of Belgrade's Generalstab" by Ben Davenport (2015), and the destruction of UNESCO heritage sites, such as the case with Dubrovnik, as analysed by Darja Radovic Mahecic in her 2015 book chapter, "The case of Dubrovnik: UNESCO World Heritage Site Under Siege" (Radović Mahečić, 2015).

Like other scholarship examining the 1990s destruction of former Yugoslav cities and their heritage, works of Herscher, Makaš, and Helen Walasek's *Bosnia and the Destruction of Cultural Heritage* (Walasek, 2015) focus not only on the processes of destruction and political negotiations of heritage but also on the notions of meaning, conflict, and resistance. These publications illustrate a new trajectory in the study of Yugoslav urban space and the region's cities: while the destruction took place in the aftermath of the dissolution of the former union and the devastated buildings were often not from the Yugoslav period, the processes that resulted in their destruction were tied with the ending of Yugoslavia, and thus I find them inextricably linked. The reconstruction of the destroyed heritage has also been associated with the processes of the construct of post-Yugoslav identity, further emphasising this connection.

### Post-Socialist City in Yugoslavia: Interdisciplinary Approaches

The examination of the scholarship on the post-socialist city in the Yugoslav successor states can be divided into two threads: on the one hand, regional and international scholars have engaged in the study of the urban and architectural elements of the post-socialist city in the Western Balkans – its particulars influenced and conditioned by the Yugoslav socio-political and cultural past – and on the other hand, researchers have produced scholarship focusing not on the built and urban environment as much as on the social and cultural narratives in the post-Yugoslav post-socialist space. This duality can further be emphasised in the context of the fields in which these works are produced. Researchers exploring the post-socialist city in the context of architecture and urban planning are architectural and urban historians, socio-cultural anthropologists, or art historians. In contrast, those examining the socio-cultural narratives of the post-socialist city come from different fields in humanities and social sciences, predominantly from sociology, urban geography, anthropology, and area studies.

Scholars investigating architectural and urban features of the post-Yugoslav post-socialist city – this duality a unique characteristic to be examined further – have focused on the topics of housing transformations, as seen in “Post-Socialist Housing Policy Transformation in Yugoslavia and Belgrade” (Petrović, 2001) and in “Functional Metamorphosis of New Belgrade” (Jovanović & Ratkaj, 2014); on transition to market-focused urbanism, as illustrated in “From Modernist to Market Urbanism: The Transformation of New Belgrade” (Waley, 2011); on sustainable development, as demonstrated in “Participatory Measurements of Sustainable Urban Development and Quality of Life in Post-Socialist Zadar, Croatia” (Cavrić et al., 2008); and on sustainability, as examined in “From Post-Socialist to Sustainable: The City of Ljubljana” (Svirčić Gotovac & Kerbler, 2019). Other authors have specifically studied the concepts of national identity and branding as negotiated and exhibited in architecture, a great example illustrated in Andrew Graan’s work on Skopje, “Counterfeiting the Nation? Skopje 2014 and the Politics of Nation Branding in Macedonia” (Graan, 2013), and Boris Petrović’s 2016 (Petrović, 2016) examination of the city’s recent extensive remodelling, “The Haussmannian Paris and the Neoclassical Skopje (Petrović, 2014)”. In the study of the nation and the national in the region, the researchers have shown their interrelation with heritage politics, particularly expertly shown in the works of Fabio Mattioli, “Unchanging Boundaries: The Reconstruction of Skopje and the Politics of Heritage” (Mattioli, 2014), and Sanja Horvatinčić, “Between Memory Politics and New Models of Heritage Management: Rebuilding Yugoslav Memorial Sites ‘From Below’” (Horvatinčić, 2020). These scholarly projects have centred on shifts similar to those unfolding throughout the former communist world since the early 1990s, albeit with a particular focus on the intrinsic issues pertinent to the politics of the post-Yugoslav region: primarily the post-war reconstruction and the socio-cultural and political negotiations of the contentious recent past.

An analysis of this short overview of the scholarship and scholars investigating the Yugoslav post-socialist city allows for an analysis of the several dominant research trends: scholars have predominantly focused on transformation and heritage, the introduction of the market economy, sustainability, and the links between the national and the urban. While the issue of housing has not been as prevalent in the early post-Yugoslav urban space as in the former Eastern Bloc countries, the studies of former archetypal housing estates of the state-socialist era – in New Belgrade, for example – have quickly become a part of the growing scholarship on the former union’s cities and their metamorphoses under the capitalist economy and pluralist governments. The question of the ‘national’ has surfaced as dominant in



the study of the contemporary transformations of the North Macedonian capital of Skopje: the government's reconstruction of the city centre in a neo-neoclassical fashion has brought upon not only global attention to the city but also scholarly debates on the links between architecture, politics, and (inter)national identity. The projects of heritage protection of remnants of the state-socialist era in the Yugoslav successor states have proven secondary to those of the earlier periods: while modernist monuments from the second half of the twentieth century have been relegated largely to the contentious communist past, researchers have predominantly focused on the urban remnants of earlier periods; one outlier is an expanding study of the Yugoslav WWII memorials.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to research conducted in the context of urban and architectural discourses on the Yugoslav post-socialist city, in the last two decades regional and international scholars have further focused on the examination of not only architectural and urban spaces in the post-Yugoslav sphere but also their socio-cultural markings. Authors from across the fields of humanities and social sciences have studied the particulars of the post-Yugoslav space; they have observed and analysed the processes of formation and negotiations of newfound cultural and social identities and their links with the socialist Yugoslav era. Sociologists, urban geographers, and socio-cultural anthropologists have examined topics such as trauma, catharsis, and re-structuring in a post-war society, as illustrated in "An Uneasy View of the City" (Vujovic, 2000) and "Urban Restructuring in Post-War Contexts: The Case of Sarajevo" (Martín-Díaz, 2014).<sup>5</sup> They have explored the projects of the post-Yugoslav constructs of identity – an excellent example is "Who's Afraid of White Socks? Towards a Critical Understanding of post-Yugoslav Urban Self-Perceptions" (Jansen, 2005) – and the transition from Yugoslav to post-Yugoslav spaces, as shown in "Transnationalism in Reverse: From Yugoslav to Post-Yugoslav Memorial Sites" (Kirn, 2014) and "'New Left' in the Post-Yugoslav Space: Issues, Sites, and Forms" (Štiks, 2015). Finally, they have inquired into the pervasive concepts of memory and nostalgia, as seen in "Successful Icons of Failed Time: Rethinking Post-Communist Nostalgia" (Bartmanski, 2011). General themes here are identifiable as those of trauma and change, the dual focus on national and trans-national, and the themes of restructuring and reshaping, in contrast to urban scholars' focus on reconstructing and rebuilding.

<sup>4</sup> While scholarship exploring the treatment of state-socialist urban heritage does exist, the predominant focus in the scope of heritage studies in the post-Yugoslav region is on the urban heritage from previous periods: Ottoman, Byzantine, and Austro-Hungarian.

<sup>5</sup> In this context, I am referring to the 1990s wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, and the NATO bombings in Serbia.

Significantly, this overview of scholarship unveils another challenging duality in the academic vocabulary on the topic: the juxtaposition between the post-socialist and post-Yugoslav in the study of the contemporary city in former Yugoslavia, and the contrasting and overlapping particulars of these two qualifying concepts. While scholars engaging with architectural and urban elements of the city examine them within the context of the post-socialist signifier, researchers investigating the socio-cultural connotations utilise the vocabulary of post-Yugoslav spaces. In contrast to urban and architectural scholars who refer to post-socialist architecture and urban planning when writing about post-Yugoslav cities, anthropologists, urban geographers, and sociologists explore the concept of post-Yugoslav space and its intricacies in a more nuanced manner. Stef Jansen's inquiry into post-Yugoslav citizenship and urbanity (Jansen, 2005) illustrates the juxtapositions between urban and rural spaces and their links with the distinct notions of post-Yugoslav identity in Serbia and Croatia. For Jansen, the particulars of this process are not only post-socialist but, more pertinently, they are characterised by the transition from Yugoslav to post-Yugoslav space. Further, Igor Štiks (2015) examines the 'post' of post-Yugoslavia in the process of the creation of the political 'new left' and the protests and uprisings associated with the process of societal restructuring to illustrate the particulars of the space that is not only post-socialist but singularly post-Yugoslav.

An analysis of the scholarship produced on socio-cultural spaces of post-socialist – and post-Yugoslav – cities exposes a region in flux, its urban and social practises entwined and symbiotic. Architectural transformations of post-socialist space influence the conversions of socio-cultural processes in the region and vice versa. The social and cultural developments equally impact the architectural production in post-Yugoslav cities, creating particular spaces in the Western Balkans, conditioned by their state-socialist past and post-Yugoslav present. These tentatively defined strands of knowledge production show the main trends of inquiry in the scholarship on the post-socialist city in post-Yugoslavia. The studies of heritage destruction and preservation, the shifts in architectural vocabulary from modernist and post-modernist to contemporary, and the notions of national, cultural, and social in the contemporary cities in the Yugoslav successor states show the multi-layered and multi-disciplinary approach to the contemporary city in the region. These studies also illustrate a fundamental need for a transdisciplinary approach in comprehensive examination of different and divergent elements in the production of urban and socio-cultural space, its negotiations and mediations.

## East-Central Europe: Post-Socialist City and Scholarship

In contrast with the regional and international scholars working on the topics of the architecture of (post)Yugoslavia, the researchers exploring the transformations in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe have engaged with the discourse since the onset of the early 1990s. The foremost discourse explored the political and economic transition from communism to multi-party democracy and from a centrally planned economy to capitalism. In the decade when the wars spread across the former Yugoslav states, the societies in Central and Eastern Europe commenced the process of a complex socio-political shift and the built environment of the former communist cities came to play a more nuanced part in this process unfolding in the final decade of the past century. The ambitious topics of privatisation, change and continuity, and questions of identity characterised the 1990s scholarship and the first decade of the new millennium, and the transition toward a more case-study-oriented approach became evident only in the past decade. The analysis of discourses on the post-socialist city in CEE allows for an opportunity to explore possible conduits for future research on the post-Yugoslav post-socialist city; some are more applicable than others, given the particulars of the post-Yugoslav socio-cultural and urban environment.

In the 1990s scholarship on Central and East European states and their cities, sociologists examined the particulars of the vehement transformations – urban and otherwise – that had unfolded in the former state-socialist countries of the former Eastern Bloc. In 1996 Gregory Andrusz, Peter Harloe, and Ivan Szelenyi published an edited volume, *Cities After Socialism*.<sup>6</sup> This first publication on urban spaces in the transforming and transformative post-socialist period explores varied topics. While some authors offer background analysis on urbanism during socialism (Enyedi, 1996), others explore the overwhelming process of privatisation (Marcuse, 1996) and the transition from socialist to capitalist city (Harloe, 1996; Häußermann, 1996). The sociologists, social scientists, and urban scholars who contributed to this volume have effectively delivered an introduction to the transforming region, shifting between two distinct and incompatible ideologies. Andrusz et al. (1996) analyse the profound changes of the urban society of the 1990s and ask the questions on urban identity, (dis)continuity,

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<sup>6</sup> The editors dedicated the publication to their “friends and colleagues in former Yugoslavia”, with the hopes that they may “have cities to live in and peaceful lives to live there” (Andrusz et al., 1996, p. vi).

and what comes next for former state-socialist cities. Following the 1996 *Cities After Socialism*, Kiril Stanilov published an edited volume, *The Post-Socialist City: Urban Form and Space Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe After Socialism* (Stanilov, 2007), exploring the public and urban space in post-socialism in further detail. Stanilov's volume examines a myriad of time-pertaining topics such as regional development trends, non-residential and residential planning, public policy and public space, and, finally, the future planning of the post-socialist city. The volume, and its contributors, offer a broader perspective on the transformation of state-socialist urban spaces and planning processes: the authors examine case studies from different post-socialist countries from throughout the former Eastern Bloc offering distinct and at times overlapping analyses.

In this period, a discourse on identity became particularly pertinent. The transition period of the 1990s exemplified the rhetoric of societal change and transformation, the shift from communist to, once again, 'European' identity. The urban spaces illustrated these conversions, both their flaws and triumphs. Following a 2005 conference, John Czaplicka, Nida Gelazis, and Blair Ruble's edited volume, *Cities after the Fall of Communism: Reshaping Cultural Landscapes and European Identity* (Czaplicka et al., 2009), explores the transformations of urban spaces concerning the formation of identities, and in particular the process of the presumed 'homecoming' to Europe. Exploring a similar theme, Craig Young and Sylvia Kaczmarek analyse the links between the socialist and post-socialist urban identity in Central and Eastern Europe (Young & Kaczmarek, 2008), and Virag Molnar examines the 'European city' and the notion of post-socialist locality in Berlin (Molnar, 2010). Overall, the themes of conflict, change and continuity, privatisation, identity, and globalisation can be identified as predominant in this period, characterising the discourse on the post-socialist city until 2010.

In the last ten years, the scholarly discourse has slightly shifted: while sociologists of the 1990s had established their work in the veins of 'grand topics' of post-socialist transition and transformation, the contemporary urban sociologists, socio-cultural and urban anthropologists, and urban geographers have engaged in the exploration of the post-socialist city in a more concentrated manner. As a result, the scholarship published in the last decade has focused on singular case studies, mainly dealing with the state-socialist urban heritage in contemporary times and the present-day processes and developments in Central and East European cities.

In the case of the Czech Republic, researchers have studied and analysed communist housing estates and their 'future' within the context of transition and privatisation, as evident in "The Future of Housing Systems After the Transition – The Case of the Czech Republic" (Lux & Sunega, 2010); others

have explored various possible trajectories and variations within different housing estates – illustrated in “Housing Estates in the Czech Republic After Socialism: Various Trajectories and Inner Differentiation” (Temelová et al., 2011). Furthermore, a question of diversity in CEE cities, particularly in Prague’s housing estates, has been a topic of interest in recent years, well-described in “Arrival City: Invisible Diversity at Prague’s Housing Estates” (Heřmanová & Lehečka, 2019). Likewise, housing estates, the local *paneláky*, arguably a key topic of the recent decade, have been studied both by local and international scholars focusing on their meaning in the post-socialist discourse, a good example provided in “Czech Paneláks Are Disappearing, but the Housing Estates Remain” (Zarecor & Špačková, 2012). Elsewhere in the region of the former Eastern Bloc, the discourse has developed in a similar fashion. In Poland, the question of segregation and urban division has been pertinent, seen in “Paradoxes of (Post)Socialist Segregation: Metropolitan Sociospatial Divisions Under Socialism and After in Poland” (Marcinićzak et al., 2013), as has been the question of urban and demographic shrinking observed in the country, well detailed in “Demographic and Morphological Shrinkage of Urban Neighbourhoods in a Post-Socialist City: The Case of Łódź, Poland” (Kazimierczak & Szafrńska, 2019). In Slovakia, the post-socialist transformation of open spaces in housing estates has been a part of the predominant discourse, with a good analysis provided in “Post-Socialist Transformations of Green Open Spaces in Large Scale Socialist Housing Estates in Slovakia” (Kristiánová, 2016). Finally, in the unique case of former East Germany, similar trends have been noted, specifically in the research focused on post-socialist growth and shrinkage of the population, exemplified in “What Drives Urban Population Growth and Shrinkage in Postsocialist East Germany?” (Heider, 2019).

The contemporary researchers engaging with the theoretical discourse on post-socialism have focused on the 1990s introduction and subsequent application of ‘Western’ urban theories in the context of the post-socialist urban space; they have also engaged with the problematic and inapplicability of such theories in CEE, a notable example seen in “The Relevance of ‘Western’ Theoretical Concepts for Investigations of the Margins of Post-Socialist Cities: The Case of Prague” (Ouředníček, 2016). At the same time, the discourse on the broader exploration of the utilisation of urban theory in post-socialist cities has proliferated, as demonstrated in “Introduction: Post-Socialist Cities and Urban Theory” (Ferenčuhová & Gentile, 2016). In the last decade, scholars have also focused on theorising the concept of the ‘post-socialist city’, its predecessor, the ‘socialist city’ in CEE, and the links between the two; excellent examples of this discourse are shown in “What Was So Socialist About the Socialist City? Second World Urbanity

in Europe” (Zarecor, 2018) and “Conceptual Forum: The ‘Post-Socialist City’” (Hirt et al., 2017). Broadly, the leading scholarly topics from the last ten years in the research on CEE cities can be identified as focusing on state-socialist housing estates, diversity and marginalised populations, and Western theoretical inputs and contemporary urban theory. As such, they show the shifting trends from ‘grand topics’ of ideological transformations of the 1990s to a more contemporary problematic of living in large cities, migration, climate change, and sustainability.

## Future Research in Post-Yugoslavia

Based on the scholarship outlined and briefly analysed in this article, the possible venues for future research on the post-socialist city in former Yugoslavia can be divided into several trajectories: the examination of the ‘post-Yugoslav’ as juxtaposed to ‘post-socialist’ city; further explorations of the destruction, reconstruction, and meaning in heritage preservation as well as the more comprehensive inclusion of heritage in the region; the expanding study of Yugoslav monuments; the rising problematic of housing; the growing focus on sustainability; and the recent issues regarding the developments in foreign investment urban renewal projects in former Yugoslav capitals.

The concepts of ‘post-Yugoslav’ and ‘post-socialist’ largely lack theorisation in the studies of the built environment and socio-cultural space in former Yugoslavia. As much as the Cold War cities in the former Yugoslav federation were state-socialist, modernist, and Yugoslav, nowadays, the cities in the region are primarily referred to as post-socialist, at least within the framework of urban and architectural studies. The Yugoslav successor states’ modernist and socialist pasts, while dynamic, evocative, and perhaps even haunting, are seldom explored within the context of the contemporary region, and the role of the Yugoslav past in the present is missing; that is, unless urban and societal remnants and scars of the former union are utilised as the ‘other’ against which to establish and negotiate the present urban and national identity. Significantly absent in the analysis of the scholarship dealing with the contemporary city in former Yugoslavia, the local and international scholars only seldom explore the ‘post-Yugoslav’ signifier in architectural and urban scholarship; it is somewhat more often referenced by scholars engaging with socio-political and cultural transformations of the contemporary Western Balkans, albeit it remains understudied and a possible new research venue.

Heritage remains a predominant element in the scholars’ examination of the built environment in the region nowadays, particularly in Bosnia and

Herzegovina and to a lesser degree in Kosovo. Due to the vast destruction and unsettled political environment in these countries today, the focus on the destruction of the built environment maintains its place in the discourse on the built environment in former Yugoslav states in general and in the war-torn post-Yugoslav countries in particular.<sup>7</sup> The recent shift toward expansion of this discourse toward a critical examination of both destruction in the region, and even more so, reconstruction projects, offers a perspective possibly to be explored in future scholarship: the study of heritage – that from the Yugoslav and earlier periods – would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the built environment in the region, in particular when juxtaposed with the theoretical explorations of space and place in the contemporary Western Balkans, and notions of nationalism and identity, both urban and cultural.

The vast focus on Yugoslav WWII memorials and monuments serves as a singularly explored aspect of the discourse on Yugoslav modernist heritage and its place in the contemporary urban framework. While meanings of war memorials have been altered, appropriated, and negotiated within the cultural and political sphere in the last twenty years, the narrative surrounding the current condition of the modernist architecture of the Yugoslav decades remains overlooked and apt for analysis. Although extensively studied in the context of the architectural production during the second half of the twentieth century, the modernist – and some post-modernists – structures from the Yugoslav era are seldom examined within the context of contemporary heritage studies, its meaning relegated to the communist ideology and its links with the built environment of Cold War Yugoslavia. In a similar vein, the study of Yugoslav era housing remains underexamined – apart from the examples of New Belgrade’s communist ‘dormitories’ and their newly erected surrounding shopping centres – and its place in the contemporary socio-political and cultural discourse falls short. Given a large number of those inhabiting the communist period housing estates in the region of former Yugoslavia, its cultural and architectural significance stands problematically understudied and open for scholarly examination.

Finally, with the exigent global focus on climate change and ecological crises linked and facilitated by hyper-capitalist economies, there is a prolific ground for a discourse engaging with these topics in the context of the post-Yugoslav city. The lack of regulations regarding environmental

<sup>7</sup> In this article, I refer to Kosovo as a post-Yugoslav independent state. Although a point of contention between Serbia and Kosovo, for the purposes of this paper, I acknowledge the independence of this former Yugoslav province. (81% of EU member states and 51% of the UN members recognise Kosovo as an independent state.)

sustainability and local and foreign investments – at different levels throughout the Yugoslav successor states – and interminable corruption within the local governing bodies call for attention to the much-needed examination of development projects in post-Yugoslav cities. Within the context of corruption demonstrated in the cities throughout the former union, the examination of the foreign influx of funds for urban development projects serves as a warning regarding the unregulated and unsustainable construction of contemporary cities and the blatant disregard for their socio-cultural and historical singularities, and future ecological and economic sustainability. The recent example of the Belgrade Waterfront complex – and the currently abandoned project of Zagreb Manhattan – illustrates the systemic abuses in the development of post-Yugoslav cities.<sup>8</sup> Funded by Middle Eastern consortium and erected after alterations of the city's urban plan – and eschewing any public debate the citizens repeatedly called for – the Waterfront illustrates the non-participatory urban development and calls for attention due to the rising problematic regarding the use of public spaces, their funding, and their ecological and financial sustainability.

Unlike the research on Central and East European post-socialist cities, the research on the post-Yugoslav post-socialist space is heavily encumbered by the 1990s wars, the contentious dissolution of the former union, and the contemporary nationalist politics in the region. Architecturally, the vast destruction of the last decade of the past millennium holds a pertinent role in the present-day negotiations of urban space – public and private – and the heritage of both pre-Yugoslav and, to a lesser extent, Yugoslav era remains perpetually negotiated, its meaning altered and amended. While the scholarly discourse will most certainly continue to follow the trend of heritage and memory studies and analyses of reconstruction and rebuilding projects, the future research may venture into the issues that have been at the forefront of the research on the post-socialist city in CEE: predominantly, the topics of housing, diversity and marginality, disenfranchisement, and identity.

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<sup>8</sup> Belgrade Waterfront is an urban renewal development project spearheaded by the Serbian government. Highly controversial and plagued with accusations of corruption and disenfranchisement, the construction of the complex started in 2014, with some residential segments and a shopping mall already completed. The remainder of the Waterfront is still under construction. Zagreb Manhattan is an abandoned urban renewal project of the late mayor of Zagreb, Croatia, Milan Bandić. Bandić's plan to cede more than a million square metres of city's land to an Abu Dhabi investment company – a part of it under the semi-protected modernist structure of the Zagreb Fair – was put to a halt when, following numerous protests, the city's planning institute refused to amend the urban plan of Zagreb to facilitate the construction.



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## Istraživanje postsocijalističkog urbanog prostora u bivšoj Jugoslaviji: analiza multidisciplinarnih metodologija i teoretskih pristupa

Od svršetka perioda komunizma u Evropi u ranim devedesetima—i tehnički, od raspada Jugoslavije i rata koji je obilježio posljednju deceniju dvadesetog stoljeća na Balkanu—stručni istraživački rad na temu jugoistočne Evrope se samo intenzivirao. Tematski akademski projekti posvećeni arhitekturi dvadesetog stoljeća su prisutni u nauci još od početka novog milenija, a nova generacija istoričara arhitekture i urbanizma dodatno naglašava i širi već postojeće teme. Ipak, studij postsocijalističkog arhitektonskog perioda u gradovima zapadnog Balkana zauzima pak sekundarni položaj u odnosu na istraživačke djelatnosti posvećene arhitekturi modernizma u Jugoslaviji te ulozi arhitekture u sociopolitičkim preturbacijama perioda hladnog rata. U okviru diskursa istorije arhitekture i urbanizma, studij postsocijalističkog urbanog prostora je tek minimalno zastupljen—stručno-istraživački projekti na temu se prvenstveno vrše u oblasti sociologije, sociokulturne antropologije i urbane geografije.

Cilj stručnog rada „Studying the Post-Socialist City in Yugoslavia“ je analiza postojeće literature na temu postsocijalističke arhitekture te studij urbane, ideološke i sociološke baštine socijalističke Jugoslavije; drugi cilj rada je identifikacija mogućih pravaca daljeg istraživanja na temu. Tvrdim da studija multidisciplinarnih istraživačkih radova na temu socijalističke i postsocijalističke arhitekture služi kao krucijalan korak u razumijevanju jugoslovenskog i post-jugoslovenskog urbanog prostora kao i njegovih idiosinkratičnih karakteristika. Metodološki, „Studying the Post-Socialist

City in Yugoslavia“ prvenstveno identificira pristupe temi različitim disciplinarnih oblasti i njihovih tačaka preklapanja te vrši analizu postojećeg diskursa. Dalje, kroz studije različitim metodoloških i teoretskih pristupa u već postojećem istraživačkom diskursu na temu postsocijalističke arhitekture gradova središnje Evrope, „Studying the Post-Socialist City in Yugoslavia“ predlaže i definira moguće pravce u daljim studijama postsocijalističke arhitekture i urbanizma u zemljama bivše Jugoslavije.

**Ključne riječi:** socijalistička arhitektura, postsocijalistička arhitektura, Jugoslavija, zemlje bivše Jugoslavije, ideologija i arhitektura, kulturna baština, zapadni Balkan.

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## Badanie przestrzeni miasta postsocjalistycznego na obszarze byłej Jugosławii: analiza wielodyscyplinowych metodologii i perspektyw teoretycznych

Od upadku ładu komunistycznego w Europie na początku lat 90. XX wieku, czemu towarzyszył rozpad Jugosławii i wojna, która naznaczyła ostatnią dekadę minionego stulecia na Bałkanach, intensywnie rozwijają się badania naukowe poświęcone Europie Południowo-Wschodniej. Od początku nowego tysiąclecia pojawiają się projekty akademickie dotyczące dwudziestowiecznej architektury, zaś nowe pokolenie historyków architektury i urbanistyki z rosnącym zainteresowaniem rozwija poruszaną dotąd tematykę. Jednakże badania nad architekturą okresu postsocjalistycznego w miastach zachodnich Bałkanów odgrywają drugorzędną rolę w porównaniu z aktywnością naukową poświęconą architekturze modernizmu w Jugosławii, jak też miejscu architektury w przemianach społeczno-politycznych podczas zimnej wojny. Badania przestrzeni miejskiej w okresie postsocjalistycznym zajmują marginalne miejsce w dyskursie historii architektury i urbanistyki, zaś projekty naukowe o tej tematyce rozwijają się głównie w perspektywie socjologii, antropologii społecznej i geografii miasta.

Celem artykułu jest analiza dotychczasowej literatury dotyczącej architektury postsocjalistycznej oraz miejskiego, ideologicznego i socjologicznego dziedzictwa socjalistycznej Jugosławii; przedstawione przeze mnie prace starają się również określić możliwe kierunki dalszych studiów nad tą problematyką. Uważam, że analiza wielodyscyplinowych badań naukowych dotyczących architektury socjalizmu i okresu postsocjalistycznego może być kluczowym krokiem w procesie odkrywania znaczeń jugosłowiańskiej i postjugosłowiańskiej przestrzeni miejskiej,

jak też w próbach scharakteryzowania jej specyfiki. Pod względem metodologicznym artykuł rekonstruuje sposoby badania typowe dla poszczególnych dyscyplin oraz ich punkty wspólne, jak też dokonuje analizy istniejącego już dyskursu naukowego. Ponadto dzięki badaniu różnorodnych perspektyw metodologicznych i teoretycznych w studiach na temat miast Europy Środkowej w artykule zaproponowano możliwe kierunki dalszych prac badawczych nad architekturą i urbanistyką okresu postsocjalistycznego w krajach byłej Jugosławii.

**Słowa kluczowe:** architektura socjalizmu, architektura postsocjalistyczna, Jugosławia, kraje byłej Jugosławii, ideologia i architektura, dziedzictwo kulturowe, Zachodnie Bałkany.

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