

Mgr. Tereza Juhászová, Ph.D.

Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Science, Prague

Urbanity: Inequality, Adaptation and Urban Public Space in the Historical Perspective

Project Urbanity is implemented by an interdisciplinary team of experts from leading national and foreign research institutions.

- Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences
- Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Science,
- Palacký University in Olomouc

About the project

Urbanity: Inequality, Adaptation and Urban Public Space in the Historical Perspective is an interdisciplinary project funded by the Johannes Amos Comenius Programme under the call Social Sciences and Humanities: Man and Humanity in the Global Challenges of Today.

The Urbanity project aims to understand key issues in the development of urban public space in the Czech context from the Middle Ages to the present day. By combining historical, sociological, anthropological and geoinformation research, it seeks to offer new perspectives on the complex issues of urban inequality, adaptability to crises and the transformation of public space.

The project draws chiefly on the concept of the “history of the present”, which allows for the exploration of the historical causes and contexts of current challenges, such as climate change, migration, inequality and conflicts related to public space. The project arises from the assumption that a deeper understanding of the past may provide us with practical models for equitable and inclusive planning of urban public space in contemporary democratic society.

Project structure

The Urbanity project is structured around three main research work packages covering the complex issues of urban development, its historical roots and contemporary challenges. These research work packages were framed so as to complement one another and create synergies across interdisciplinary research work.

1. Urban public space – A place of creativity and conflict

The aim of this research work package is to explore public space as a crucial indicator of social change, creativity and conflict. Its goal is to gain an understanding of the historical and current dynamics influencing public space, as well as to propose a possible democratic and inclusive transformation for this public space.

- Historical analysis
- Map development of public spaces from the Middle Ages to the present, with emphasis on their political, social and symbolic roles.
- Creativity and conflicts
- Identify the role of public space in encouraging creativity and as a place where social conflicts take place and are resolved.

2. The city as a place of inequality

3. Urban threats and resilience

Urban Public Space as a Site of Nation-Building Competition in Interwar Subcarpathian Ruthenia

Ágnes Erőss (University of Bozen-Bolzano) & Tereza Juhászová (ÚSD AV ČR)

This article examines urban public space in interwar Subcarpathian Ruthenia as a key arena of competing nation-building projects following the region's incorporation into Czechoslovakia after World War I. Drawing on the concept of the iconosphere, it analyses how divergent visions of modernity

(or backwardness) and statehood were articulated through visual, spatial, and architectural interventions. Using examples from various urban settings across Subcarpathian Ruthenia, the article explores street-renaming practices, monument construction, and new public architecture—especially school buildings—as sites where state Czech(oslovak) authorities and proponents of other national projects (Ukrainian, Hungarian, and German) competed over symbolic power and political legitimacy, and where local actors actively contested these ambitions. Based largely on archival records from Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and Germany, the study argues that urban public space functioned not merely as a backdrop for nation-building but as an active medium through which competing political and cultural projects were visualized and contested.

Contact:

Mgr. Tereza Juhászová, Ph.D.

Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Science, Prague

juhaszova@usd.cas.cz