Session: Urban development trends and planning responses in the large capitals of Central and Eastern Europe

Prague: urban planning transformation 2012 – 2019

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Urban and Housing Systems under Pressure: Varieties of Responses
Metropolitan Research Institute, Budapest
27-29 September 2019
Characteristics of Planning in the post-communist cities of Central Europe

Main Characteristics


A. Adaptive value-free attitudes and ad hoc decision making
   • authorities lacked any doctrine, the communist one was not replaced by a new tenet
   • top-down coercive principle stays in place

B. Gap between higher level planning policy and local planning documents
   • behaviour which enabled planners to promote their own objectives under the totalitarian regime is now replicated to accommodate projects controversial to the official policies

C. Planning functions privatised, planning officers only administer plans, which are designed by freelance planners
   • planners moving from municipalities to private businesses that competed with each other in offering services to municipalities, regions and developers
   • professional ethics, the service to an immediate client is emphasized, while public interest is not expressed

Are they still valid?
Characteristics of Planning in the post-communist cities of Central Europe

Main Characteristics (cond.)

D. Planning authorities lacking professional planners with required skills
   • most skilled planners work in to the private sector
   • planners in public sector often reduced to administrators

E. Planning services economic development led by urban regime coalitions (compare Stone, 1989)
   • the professional weaknesses of many planning authorities, coupled with the habit of bending national regulations and policies, enables the building of powerful coalitions between business elites and local politicians.

F. Low capacity of planning to resolve conflicts by seeking consensus and low citizen participation in planning
   • planners are not trained nor required to resolve conflicts in planning by seeking consensus among stakeholders
   • public participation often reduced to a mere formality

Are they still valid?
## Prague City Councils – implications for urban planning

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Transformation of ÚRM to IPR Prague

source: IPR Praha
New Prague building regulations

source: IPR Praha
New Strategic plan of Prague

approved in 2017, source: IPR Praha
Institutionalising public participation

manual approved in 2016
New spatial plan of Prague
New spatial plan of Prague

Crucified mayor of Prague
# Prague City Councils – implications for urban planning

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Are they still valid?

not valid
not valid
not valid
Characteristics of Planning in the post-communist cities of Central Europe

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Are they still valid?

Partly valid
More research required
Not valid
Prague is moving from post-communist planning towards.....?
Extended model of multiple transformation

A. TRANSFORMATION FROM COMMUNISM

- Transition I: Institutional transformations
democratic government elections, privatization, price liberalization, foreign trade liberalization

- Transition II: Social transformations
internationalisation, economic restructuring, social polarization, postmodern culture, neoliberal politics

- Transition III: Urban transformations
city centre commercialization, inner city regeneration, outer city suburbanization

B. STRUCTURAL CHANGE FORDISM -> POST-FORDISM

- Neo-liberal doctrine, recommendations by supranational agencies, entrepreneurialism
- Economies of scope, flexible accumulation, off-shoring, FDI from transnational companies, new division of labour, shifts in industrial organization
- Gentrification of labour neighbourhoods, aestheticized land use intensification, catering to TCC taste, inner city decline

Graphics by the author, based on the model of (Sýkora & Bouzarovski, 2012) extended by structural effects.
**PRAGUE OFFICE MARKET TREND**

**QUARTERLY FIGURES (Q2 2019)**

- **Stock ▲** (+ 1.7%)
  - 3.57 mil. sq m
- **Vacancy rate ▲** (+ 30 bps)
  - 4.6%
- **New Supply ▲** (+ 54.2%)
  - 51.8 thousand sq m
- **Take-up ▼**
  - 50.6 thousand sq m
- **Total Leasing Activity ▼**
  - 100.6 thousand sq m
- **Space UC ▼** (- 3.4%)
  - 317.8 thousand sq m

Source: CBRE Research, PRF, Q2 2019

source: CBRE 2019
Chart 35: New completions and vacancy rates in the regional capital office markets

Source: MNB collection based on Colliers, CBRE, JLL, and Cushman & Wakefield data
Prague - Number of guests and overnight stays
January-September 2012-2018

source: Prague City Tourism, 2018
Share of housing costs of total households net incomes in Prague, 2006 - 2014

source: IPR Praha 2016
Share of housing costs of total households net incomes in Prague, 2006 - 2014

24.8%
20.0%
16.5%
Conclusions (Prague)

- local government independent on national government, initiator of many reforms and innovation that are replicated in other cities (public participation manual, urban design guidelines/approaches), proponent of national planning law reform
- since 2012 significant democratisation of planning, institutionalisation of public participation and increased capacities in this regards
- still relatively low capacity to implement, investments funds are not able to be used as projects are not ready (IPR is a policy/strategy making institution)
- major challenges such as affordable housing or negative impacts of tourism are well described but policies only catching up
Bibliography


Maier, K. (2012, April 3). Interview with the head of Urban Planning Department of the Czech Technical University, Prague. (P. Návrat, Interviewer)


