Introduction:
Backward and Peripheral? Emerging Cities in Eastern Europe

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Much of the historical work in recent decades has been devoted to "decentering." Historians of all walks of life have shifted their attention to regions and social groups that are supposedly located at the "margins", be it geographically or socially. The post-colonial critique of a Western vision of the world as it was voiced in anthropology, history, literary criticism and neighboring disciplines has substantially questioned an often tacitly assumed dichotomy of center-periphery relationships.[1] The imperative was, and is, not to reproduce the historical power relations and cultural stereotypes in scholarly work. Analyzing so called emerging cities in Eastern Europe, recent urban historiography makes clear that a look at the micro-level of the cities themselves could help us to move beyond this supposed center-periphery dichotomy. These cities developed their own dynamics and came to have a certain "life of their own," resulting less from the relationship to the imperial center than from a vivid interurban exchange and network. This introduction will hence explain why the category "periphery" in our specific context—emerging cities in Eastern Europe—needs to be seriously questioned.

Re-evaluating Peripheries (and Centers)

Let us take, for example, the history of science or, more broadly conceived, the history of knowledge. In the past two decades there has been a lively debate within the Science and Technology in the European Periphery (STEP) network.[2] The research of the STEP network has vindicated the genuine value of studying the "periphery" and formulated a research agenda of its own,

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[*] This special issue originates from the panel "Emerging Cities—Knowledge and Urbanisation in Europe's Borderlands 1880-1945" at the European Association of Urban History Conference in Helsinki, August 2016.

[1] Classical works are EDWARD SAID: Orientalism, New York 1978, and HOMI BHABHA: The Location of Culture, London—New York 1994. More recent seminal works in sociology, history of science and history are GURMINDER K. BHAMBRA: Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination, Basingstoke 2007; KAPIL RAJ: Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650-1900, London 2007; JÜRGEN OSTERHAMMEL: Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts, München 2009.

[2] MARIA PAULA DIOGO, KOSTAS GAVROGLU et al. (eds.): STEP Forum Special Issue, in: Technology and Culture 57 (2016), 4, pp. 926-997. Information on the network: http://step2.hicido.uv.es/ (2018-08-01).

namely "to articulate the significance of the processes of appropriation of scientific ideas, practices and techniques through the multifarious (local) cultural processes, to bring to surface the specificities of local sites which have had a decisive role in knowledge production, and to underline the decisive active role of all those whose intellectual, professional and often political interventions shaped the processes of appropriation."[3]

Structurally analogous arguments have been put forward in urban history, in particular for the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Time and again, cities in Eastern (or Southern) Europe have been labeled "backward" and "delayed," particularly in comparison with Western metropolises. For a long time, there was a tacit assumption that they had no alternative but to follow the "role model" of the metropolis, not least because the historical actors did indeed try to emulate London, Paris or Berlin.

The center-periphery model attempts to describe a process of differentiation and proposes a—rather simplistic—explanatory model for it. The periphery is subjected to the cultural hegemony of the center, which imposes its values and practices. Clearly, this model oversimplifies the multiplicity of interests and strategies of the numerous agents involved in the urbanization processes around 1900. The center-periphery model fails to do justice to numerous variants of urbanization and modernization during the long nineteenth century. It is now common sense among historians that allegedly "second" cities constitute a proper and rewarding object of study in their own right.[4] Similarly to the argument put forward by STEP, the way these so called "peripheral" cities adapted and combined models from elsewhere was creative and thus generated new solutions. "Foreign models and innovations never simply materialized as static things."[5] Within this approach, the significance of the "center" as the only point of orientation is fading.

This brings us to the crossroad of these two historiographies: the production and circulation of knowledge about the city.[6] As is well known, the accelerated demographic growth of urban spaces in the second half of the nineteenth century challenged the local governments in unprecedented ways. Social housing, public transport, public health and sanitation as well as city

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[3]   KOSTAS GAVROGLU, MANOLIS PATINIOTIS et al.: Science and Technology in the European Periphery: Some Historiographical Reflections, in: History of Science 46 (2008), 2, pp. 153-175, here p. 154.

[4]   EMILY GUNZBURGER MAKAS, TANJA DAMLJANOVIC CONLEY (eds.): Capital Cities in the Aftermath of Empires: Planning in Central and Southeastern Europe, London 2010; NATHANIEL WOOD: Becoming Metropolitan: Urban Selfhood and the Making of Modern Cracow, DeKalb 2010; MARKIAN PROKOPOVYCH (ed.): Thematic Block on Eastern European Cities, in: Urban History 40 (2013), pp. 28-91.

[5]   SHANE EWEN: What is Urban History?, Cambridge 2015, p. 124.

[6]   For a historiographical overview see OLIVER HOCHADEL, AGUSTÍ NIETO-GALAN: How to Write an Urban History of STM on the "Periphery", in: Technology and Culture 57 (2016), pp. 978-988. For a collection of case studies see IDEM (eds.): Urban Histories of Science: Making Knowledge in the City, 1820-1940, London 2018.

planning became burning issues that required specialist knowledge.[7] Historians have thus pointed out the emergence of a new social group: experts in urban reforms. Many of these emerging cities could count on a young, well-educated generation of experts, who played a crucial role as "engineers" of the urban modernization, as Martin Kohlrausch and Jan C. Behrends argue.[8]

Since the pioneering study of Marjatta Hietala we know that, from the last decades of the nineteenth century onwards, many municipal administrative bodies and city councils sent commissions to other cities all over Europe or even across the Atlantic to gather information on how to modernize their own cities.[9] These study trips were mostly dedicated to questions of urban planning and public health; today we would speak of the search for "best practices."[10] Fairs and exhibitions, both on the international and the national level, also served as showcases for what a "modern city" should look like.[11] This circulation of specific urban knowledge between cities has been called "transnational municipalism."[12] The historian's task is thus to make these transnational and interurban communities visible again.

However, there is also another dimension: these emerging cities were often run by ambitious mayors and city councils. On the one hand, these local politicians wanted to implement "progress" in their city in order to demonstrate their own capability to run and hence to modernize the city. On the other hand, they were mostly committed to the nationalist agenda (Polish, Croatian,

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[7] DIEGO ARMUS: The Ailing City: Health, Tuberculosis, and Culture in Buenos Aires, 1870-1950, Durham 2011; CELIA MIRALLES: La Tuberculose dans l'espace social Barcelonais, 1929-1936, phil. diss., Université Lyon 2 & Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, 2014; ANNA MAZANIK: Sanitation, Urban Environment and the Politics of Public Health in Late Imperial Moscow, phil. diss., Budapest, 2015. URL: www.etd.ceu. hu/2015/mazanik_anna.pdf (2018-08-01).

[8] JAN C. BEHRENDS, MARTIN KOHLRAUSCH (eds.): Races to Modernity: Metropolitan Aspirations in Eastern Europe 1890-1940, Budapest 2014.

[9] MARJATTA HIETALA: Services and Urbanization at the Turn of the Century: The Diffusion of Innovations, Helsinki 1987.

[10] ESZTER GANTNER, HEIDI HEIN-KIRCHER: "Emerging Cities": Knowledge and Urbanization in Europe's Borderlands 1880-1945—Introduction, in: Journal of Urban History 43 (2017), 4, special issue, pp. 1-12, here pp. 5-7.

[11] E. g. see the special issue Bilder vieler Ausstellungen. Großexpositionen in Ostmitteleuropa als nationale, mediale und soziale Ereignisse, in: Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung 58 (2009), 1-2; KLAUS VOGEL: "deren Besuch sich daher unter allen Umständen lohnt": Die I. Internationale Hygiene-Ausstellung 1911, in: Dresdner Hefte 18 (2000), 3, special issue: Große Ausstellungen um 1900 und in den zwanziger Jahren, pp. 44-52.

[12] PIERRE-YVES SAUNIER, SHANE EWEN (eds.): Another Global City: Historical Explorations into the Transnational Municipal Moment, 1850-2000, New York 2008; NICHOLAS KENNY, REBECCA MADGIN (eds.): Cities Beyond Borders: Comparative and Transnational Approaches to Urban History, Farnham 2015. More generally on the circulation and appropriation of knowledge see JAMES A. SECORD: Knowledge in Transit, in: Isis 95 (2004), 4, pp. 654-672.

Hungarian …) of their time, while, at the same time, understanding the necessity to evaluate, adapt and implement best practices in the field of urban planning and civil engineering.[13]

This approach helps to liberate the historian's perspective on this period around 1900, which often seems caught in the straight-jacket of nationalism as *the* defining feature. James Moore and Richard Roger argue that "central government was not invariably the most important influence on municipal knowledge since, in many instances, specialist information could be readily acquired from neighboring authorities, professional organizations, national and international bodies, and the municipal corporations associations. Municipal knowledge was not bounded by physical boundaries; it had assumed international currency."[14]

Already in the early twentieth century, the first scholars of urban life understood the city of their time as a condensed space.[15] Urban spaces thus became hotspots for the production and the distribution of knowledge.[16] Yet the cities themselves also produced a specific kind of knowledge, which originated from urbanization itself as part of their learning process.[17] This knowledge was constituted from knowledge about modalities, strategies and practices of urban planning and infrastructural development as well as from "social"

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[13] See e. g. KARIN HALLAS-MURULA: The Political Iconography of Early 20th Century City Planning: Greater-Tallinn by Eliel Saarinen, 1913, in: HEIDI HEIN-KIRCHER, ILGVARS MISĀNS (eds.): Stadtgeschichte des Baltikums oder baltische Stadtgeschichte? Annäherungen an ein neues Forschungsfeld zur baltischen Geschichte, Marburg 2015, pp. 151-165; KARIN HALLAS-MURULA: Diffusion of European Modern City Planning around 1900: Transferring and Implementation of International Knowledge in Tallinn, in: GANTNER/HEIN-KIRCHER (as in footnote 10), pp. 615-624; INGA KARLSTREMA: Knowledge Transfer and Advanced Urban Planning in the Newly Established Ring of Boulevards in Riga: The Case of the First Municipal Gas Factory, ibidem, pp. 639-650.

[14] JAMES MOORE, RICHARD ROGER: Who really ran the Cities?, in: RALF ROTH, ROBERT BEACHY (eds.): Who Ran the Cities? City Elites and Urban Power Structures in Europe and North America, 1750-1940, London 2016, pp. 37-70, here p. 69.

[15] Early urban sociologists like Georg Simmel (1858-1918) and Louis Wirth (1897-1952) were among the first to understand the city within the contexts of size, density and heterogeneity and identified these contexts as sources for the city's productivity. GEORG SIMMEL: Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben, in: KARL BÜCHER (ed.): Die Großstadt: Vorträge und Aufsätze zur Stadtentwicklung, Dresden 1903, S. 185-206, URL: http://www.gsz.hu-berlin.de/de/gsz/zentrum/georg-simmel/georg-simmel-die-gros staedte-und-das-geistesleben.pdf/view (2018-08-01); LOUIS WIRTH: Urbanität als Lebensform [1938], in: ULFERT HERLYN (ed.): Stadt und Sozialstruktur: Arbeiten zur sozialen Segregation, Ghettobildung und Stadtplanung, München 1974, pp. 42-67.

[16] ULRIKE FELT: Die Stadt als verdichteter Raum der Begegnung zwischen Wissenschaft und Öffentlichkeit, in: CONSTANTIN GOSCHLER (ed.): Wissenschaft und Öffentlichkeit in Berlin 1870-1930, Stuttgart 2000, pp. 185-219, here p. 194; also see ILJA VAN DAMME, BERT DE MUNCK et al. (eds.): Cities and Creativity from the Renaissance to the Present, London 2017.

[17] E. g. ULF MATTHIESEN: Wissenskultur und Stadt, Berlin 2003, p. 4.

knowledge, which derived from experiences of experts and from experience with migration, diversity and/or cohabitation.

Re-evaluating the Eastern European Cities

Two of us (Eszter Gantner and Heidi Hein-Kircher) have recently proposed the concept of "emerging cities" to reappraise the role of Eastern European cities in this respect, focusing on cities creating an "urban periphery."[18] We use this term to refer, not to the "rural province," but to urban societies in the border regions of continental empires forming "shatterzones"[19] and zones of particular interaction and transfer.

The emerging cities were characterized as "peripheral," not just because of their situation in the imperial, in many cases multi-ethnic, provinces (i. e. Crownlands of the Habsburg Empire or the Russian Baltic Provinces), but also due to the fact that urban modernization processes in the eastern part of Europe have traditionally been seen to have started very late—in the eyes of Western European observers, the modernizers themselves, and also (until a few decades ago) by almost all urban historians. Hence, the more or less pejorative attitude towards these cities as "backward" and "peripheral" is rooted in a more general attitude towards these regions, particularly as these cities were indeed not places of high-level industrialization. The cities on the imperial geographical peripheries showed that modernization and "catching up" with modern (Western) trends did not necessarily have to be interconnected with high industrialization.

Characterizing these cities as "emerging" will help us to re-evaluate the traditional label of "backwardness" (i. e. "peripheralness"). The common perception that these places were both "delayed" and "peripheral" suddenly seemed like an opportunity: The backlog of urban (infrastructural) development allowed for more sophisticated and "modern" approaches to solving pressing urban problems than Western cities had had at their disposal some decades earlier. In fact, the local governments tried to implement even more advanced solutions than the alleged Western role-models in order to improve the infrastructures of their cities. Paradoxically, being "delayed" could therefore be turned into an advantage, the opportunity to benefit from the most recent technologies. Apart from doing away with hierarchical and outdated notions of "secondary" and "peripheral", the concept of "emerging cities" stresses the agency of these cities in the modernization of urban space around 1900.

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[18]   GANTNER/HEIN-KIRCHER (as in footnote 10). The following reflections are derived from their concept.

[19]   OMAR BARTOV, ERIC D. WEITZ (eds.): Shatterzones of Empire: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands, Bloomington 2013.

Thus, the cities on the "peripheries" could aspire to their own variant of modernity which could compete with more "Western" cities, at least in some aspects. Looking at their development, the answer to our question about "urban peripheries" is thus quite clear: the rapid modernization of these cities cannot be elaborated using the center and periphery model, even if they were perceived to be non-reverberatory by contemporaries and by urban historians.

Conceptualizing "emerging cities," the authors are seeking to illustrate a matrix that was developing within these urban spaces at the peripheries of the Empires (in terms of multi-ethnic and multi-religious contexts, processes of nationalization as resources and agents, conscious positing at the intersection of national, local and European trends, and urbanization, which started at the end of the nineteenth century). Within this matrix, transnational contact and transfer is an important feature, because all emerging cities were an integrated part of interurban networks, for example through architectural or public health associations, architects like Fellner & Helmer[20], who were Viennese but worked on international projects, and urban planning offices such as Eliel Saarinen's (1873-1950), which Gantner and Karin Hallas-Murula discuss in this issue. Another interurban influencer was the British engineer William Lindley (1808-1900), who devised not only the reconstruction of Hamburg (and its water supply), but also parts of the reconstruction of the sewage and water supplying systems of Warsaw, Budapest, Prague, St. Petersburg and Moscow. As all these architects and engineers worked internationally, they formed, and contributed to, a network of knowledge exchange, which put these cities in the focus of modern urban planning. In this regard, these cities were not "peripheral" at all—neither in their modernization nor in their cultural habits and attitudes. The most modern standards and the latest technical solutions were implemented there, hence these cities were, in a certain regard, at the "center" of development and no longer on the "periphery."

This emerging matrix between Eastern European cities created particular forms of modernity as well as of urbanity. These specific forms arose in all cities that were becoming, at the very least, regional centers in Eastern Europe, that is, those cities perceived as dynamic actors within the region.[21] The development of these urban "peripheries" did not only take place within the "frame" of the empires. It was hence an integral part of the "territorialization project" spreading from the center to the "supplementary spaces"[22] and the

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[20]   These architects planned and built some of the Habsburgian theaters, for example in Vienna, Budapest, Prague, Graz, Liberec, but also in German cities like Hamburg and Wiesbaden. See DIETER KLEIN: Fellner & Helmer: Wiener Atelier mit Weltgeltung, in: Baukultur 4 (1997), pp. 34-47.

[21]   GANTNER/HEIN-KIRCHER (as in footnote 10), pp. 8-9.

[22]   Both termini: STEFFI MARUNG, MATTHIAS MIDDELL, UWE MÜLLER: Territorialisierung in Ostmitteleuropa bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg, in: FRANK HADLER, MATTHIAS MIDDELL (eds.): Handbuch einer transnationalen Geschichte Ostmitteleuropas. Vol. 1: Von der

deep process of state building.[23] This perspective allows us to analyze the interconnection of local, imperial and European developments.[24]

In a more general context, urban historian Bert De Munck asks whether the cities themselves are not "the *result* of agency, in other words of immigration, entrepreneurial activity and the aspirations of political and intellectual elites."[25] If we understand the city as a dynamic and forever changing assemblage, this view needs to be extended to the interurban space as well: "European cities are seen as nodes in communication networks that created a trans-urban public sphere." This helps to question whether the emerging nation-state of the late nineteenth century should be the main frame of historical analysis[26], and to refocus our attention on the international knowledge exchange that was taking place via a dynamically developing network. Such considerations suggest that we need to re-evaluate the modernizing processes within these cities and hence their significance.

This Special Issue argues that an important next step in this line of research is to conceptualize cities as active nodes in large interurban networks, i. e. not only to compare cities, but to look specifically for connections between Helsinki and Tallinn, Budapest and Zagreb or Lviv, Cracow and Warsaw, cities that were all situated—as the historical actors in both Eastern and Western Europe perceived it—at the "outpost of civilization."[27] Yet clearly the political actors in Eastern European cities did not only try to catch up, but also to win the "race to modernity," as Behrends and Kohlrausch characterize these processes from the 1920s.[28]

This Special Issue thus focuses on half a dozen cities in Eastern Europe in the last third of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries and addresses the following questions: Which models did these emerging cities try to follow in their quest to modernize themselves? How did they gather information

Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg, Göttingen 2017, pp. 37-130, here p. 92.

23 General process: JÖRG GANZENMÜLLER, TATJANA TÖNSMEYER: Einleitung: Vom Vorrücken des Staates in die Fläche. Ein europäisches Phänomen des langen 19. Jahrhunderts, in: IDEM (eds.): Vom Vorrücken des Staates in die Fläche: Ein europäisches Phänomen des langen 19. Jahrhunderts, Köln et al. 2016, pp. 7-32.

24 This interconnected analysis is still a desideratum, see: STEFFI MARUNG, MATTHIAS MIDDELL, UWE MÜLLER: Multiple Territorialisierungsprozesse in Ostmitteleuropa, in: HADLER/MIDDELL (as in footnote 22), pp. 452-455.

25 BERT DE MUNCK: Re-Assembling Actor-Network Theory and Urban History, in: Urban History 44 (2017), pp. 111-122, here p. 113.

26 CLAUS MØLLER JØRGENSEN: Nineteenth-century Transnational Urban History, in: Urban History 44 (2017), pp. 544-563, here p. 558; also see MICHAEL G. MÜLLER, CORNELIUS TORP: Conceptualizing Transnational Spaces in History, in: European Review of History 16 (2009), 5, pp. 609-617.

27 E. g. see the case of Lviv (Lemberg/Lwów/L'viv): FRYDERYK PAPÉE: Historia miasta Lwowa w zarysie [Short History of the City of Lviv], Lwów 1894, p. 205.

28 BEHRENDS/KOHLRAUSCH (as in footnote 8).

about the most recent trends in architecture, urban planning and public health? And how did they implement these new ideas in their own city? In short: how did this "urban" knowledge circulate and how was it adapted "back home"?

What emerges if the five case studies of this Special Issue are put together is the variety of "modernities" that characterized these cities.[29] "Modernity" assumes different and sometimes even diametrically opposed meanings, depending on the historical context.[30] Often the term "Europe" was used as a synonym.[31] How to design a "modern" city was negotiated and often highly controversial, reflecting the political-ideological spectrum of historical actors. When emerging cities tried to present themselves as "modern," both to the outer world and within their respective empires, technological innovations, "hygiene" (public health) and rational urban planning were the central topics. They shape the master narrative of the modernization for the period 1850-1945, particularly at the urban peripheries of the continental empires. Thus, this Special Issue is conceived of as a point of departure for further investigation.

The Papers of this Special Issue

Karin Hallas-Murula highlights the pivotal role of Helsinki in modernizing Tallinn at the beginning of the twentieth century. She thus shows how closely the processes of nation building, modernization and Europeanization were intertwined in Estonia. Due to its geographical and cultural proximity, Finland had been the model for constructing Estonia as a nation throughout the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the twentieth century, "Europe" became the new catchword of the modernizing rhetoric. "Let us be Estonians, but become also Europeans!" was the slogan of leading intellectuals of the Young-Estonia movement. This concept of Europeanization of Estonian culture made itself felt in different areas, in literature, the arts, but also—as this article emphasizes—in architecture. Finnish architects such as Eliel Saarinen, Armas Lindgren and others were invited to work in Estonia and to design buildings of high national symbolic value. Hallas-Murala points out that this transfer of expertise was not limited to the construction of individual buildings, but also extended to urban planning: Saarinen designed the modern master plan of Greater-Tallinn in 1913.

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[29]   SHMUEL N. EISENSTADT: Die Vielfalt der Moderne, Weilerswist 2000.

[30]   For other case studies see NATHANIEL WOOD: The "Polish Mecca", the "Little Vienna on the Vistula" or "Big-City Cracow"? Imagining Cracow before the Great War, in: Urban History 40 (2013), pp. 226-246; LAURA KOLBE: Imperial and National Helsinki: Shaping an Eastern or Western Capital City?, in: BEHRENDS/KOHLRAUSCH (as in footnote 8), pp. 267-289.

[31]   BURKHARD WÖLLER: "Europa" als historisches Argument: Nationsbildungsstrategien polnischer und ukrainischer Historiker im habsburgischen Galizien, Bochum 2014.

Eszter Gantner delves into the work of Saarinen in a different context and shows how the Finnish architect connected the peripheries of empires by transferring architectural knowledge. Between 1873 and 1914 the city of Budapest transformed into a metropolis of industries, media, science and culture and thus became the center of national power. Unlike any other Hungarian city, Budapest represented the particular ambivalence and velocity of the nation's modernization process. This paper argues that the city tried to strike a fine balance between local traditions and European trends. Gantner investigates how knowledge about urban reform was transferred, adapted and applied between emerging cities in East Central Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In concrete terms: how did Budapest and Helsinki communicate and exchange best practices?

As both examples suggest, architecture played a key role in the transfer and appropriation of concepts of urban modernity in specific local and regional contexts. The third article shows that architecture and urban planning also served a purpose in the area of national distinction and demarcation. Dragan Damjanović elucidates their role in the case of Zagreb in those formative decades before the First World War marked by demographic and economic growth. The 1867 Compromise placed Croatia under direct Hungarian rule within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, yet the architectural and urban design of Zagreb was far more influenced by Vienna than Budapest. There is a twofold reason for this: firstly, the majority of Croatian architects as well as many members of the national political and economic elites had studied in Vienna and, secondly, because of the opposition towards Budapest. Beginning in the 1880s, the Croatian government tried to strengthen the ties between Zagreb and Budapest, for example by sending Croatian architects and civil engineers on subsidized study trips to Budapest. At the same time, several Hungarian ministries and the Royal Railways launched a number of major building projects in Zagreb including the construction of the central train station. As the architects were Hungarian, the presence of these buildings nurtured the uneasiness many Croatians felt towards Budapest and they were perceived as symbols of Croatia's colonial subordination.

Máté Tamáska writes a kind of histoire croisée of the ports of Budapest and Vienna in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. What was the impact of the industrialization of the river on the ports of these two major cities of the Empire? Tamáska highlights the crucial importance of the geopolitical setting of Budapest and Vienna and thus the significance of the regulation works executed on the Danube. He shows how similar challenges and experiences triggered the transfer of techniques and applications between the two ports. Thus, instead of a fragmented urban network along the Danube Valley, two rival cities emerged: Vienna and Budapest, both trying to harness the enormous political and economic potential of the river.

Traveling architects and their ideas of urban planning were main features of the interurban network in Eastern Europe, but not the only ones. Aleksander Lupienko shows that the media, in particular journals, were also vital

for interurban knowledge transfer. His case study centers on the Polish territories, divided by borders among three empires (Austro-Hungarian, Russian and German). The Polish public sphere is generally presented as a large debating ground marked by different world-views (positivist, religious, socialist, or nationalist) where a modernity discourse was unfolding in the media, replete with broadly sketched Western examples of innovations. It was a forum where contributors would try to win over their readers and convince them to back specific social and political agendas. Yet, as Lupienko demonstrates, a completely different picture emerges if we look at the writings of technicians, engineers and other professionals. In their books, brochures and articles, these experts examine and compare critically, and in much detail, ideas and models from abroad. Crucially, a substantial number of the proposals and concepts discussed come from "near-abroad," i. e. from other Polish speaking territories. Scientists and engineers from Lviv, Cracow, Warsaw or Poznan formed multiple ties with each other. These networks were created through journals, visits, exhibitions and congresses, as well as personal contacts, that proved instrumental in the joint task of solving ever more urgent urban problems. Thus, the Polish case is both particular with respect to its partitioned territory as well as typical for Eastern Europe, characterized by a high level of multi-ethnicity. The media of the time played an essential role—despite widespread censorship—in mobilizing national groups and enabling them to pursue their individual political agendas.

When analyzed together, these five articles amply demonstrate the intense and multi-directional circulation of experts and practices related to urban reform between Eastern European cities in the period from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. This trans-urban approach enables historians to investigate how ideas, concepts and objects change when they "move" between urban spaces. These cities formed a dynamic and dialectic relationship, exchanging and appropriating practical and highly modern urban knowledge. In this trans-urban setting, the term "peripheral" is, at best, a category used by historical actors to legitimize the implementation of provisions, yet with little explanatory power. Historians will have to continue to devise and apply alternative conceptual frameworks in order to grasp the complexity of this Eastern European urban space.