

are countries which clearly cannot be considered as such (e.g. Russia, Ukraine, Albania, Bosnia, and Kosovo). Of course, this is not just a matter of semantics. The decision to compare all these countries with consolidated democracies in Central Europe has serious consequences for the analysis and can bias the results. In the former countries, the quality of the data and the incentives for the behaviour of the actors involved in the electoral process are not the same. In addition, these non-democratic countries have the highest degree of ethnic heterogeneity and the lowest degree of party nationalisation. One may then ask to what extent the results are driven by territorially structured ethnic heterogeneity or some other omitted intervening factors specific to unstable or undemocratic polities. The author could have easily dismissed these doubts by presenting on each occasion a supplementary analysis testing his model exclusively on consolidated democracies (e.g. the post-communist members of the European Union).

Second, there are some methodological issues that at least deserve a more extensive discussion, if not correction. For instance, while the type of data used (cross-sectional time-series) may be treated using different methods, Bochsler applies OLS regressions with robust standard errors with no prior discussion. Similarly, he does not discuss the high multicollinearity in some of his models (p. 152) and makes use of regression models without intercept even though he does not explicitly outline the theoretical justification for this choice. Then, to eliminate potential endogeneity problems, the author could have contemplated lagging some of his variables. Finally, in contrast with other indices featured in the book, the detailed description of the indicator of 'territorial ethnic divisions' (used as a predictor of party nationalisation in Chapter 4) can only be found in the endnotes. These slight imperfections are nonetheless rather minor when compared

with the positive aspects described above. All in all, *Territory and Electoral Rules in Post-Communist Democracies* is certainly one of the best political science books published on Central and Eastern Europe in recent years and it will draw the attention of scholars from various research fields.

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Kimberly Elman Zarecor: *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia 1945–1960*

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This book was written by Kimberly Elman Zarecor, a pupil of the important architectural theorist Kenneth Frampton, as an extension of her doctoral thesis, which she defended in 2008 at Columbia University. It focuses on the beginnings of the construction of structural panel buildings in former Czechoslovakia after the Second World War up until 1961. This is a timely topic for discussion by architectural historians. While panel housing blocks are an omnipresent relic of the socialist era of construction, Czech theories of architecture have thus far considered such housing blocks merely as 'endless rows of prefabricated drab boxes'.

The post-war history of Czech architecture has long been neglected, or, more precisely, has been completely ignored. Although a number of studies, books and exhibitions devoted to architecture, mostly of the 1960s, have recently appeared, they are usually monographs of an important architect or studio, highlighting achievements of exclusivity beyond the boundaries of standard production. Why is the history of Czechoslovak architecture between 1948 and 1989 neglected? The first reason is the high regard in which inter-war functionalism is held. Functionalism, a style from the

1920s and the 1930s, probably the most celebrated era for Czechs and Slovaks in the 20th century, was described as representative of interwar capitalism and as such was not studied by historians of architecture in the era of early socialism in the 1950s. When architecture turned back to modern forms in the 1960s, inter-war functionalism started to be discussed again and a genuine interest in this style only reached a peak in the 1980s. The end of socialism in 1989 resonated with a focus on architecture built during the last right-wing system in the country—functionalism, which became not only the subject of a certain revival in architectural practice, but was also an interest of theorists and historians in 1990s. It represented a successful style of the inter-war period, which was seen as the prototype for development in Czechoslovakia after 1989. It is no wonder then that the socialist era of architecture was completely missing from the field of research. It was overshadowed by functionalism and its architectural gems. Those who nevertheless studied socialist architecture were exposed to a perception of their bearing responsibility for the promotion of the former regime. Scientific work wanting to deal with this issue was suspected of communist sympathies. The older generation of theorists still feel it their duty to speak disapprovingly of the architecture that originated between 1948 and 1989 and in some cases even to reject the possibility of scientific research on this topic. The stigma also applies to the architects of the buildings in question, who sometimes claim they were victims of political pressure from the communist system; some of them have withdrawn into seclusion and refuse to talk about their work altogether.

All this background information is necessary to explain why Kimberly Elman Zarecor's book is groundbreaking. From the position of a foreign authority who meticulously has studied the very archives ignored by Czech researchers, she offers an

other story which is likely to be accepted in the Czech expert sphere. Elman Zarecor can afford to devote the whole introduction of the book to the aforementioned political and historical aspects and to criticism of the current state of Czech architectural history and theory, which prefer descriptive studies to critical analyses. The book contains two important messages. First, Czechoslovak panel construction is based on the pre-war efforts of architects, and their attitude towards industrialisation is unique in Europe. Second, most Czechoslovak architects participated in the socialist planning system voluntarily; they were not victims of manipulation by political powers or at least not to the extent that has been claimed.

These conclusions are derived from the author's study of an enormous collection of archival, primary sources and photographic material gathered between 2002 and 2008. It should be noted that Elman Zarecor was the first researcher to visit the state archives in order to explore the relations among politicians and architects and their participation in policy-making pertaining to construction plans. These findings are used to reconstruct 'both a history of building typologies and an exploration of architectural practice'. These two aims are pursued in chapters divided into subsections focusing on the organisation of work, the change in the position of the architect in society, and the construction industry. Other subsections deal with individual buildings, case studies, and documenting trends in Czechoslovak architecture of the period. The first chapter describes the origins of the debates against the backdrop of global industrialisation and development that was under way in the inter-war period. It is devoted to both an 'exploration of architectural practice' and 'a history of building typologies'. Subsections dealing with the architectural associations (never previously explored) oriented towards the idea of industrialisation are combined with case studies

of a collective house in Litvinov and model development settlements in Ostrava, Most and Kladno. Here already the question arises whether these case studies can deliver an objective view of the construction of that time.

Similarly, the second chapter, dealing with the beginnings of socialist architecture since 1948, is divided into subsections describing the transformation of the profession (especially the emergence of the largest state organisation Stavoprojekt) and the creation of T-series, the first series of standardised houses. The next chapter, focusing on Sorela (the Czechoslovak version of socialist realism in architecture), is devoted to the attractive phenomenon of historicising architecture which existed for a very short period in Czechoslovakia. Elman Zarecor rejects the idea that the aesthetics of Sorela and the decorative tendencies were in contradiction to industrialisation and prefabrication. She demonstrates that, despite the dominant position of socialist realism, the state pushed technological innovation in the direction of prefabrication and industrialisation. The Poruba housing estate is used as a case study. It was built in the style of socialist realism, but using the technique of prefabricated brick blocks. This technique represented a precursor to further prefabrication. At the end of the chapter, Elman Zarecor presents one aspect of this style, namely that of urban ensemble, from the perspective of foreign researchers such as Boris Groys and Catherine Cooke. Here it becomes particularly clear that Czech architectural theory lacks a broader scope and unbiased historical analyses.

The next chapter deals with Jiří Kroha, who is presented as a case study illustrative of the transformation of the relationship of architects to aesthetics and technology. The final chapter briefly summarises the prefabrication and industrialisation process from 1948 to 1961. It includes a list of the developed types and their use. The period 1948–1956 is treated in great detail;

the period 1956–1961 is given only a very short subchapter.

In the conclusion, Elman Zarecor summarises her findings. Pre-war activities already showed Czechoslovak architects were prepared to work collectively for a socialist state. They welcomed the opportunity to work for the state in the new design organizations and tried to fulfil the general expectations. These did not relate to the quality, but rather the quantity of production; the emphasis was placed on housing. The architects saw industrialisation as a means of fulfilling their commitment to the community. Elman Zarecor defends this thesis convincingly, and thus opens up a new area of research for Czech and Slovak historians and theoreticians of architecture. In addition, Czech experts should be grateful for the discovery of unknown archival sources that will prove crucial for further research. This book's topic is far from exhausted; rather, it anticipates further study. It would be tempting to analyse the architectural discourse of that time, which varied significantly and could tell us much more about the thinking of architects than was actually captured in the book. The only complaint might be about the order of individual chapters in the book, which seems random and makes the complex development in the Czechoslovak architecture difficult to understand.

Kimberly Elman Zarecor successfully describes the mechanism of architectural practice under the communist regime in Czechoslovakia between 1948 and 1961, convincingly rejects the notion that this practice was completely under political pressure and identifies a line of continuity with earlier efforts by the admired and politically 'innocent' inter-war generation of architects.

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