

Introduction: Notes towards a political morphology of undead urban forms

Jonathan Bach and Michał Murawski

Towards a political morphology of the centre

The idea of the city dominated by a soaring landmark or a grand epicentre – whether a sacred temple, a secular monument, or a single central business district – has allegedly been buried along with high modernity and replaced with the polycentric, distributed and purportedly ‘smart’ city. In the same crypt, we are told, lies the socialist city, leaving a legacy of ruin, relic, failure and obsolescence. This book argues that not only are such characterisations empirically inaccurate, but they contain contestable normative assumptions about how urban form relates to ideology. Instead, we wish to draw attention back towards the centre to better understand the relation between power, architecture, planning and politics, and to invite new theoretical understandings of cities in relation to state processes and sociocultural structures left incomplete by neoliberal explanations of urban transformation. In so doing, we question the linear grand narrative in which a discrete high modern epoch, dominated by central ensembles, is transformed into a twenty-first-century epoch of political, economic and spatial decentralisation. We do this not to embrace some kind of reactionary valorisation of centrality, but rather to signal a discomfort with the way that polycentricity, when viewed as inevitable and unquestionably laudable, has become a kind of urban ‘end of history’ that risks obscuring its own politics and potential for transformation. How, the book asks, can we empirically understand the continued and powerful influence of centrality on the formerly socialist and late-capitalist cities of today, both as a metaphorical position from which political or economic power emanates, and as an actual architectural form or urban morphology?

Centrality is generally considered an exemplary high modern urban concept, practice, ideology, form and aesthetic. Sometime during the second half of the twentieth century, between the horizontal vernacularism of Denise Scott Brown, Robert Venturi and Steven Izenour's *Learning from Las Vegas* and Google's plans for 'smart cities' (with the collapse of the Soviet Union in between), politicians, planners and scholars rallied around a new urban age said to be taking shape in its place. This age promised to be humbler, more sustainable, polycentric and periphery-oriented: brownfield eco-cities instead of monumental axes or skyscraper forests; relational-aesthetic 'micro-utopias' instead of heaven-storming atheist ziggurats; pop-up innovation hubs rather than palaces of culture; fleeting anti-statues in place of equestrian heroes and triumphal arches; Amazon, Airbnb and WeWork on the relics of the Galeries Lafayette, the Grand Hotel, and Lord & Taylor.

Ideologically, then, from the late twentieth century on, the centre began to be associated with authoritarian polities and command economies, exemplified by grandiose central ensembles and architectural monumentality. Meanwhile, liberal democracies and late capitalism became increasingly associated with architectural asceticism or decentralisation, moving away from classic capitalism's love affair with monumentality and verticality. In this vein, the world's most influential planning theorists, economists and political scientists – from Jane Jacobs to Economics Nobel laureates Paul Krugman and Elinor Ostrom – described and celebrated the dismemberment of 'inflexible' and 'authoritarian' urban monocentricity.¹ In its place the de-centred or 'polycentric' city has come to consolidate itself as today's hegemonic spatial form of neoliberal urbanism, promising a more efficient distribution of work, residence and government. We have nothing against efficiency, yet we wonder about the ways in which the discourses of democracy are being used to make discourses of neoliberalism seem self-evident.

Is this decentralising, centrifugal tendency really as absolute, inevitable, or even desirable, as its prophets claim? Metaphorically, it is the centre that holds things together, providing the right balance for the alignment of political, spatial and social forces. When the centre cannot hold, as in Yeats's poem 'The second coming', things famously fall apart. It is no coincidence that this poem trended sharply on Twitter in the days following the Brexit referendum in June 2016, and again following Donald Trump's election victory in November of that year ('what rough beast, its hour come round at last / Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?').² By contrast, when centrist saviour of the established order Emmanuel Macron defeated revamped neo-fascist Marine Le Pen in the

French presidential elections in April 2017, the Tweets and headlines read – surprise, surprise – ‘the centre holds’.

Yet the city centre is a metaphor written in stone and streets – it is the exertion of power through the symbolic representation of the built environment. As such, the city centre provides a conundrum for political power as part of the age-old struggle between the decentralisation and re-centralisation of power. Power changes its shape with the rise and fall of regimes, ideologies and economies, but the shape of the built environment is harder to change with elections and revolutions. Rather, new forms of power appropriate the centre in new ways, repositioning (sometimes literally) its monumentality. Today, when the global political and economic order is increasingly subject to both the centrifugal impulses of neoliberalism and the centripetal tendencies of neo-populism, the time is right to revisit the very concept of the ‘centre’ in thinking through the morphology of the urban today.

The de-centred, polycentric city, much in vogue over the last few decades, relies on a binary of urban centrality and peripherality that is constantly threatening to fold in on itself, and for that reason remains the focus of sustained and often violent efforts to police and reinforce its boundaries, as well as of creative attempts to confuse and confound them. We can speak, guardedly perhaps, of a ‘crisis’ of centrality and its attendant forms of monumentality and verticality which gives rise to skyscrapers distributed like shards across the cityscape, to inverted cities, ghost cities, anti-cities, instant cities and ex-cities.³ This crisis of centrality gives rise equally to morphologically confusing political trends that centralise power as they move ‘from the extreme fringe to centre stage’,⁴ mixing up fringe and centre in what anthropologist Michael Taussig has called ‘the new normal, in which Trump Tower displaces the White House’ (although, as he notes, ‘there is no normal anymore’).⁵

The essays collected here are part of a conversation stretching over the past hundred years, during which a great deal of scholarly energy has been expended on interrogating the permutations of the back-and-forth between concentration and dispersal – the ‘ceaseless battle between centrifugal forces that seek to keep things apart, and centripetal forces that strive to make things cohere’, as Michael Holquist puts it with reference to Mikhail Bakhtin’s philosophy of language.⁶ To name a few prominent, canon-forming instances, these have included explorations into fission and fusion,⁷ charisma and kingship⁸ in political anthropology, centre–periphery relations in political sociology and international relations,⁹ Marxist political economy,¹⁰ ancient archaeology¹¹ and broadly defined urban studies,¹² studies of polycentric organisation in science

and government,¹³ theories of morphology and period in art and architectural history,¹⁴ modes of arborescence versus rhizomaticity or linearity and non-linearity in continental philosophy,¹⁵ and models of centrifugality and centripetality in urban economic geography.¹⁶

From its vantage point of the experience of the 'Second World' (discussed more fully below), this volume continues this interrogation, questioning the established 'political morphologies' (commonly held linkages between style and shape, aesthetics and geometry) and examining the ongoing play of de- and re-centring. There has never been an immutable relationship between liberal democracy and decentralisation, but the current, Yeats-trending crisis of centrality is doing a particularly vivid job of laying bare the inadequacies of our established categories and laying the ground for our attempt at a political-morphological rethinking.

This presents us with a rich array of questions and contradictions. What is the difference between 'centrism' (in the Blair or Macron mode) and 'centralism' (in the semi-authoritarian, Leninist sense)? How are these geometric, volumetric or aesthetic connotations attached to different modes of doing politics? On an urban terrain, the odds in the 'ceaseless battle' have, it seems, been tilting decidedly in favour of the centrifugal side. This anti-centric political geometry coheres well with what Clifford Geertz (crediting Alfred Kroeber) has characterised as the long-standing 'centrifugal impulse' of disciplines such as anthropology.¹⁷ And indeed urban scholars today – not only anthropologists, but also those in neighbouring social science and humanities disciplines – are committed to rendering the 'irreducibility' of urban life, to analytically 'de-centring' the city. At the same time, there is certainly something centre-fetishising about the neo-populists, the neo-rightists and the alt-rightists, who hark after 'traditional' value, appeal to qualities like 'authority' and 'leadership', and express their dissatisfaction with the rhetorics and aesthetics of the old liberal order. And there is a lot of monumentality and verticality wrapped up in the palatial, Trumpitectural 'Capitalist Realist' politics and aesthetics, which Trumpism and Putinism have in common.¹⁸

We are interested, then, in exploring how these sorts of alignments are made and remade between ideas pertaining to geometry, morphology and aesthetics, and those pertaining to politics, economy, culture and social organisation. How are urban centrality and peripherality linked to particular ways of doing and imagining politics and economics, from totalitarianism to democracy, (neo)liberalism to (neo-)populism, state socialism to high capitalism, production-line Keynesianism to flexible accumulation, sacredness to secularism, protest to repression? What are the 'elective affinities' between the politics of centrality, and other

styles, shapes and geometries, on the level of architectural style as well as city planning? How do various forms of monumentality (sculptural, palatial or domestic), verticality and horizontality crystallise on urban centres and fringes? How do these connections, in turn, map onto our understandings of epochal transformations, within which the politics and morphologies we examine are caught up? Can we imagine (and perhaps implement) counter-intuitive, paradoxical and subversive forms of monumentality, verticality and centrality, whether the type of intimate, domestic, modernist monumentality discussed by Adam Kaasa in his contribution to this volume or the forms of feminist, counter-patriarchal monumentality and centrality explored by artists, among them Sanja Iveković and Zofia Kulik?¹⁹ On a historical level, what is the relationship between high centrality, monumentality and high modernity, especially in the state socialist incarnation (broadly understood) of the first-named? Have this morphology and that epoch died together, and, if so, what are their posthumous lingerings, afterlives and reincarnations?

Cultures One, Two and Free

The end of Soviet-led state socialism constituted a great de-centring of power, and the cities that took shape under the tutelage of epicentric socialist modernity swiftly found themselves de-centred, subjected to the centrifugal, disordering impulses of *laissez-faire* late capitalism (now better known as ‘neoliberalism’).²⁰ Post-socialist urbanism gives us perhaps the clearest example of twentieth-century centrality as it encounters the newly forged, reconfigured, reincarnated mutant and zombie centralities and peripheralities of the twenty-first century. It reflects the global impact of socialist modernism far beyond the Soviet bloc, which made its mark on contemporary cityscapes from Mexico to India, China, Nigeria, Iraq, Vietnam, Mongolia, Cuba, Tanzania and beyond.²¹ The socialist incarnation of high modern epicentricity has a lasting legacy not only on post-socialist cities but on world urbanism as a whole, with planetary implications for theorising the urban in the twenty-first century.

Thus, to rethink centrality, and with it the genealogy of the contemporary global city, this volume starts from the experience of the ‘Second World’ during and after socialism.²² Arguably, it is there that modernity witnessed its furthest-reaching and most radical realisation.²³ And yet post-socialist cities are often doubly excluded in urban scholarship and theory building because, as Tauri Tuvikene puts it, they appear neither central nor peripheral enough, ‘neither mainstream nor

part of the critique',²⁴ especially in the context of post-colonial urbanism. To rethink centrality is thus also a way to better understand the changing valence of post-socialist cities in thinking about urban theory. This does not mean some kind of redemptive re-centring of the socialist city, but rather using the lens of socialist urbanism to open up discussion about centrality as a theme across much urban discourse, from geographical discussions of centre and periphery to planning discussions of polycentric and 'smart' cities. Thus, it seeks to be part of that larger set of 'conversations open[ing] up among the many subjects of urban theoretical endeavour in cities around the world', as Jennifer Robinson has put it, that are moving away from 'an authoritative voice emanating from some putative centre of urban scholarship'.²⁵

One of the key points of departure behind this volume is a highly influential analysis by architectural historian Vladimir Paperny, according to which modern Russian architectural culture oscillates endlessly between two fundamental variants: Culture One (centrifugal, horizontal, constantly in motion, aesthetically sparse), which can be most straightforwardly identified with the Soviet avant-garde of the 1920s, and Culture Two (centripetal, vertical, static, aesthetically opulent), which achieved its most extravagant flowering during the Stalin years.²⁶ Paperny has expressed doubt about whether these categories can be applied in their purity to post-socialist Russia, but he has also – in exemplary high structuralist fashion – expressed scepticism about whether it is possible to go beyond them and arrive at something like a 'Culture Three'.²⁷

The contributions in this book raise the possibility that this binary opposition can be strategically redeployed, if not dialectically sublimated, in order to make sense of the late-capitalist political-morphological common sense of the Euro-American world. This common sense, in simplified form, is that the West and the North are moving towards an emancipated new urban culture – let us call it Culture *Free* – that is possessed of all of the dynamism, fringiness and horizontality of Culture One, but liberated of its grandiose modernist narratives and centralities. The 'rest' of the world – the Global East and the Global South – meanwhile, are often cast as if they were languishing within an obsolete variant of Culture Two, whose contours are dictated by the whims of gold-plating, column-proliferating dictators and parvenu oligarchs.²⁸ Yet the centripetal morphologies of Culture Two – allegedly obsolete, or consigned to the peripheries – continue to hold sway over cities far beyond the realm of wherever it is that the Global East begins and ends.

In (re-)centring the experience of socialist urban modernity, then, this book represents urban stories from a small selection of the

former Soviet-bloc ‘Second World’ – Russia, Poland, East Germany and Ukraine – and juxtaposes them with select tales from beyond – Sweden, India, the United Kingdom and Mexico. Without any aspiration to comprehensiveness, and with a keen awareness that greater coverage would always be desirable (China, for example, deserves its own treatment in this regard), the book theorises the urban planet through the afterlife of socialist high-modern urbanism. To this end we cautiously find the term Global East useful, not as a replacement for the notion of ‘post-socialism’ (although we find that term wanting), but because it allows us to operationalise Zsuzsa Gille’s argument that there is a global context for post-socialism – a ‘global post-socialist condition’.²⁹ As we use it here, the term Global East is also consciously derivative of the concept of the Global South; indeed it seeks to engage the (former) socialist (urban) world in a conversation started by post-colonial and de-colonial studies. The project of provincialising the West and the North, we would like to suggest, can be a project of centring not only the South, but also the East.³⁰

One of our reservations about the term ‘Global East’, however, is that, while centring a particular compass point broadly associated with actually existing socialism, it also, paradoxically, runs the risk of eliding (or provincialising) socialism’s centrality to the construction (as well as the deconstruction) of modernity. For this reason, we would like to use this opportunity to flag the usefulness of concepts such as ‘zombie socialism’ and ‘still-socialism’ which seek to overcome the fatalistic Fukuyamian overtones of *post-socialism*.³¹ We actively call for the development of new concepts along these lines – the term ‘trans-socialism’ springs to mind here as one possibility – that can account for both socialism’s afterlives and enduring legacies as well as its spatial and temporal global reach.

Fanning out from Moscow

Starting from the Global East, then, and extending beyond, this volume asks what it means, in practice, to explore the tension between forces of de-centring and re-centring as they reshape the political, economic and social fabric of the urban. Emerging out of an interdisciplinary conference on power and architecture held in London 2016, the essays are purposely eclectic.³² They represent a medley of narrative styles and methodological orientations, from grounded academic essays, to reflections on artistic practice, to political interventions. They draw from urban studies, social anthropology and architectural and artistic theory and practice to

explore empirically how cities, mostly but by no means exclusively in the Global East, are dealing with the inheritance of older models of centrality and how they appropriate, reinvent and repurpose the centre – both the built environment itself and the attendant political discourses about the centre as the location of power. Because architecture and power are inextricably intertwined, the cases provide insights into the changing nature of modern power as a function of the shifting imaginaries of centrality.

Re-Centring the City consists of six thematic parts radiating out, as it were, from the legacy of high socialist modernity in its metropolitan centre of Moscow, the capital of the state socialist cosmos, which forms the first part. ‘Moscow, point of departure’ begins with a personal account of the flight from Moscow’s centripetal force by Vladimir Paperny (chapter 1), whose notions of Culture One and Culture Two form a conceptual waltz throughout this volume. From there it moves to accounts of Moscow’s ongoing struggle with its varying conceptions of centrality by contrasting the Kremlin itself, in Clementine Cecil’s account of its hegemonic status (chapter 2), with the sprawling Stalinist-era park known as VDNKh, which Andreas Schönle (chapter 3) presents as exemplary of what he calls the post-post-socialist condition. The next two chapters draw our attention to the absences and interstices in and around these oddly mimetic monumental spaces, first in Owen Hatherley’s (chapter 4) alternative genealogy of today’s decentralising fantasies in the Soviet Constructivist’s ‘disurbanism’ movement of the 1930s, and then through Daria Paramonova’s (chapter 5) explanation of contemporary Moscow’s focus on space as an organising principle for new architecture in the post-Soviet era.

In the second part, ‘Off-centre: palatial peripheries’, the book fans out from Moscow to explore the styles, shapes and ideologies of palatial monumentality – in its pre-socialist, socialist, post-socialist and *still*-socialist incarnations – in Berlin and Warsaw, cities on the socialist world’s privileged fringes, or second-order centres. Jonathan Bach’s essay (chapter 6) examines a structuring absence at the centre of East Berlin that lasted for twenty-three post-war years between the destruction of Berlin’s imperial castle and the building of the socialist Palace of the Republic (which, in turn, was torn down after reunification and replaced by a reconstruction of the imperial castle, bearing the name Humboldt Forum). The imperial castle’s reappearance is the subject for Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll and Jonas Tinius (chapter 7), who take today’s Humboldt Forum as a case study for understanding centrality along the intersecting axes of ‘spatial horizontality’ and ‘vertical temporality’. Rounding out this part, Michał Murawski (chapter 8) presents Warsaw’s assertively vertical Palace of

Culture and Science as a socialist-era edifice alive with subversive public spirit, one that leads us back to Stalinist Warsaw's leading architectural ideologue, Edmund Goldzamt, and his strikingly prescient theories, formulated in the 1950s, about architectural power and centrality.

The third part, 'Looking inward: re-centring the sacred', shifts perspective to examine the social centrality of sacred spaces and their changing architecture emerging from confrontations between secular and sacred forms of modernity. Kuba Snopek with Izabela Chichońska and Karolina Popera ([chapter 9](#)) provide an intriguing look at how parish churches in post-war Poland emerged as vernacular and communal architecture alongside, and against, the rigid modernism of the central state. If, in post-war Poland, many parish churches were built with the implicit tolerance of the Polish socialist state, Jewish temples and community buildings, especially in former shtetls, were explicitly allowed to deteriorate, and Natalia Romik ([chapter 10](#)) explores interventions into the spectral architecture of abandoned Jewish property through the work of the Nomadic Shtetl Archive. The last essay in the part, by Jennifer Mack ([chapter 11](#)), focuses on the pressing question of how centrality constitutes community through the construction of mosques in Sweden today, exploring how plans for their construction become part of a redefinition of what counts as the centre of Swedish public life and urban space.

A discussion of centrality would not be complete without verticality, which has haunted socialist modernism, from its obsessions with the never-built Tatlin Tower and Palace of the Soviets, to the legacy of Moscow's seven tall buildings in the immediate post-war period and its Warsaw spin-off. The fourth part, 'Looking upward: power verticals', examines how verticality reorients our ideas of centre and periphery. Stephen Graham ([chapter 12](#)) connects the metaphysics of reaching for the sky with the politics of ever-higher skyscrapers as a marker of global centrality. Vyjayanthi Venuturupalli Rao's following essay ([chapter 13](#)) brings the politics of skyscrapers down to earth, as it were, by examining the politics of air rights in Mumbai, where the high-rise apartment building becomes decidedly anti-monumental (in contrast to Graham's examples of trophy towers), mired in an 'air rights game' that ultimately challenges the very idea of urban development. We end the part with a photo essay by Tom Wolseley ([chapter 14](#)), based on his film, *Vertical Horizons*, about living in the shadow of London's infamous Shard skyscraper.

The penultimate part, 'Looking outward: hinterlands, diffusions, explosions', moves from the heights of our modern Icarian fantasies to reconceptualise the urban 'edge' beyond the binary of centrifugal and centripetal forces. Pushpa Arabindoo ([chapter 15](#)) argues that the salient

distinction for understanding (capitalist) urbanisation is less the classic 'urban vs rural' than 'urban vs non-urban'. Arabindoo uses the case of Chennai to supplant the 'periphery' with the concept of the 'hinterland' as an interpretive vocabulary for understanding a wide range of morphological forms and settlement typologies ranging from the urban to the wilderness. On a planetary scale, Patrick Neveling ([chapter 16](#)) argues that special economic zones, as distributed centres for capitalist production, also produce new hierarchies and, therewith, new mythologies of the centre. Building on the latent sense of rupture in the recombinations of capitalist urban modernity of the previous chapters, Irish multimedia artist Joy Gerrard ([chapter 17](#)) provides a visual coda to the analytical explorations of centre and periphery. Through a series of prints that range from the 2011 Arab uprisings to anti-Trump and Black Lives Matter protests, her images explore the explosive potential inherent in the relation between crowds, architecture and the built environment.

In the final part, 'Things fall: (after)lives of monumentality', the book ends with an extended reflection on what is perhaps the most common-sense understanding of the centre: as the location of monuments and monumentality around which the city is oriented, physically and symbolically. In a seemingly counter-intuitive move, Adam Kaasa ([chapter 18](#)) shows how what he calls 'domestic monumentality' was foundational to the Mexican revolutionary state's pursuit of scalar urban monumentality, an argument he develops through the case of a famous modernist housing estate project in Mexico City and the work of 'technicians' in the urban research studio Taller de Urbanismo. The final two pieces, both from Ukraine, confront the infamous cases of what has been called 'Leninoclasm', the destruction of Lenin monuments which swept through the country after 2013. Oleksiy Radynski ([chapter 19](#)) examines the limits of Leninoclasm after 2014 in Crimea, where a well-known activist and a film director were falsely accused of trying to blow up a monument to Lenin as a kind of symbolic revenge for the fragments of Lenin now found throughout Ukraine. These fragments form the centre of Yevgenia Belorusets' concluding piece ([chapter 20](#)), where they circulate as tenuous relics of a semiotics of centrality, ultimately unable to offer either effective ritual absolution or the foundations for a new national myth.

Taken together, the typologically and descriptively rich contributions to this volume challenge readers to rethink perceived affinities between despotism and grandiosity, democracy and polycentricity, high modernity and creative destruction. By including scholars from both within and outside of the former socialist world, architects, activists, journalists and artists, we hope for cross-boundary dialogues that speak

to all readers interested in the relation between power, urbanism and architecture. The empirical contributions illustrate how epicentric spaces continue to radiate over the everyday lives of cities and their inhabitants on aesthetic, political-economic and everyday levels. The centre, this book shows, remains a moving target that both sutures and sunders our elusive understanding of the urban.

Notes

1. Jacobs, 1961; Ostrom, 1972; Fujita, Krugman and Venables, 1999.
2. See Taylor, 2016; also Parini, 2016.
3. On how 'crisis' is epistemologically constituted and historically mobilised, see Roitman, 2013.
4. 'From extreme fringe to the centre stage: the rise of Breitbart News', *Irish Times*, 15 November 2016; 'For a Trump advisor, an odyssey from the fringes of Washington to the centre of power', *Washington Post*, 20 February 2017; 'How the so-called "alt-right" went from the fringe to the White House', *Mother Jones*, 22 November 2016; Matthew Garrahan, 'Breitbart News: from populist fringe to the White House and beyond', *Financial Times*, 7 December 2016.
5. Taussig, 2017.
6. Bakhtin, 1981: xviii.
7. Evans-Pritchard, 1940.
8. Geertz, 1993.
9. Shils, 1975.
10. Wallerstein, 1979; Wolf, 1982.
11. Rowlands, Larsen and Kristiansen, 1987.
12. Park, Burgess, McKenzie and Wirth, 1925; Harris and Ullman, 1945: 7–17; Jacobs, 1961; Gottmann, 1980, vol. 19; Lefebvre, 1991, 2003; Sassen, 1991; Hall, 1997; Soja, 2000.
13. Polanyi, 1951; Ostrom, 1972.
14. Wölfflin, 1950; Vidler, 2000; Paperny, 2002.
15. Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; De Landa, 1997.
16. Fujita et al., 1999.
17. Clifford Geertz, 2000: 284.
18. For more on the politics and aesthetics of Trumpitecture in East and West, see Michał Murawski, 2017.
19. Sanja Iveković has been concerned with feminist and radical forms of counter-monumentality for several decades. Her 2001 project *Lady Rosa of Luxembourg* is documented in Lunghi and Pejic, 2012. Her 2017 project, exhibited at Documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel, is documented in Latimer and Szymczyk, 2017. For an analysis of Zofia Kulik's experiments with the centrality, symmetry and monumentality of 'closed form' see Murawski, 2019. See also Kowalczyk, 1999; Wilson, 2001: 233.
20. Cf. Stenning, Smith, Rochovská and Świąte, 2010.
21. Cf. Stanek, 2012: 299–307.
22. We are indebted and sympathetic to the idea that 'Second World' urbanity can function as a corollary term to post-socialism, as systematically and convincingly put forward in Bocharnikova and Harris, 2018.
23. Rogers, 2010. In critical engagement with Jean and John Comaroff's idea of 'theory from the south', Don Kalb formulated the idea of 'theory from the east' during the keynote speech of the Society for European Anthropology at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Denver, Colorado, in November 2015.
24. Tuvikene, 2016: 139.
25. Robinson, 2016: 196.
26. Paperny, 2002. The author revisits his considerations from the 'genealogical morphological' vantage point of his own family story in his contribution to this volume.
27. Paperny, 2013. See also Martinez's critical exploration of the idea of the 'New East' in Martinez, 2019: 201–220.

28. In this sense, our arguments here – a critique of the West’s idea of everyone else’s obsolescence – are in correspondence with the agendas of the Former West project. See Hlavajova and Sheikh, 2017. Directly linked is the EECASWOB Project (Eastern European Critical Area Studies Without Borders), currently in development by Wendy Bracewell, Tim Beasley-Murray and Michał Murawski.
29. Gille, 2010.
30. The term ‘Global East’ is used in Murawski, 2018. This concept is also theorised in a complementary but distinct way – as a corollary or even replacement for the idea of ‘post-socialism’ – by urban geographers Martin Müller and Elena Trubina. See Müller, 2018 and 2019.
31. See Chelcea and Druță, 2016; Murawski, 2018.
32. The conference was organised by the School of Slavonic and East European Studies and the FRINGE Centre for the Study of Social and Cultural Complexity at University College London together with the Global Studies Program at The New School (New York) and the Calvert 22 Foundation.

Bibliography

- Bakhtin, M. M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, edited by Michael Holquist, translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- Bocharnikova, Daria and Steve E. Harris. ‘Second World urbanity: infrastructures of utopia and really existing socialism’, *Journal of Urban History* 44, no. 1 (2018): 3–8.
- Chelcea, Liviu and Oana Druță. ‘Zombie socialism and the rise of neoliberalism in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe’, *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 57, no. 4/5 (2016): 521–44.
- De Landa, Manuel. *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History*. New York: Zone Books, 1997.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940.
- Fujita, Masahisa, Paul Krugman and Anthony J. Venables. *The Spatial Economy: Cities, Regions, and International Trade*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.
- Geertz, Clifford. ‘Centers, kings, and charisma: reflections on the symbolics of power’. In *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, by Clifford Geertz, 121–46. London: Fontana Press, 1993.
- Geertz, Clifford. *Available Light: Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Gille, Zsuzsa. ‘Is there a global postsocialist condition?’, *Global Society* 24, no. 1 (2010): 9–30.
- Gottmann, Jean, ed. *Centre and Periphery: Spatial Variation in Politics*. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE Publications, 1980.
- Hall, Peter. *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.
- Harris, Chauncy D. and Edward L. Ullman. ‘The nature of cities’, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 242 (November 1945): 7–17.
- Hlavajova, Maria and Simon Sheikh, eds. *Former West: Art and the Contemporary after 1989*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017.
- Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House, 1961.
- Kowalczyk, Izabela. ‘The geometry of power in Zofia Kulik’s work’, *n.paradoxa* 11 (1999): 19–25.
- Latimer, Quinn and Adam Szymczyk (eds), *Documenta 14: Daybook*. New York and London: Prestel, 2017.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Urban Revolution*, translated by Robert Bononno. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- Lunghi, Enrico and Bojana Pejic. *Sanja Iveković: Lady Rosa of Luxembourg*. Luxembourg: Edition Mudam and Casion Luxembourg, 2012.
- Martínez, Francisco. *Remains of the Soviet Past in Estonia*. London: UCL Press, 2019.
- Müller, Martin. ‘In search of the Global East: thinking between North and South’, *Geopolitics* (2018): 1–22. Accessed 21 July 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2018.1477757>.

- Müller, Martin. 'Goodbye, postsocialism!', *Europe-Asia Studies* 71, no. 4 (2019): 533–50.
- Murawski, Michał. 'Odessa: what happens when you mix politics and real estate on the Black Sea coast?', *Calvert Journal*, 3 January 2017. Accessed 28 May 2017. <http://www.calvertjournal.com/articles/show/7379/trump-odessa-batumi-mikheil-saakashvili-real-estate>.
- Murawski, Michał. 'Actually-existing success: economics, aesthetics, and the specificity of (still) socialist urbanism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 60, no. 4 (2018): 907–37.
- Murawski, Michał, 'Zofia Kulik's palace complex: revealing the complexity of closed form (filling it with her own madness)'. In *Zofia Kulik: Methodology, My Love*, edited by Agata Jakubowska, Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art/Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019.
- Ostrom, Vincent. *Water and Politics: A Study of Water Policies and Administration in the Development of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Haynes Foundation, 1972.
- Paperny, Vladimir. *Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two*, translated by John Hill and Roann Barris. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Paperny, Vladimir. *Культура три. Как остановить маятник?* ('Culture three: how to stop the pendulum?'). Moscow: Strelka Press, 2013.
- Parini, Jay. 'Was Yeats' "The Second Coming" really about Donald Trump? How poetry transcends political crises through time', *Literary Hub*, 18 April 2016. Accessed 28 May 2017. <http://lithub.com/was-yeats-poem-the-second-coming-really-about-donald-trump/>.
- Park, Robert E., Ernest W. Burgess, Roderick D. McKenzie and Louis Wirth. *The City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925.
- Polanyi, Michael. *The Logic of Liberty: Reflections and Rejoinders*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.
- Robinson, Jennifer. 'Comparative urbanism: new geographies and cultures of theorizing the urban', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 40, no. 1 (2016): 187–99.
- Rogers, Douglas. 'Postsocialisms unbound: connections, critiques, comparisons', *Slavic Review* 69, no. 1 (2010): 1–15.
- Roitman, Janet. *Anti-Crisis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013.
- Rowlands, M., Mogens Larsen and Kristian Kristiansen, eds. *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Sassen, Saskia. *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Shils, Edward. *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975.
- Soja, Edward W. *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
- Stanek, Łukasz. 'Introduction: the "Second World's" architecture and planning in the "Third World"', *Journal of Architecture* 17, no. 3 (2012): 299–307.
- Stenning, Alison, Adrian Smith, Alena Rochovská and Dariusz Świąte. *Domesticating Neo-Liberalism: Spaces of Economic Practice and Social Reproduction in Post-Socialist Cities*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Taussig, Michael T. 'Trump studies', *Cultural Anthropology*, 18 January 2017. Accessed 21 July 2019. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/trump-studies>.
- Taylor, Ashley Phillips. 'The Second Coming: why people are tweeting Yeats in days following Trump's election', *Medium*, 16 November 2016. Accessed 28 May 2017. <https://medium.com/@ashleyphillipstaylor/the-second-coming-why-people-are-tweeting-yeats-in-days-following-trumps-election-75e006949c61>.
- Tuvikene, Tauri. 'Strategies for comparative urbanism: post-socialism as a de-territorialized concept', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 40, no. 1 (2016): 132–46.
- Vidler, Anthony. *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. *The Capitalist World-Economy: Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- Wilson, Sarah G. 'Zofia Kulik: from Warsaw to Cyberia', *Centropa* 1, no. 3 (Sept. 2001), 233–44.
- Wolf, Eric R. *Europe and the People without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.
- Wölfflin, Heinrich. *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art*, translated by M. D. Hottinger. New York: Dover Publications, 1950.