31

SOCIALIST WORLDMAKING

Comparative Research between the Socialist and Postcolonial Countries during the Cold War

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From the 1950s to the 1980s, scholars from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries engaged in a wide range of urban and regional studies in Africa, Asia, and South America. In the context of decolonization and the Global Cold War (Westad 2005), this knowledge production was part of an accelerated mobility of expertise and resources between what was called at that time the "Second" and the "Third" worlds. Many among the empirically based studies were produced in support of economic planning as well as regional, urban, and architectural planning carried out abroad by experts from socialist countries and their local partners. They included studies on regionalization of Asian and African countries as well as urban surveys and demographic studies, often delivered to support preparation of master plans of such cities as Accra, Aleppo, Algiers, Baghdad, Havana, Kabul, Kolkata, Tripoli (Libya), Ulaanbaatar, and others. This research drew upon concepts and methods previously introduced in socialist countries. Their application in locations abroad necessitated a comparison, whether explicit or implicit, between these locations and those in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Such procedures resulted sometimes in unexpected juxtapositions of Tashkent and Accra, Moscow and Ulaanbaatar, Warsaw and Baghdad, Zagreb and Conakry, and Abu Dhabi and Sofia.

By decentering Western candidates for urban comparison and by theorizing urbanization from within the encounters between the Second and the Third worlds, these studies had a lot in common with the recent "new comparative urbanism" in urban and regional research (Lees 2012). New comparative urbanism argued that there are no privileged sites for theory-building and that any city could be "thought through" any other city as a form of "experimental comparison" (Robinson 2016a: 20, 2016b). In particular, new comparative urbanism argued to move beyond studies of "global cities" and postcolonial urbanism as two frames of comparison (Ong and Roy 2011; Roy 2009). The first, embedded in "world cities" and "global cities" research (Robinson 2014), is largely based on the world-systems theory (Wallerstein 1974) with the "mode of integration" of cities with the "world economy" as its comparative criterion (Friedmann and Wolff 1982: 329). The second focuses on the consequences of the colonial encounter for the production, representation, and lived experiences of spaces (Blunt and Rose 1994; Jazeel 2019; Simone 2001).

However, in spite of this criticism, both comparative frames have proved to be resilient in urban scholarship. This points to the fact that these analytical frameworks are products of specific historical processes on a world-wide scale: Western European colonialism and Western-dominated

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"globalization." In this chapter, I will understand colonialism and globalization through the concept of "worldmaking," by which I mean historically specific ways of practicing the world. Among them, I will distinguish "socialist worldmaking," or a myriad of exchanges between the socialist Second world and the postindependence Third world during the Cold War. So understood socialist worldmaking was established and sustained by a variety of institutional frameworks, political discourses, systems of foreign trade, modes of technology transfers, and situated, everyday experiences of collaboration, which negotiated the official discourse of socialist internationalism, and sometimes transgressed it.

Building upon my previous research (Stanek 2020, 2021), in what follows, I will review comparison as practiced in the framework of socialist worldmaking with a particular focus on studies that supported architectural, planning, and construction exchanges. Revising these studies advances current debates in comparative urbanism in two ways. First, it shows how urban comparison was carried out within a framework alternative to those of the global cities research and postcolonial urbanism and, sometimes, by means of specific comparative terms and from within distinct positionalities. Second, recent historical scholarship showed that decolonization and globalization can be understood only in their intertwinement with the Cold War dynamics. Accordingly, the focus on socialist worldmaking offers an opportunity to revise the comparative frames and criteria of postcolonial urbanism and global cities research.

Socialist Worldmaking

While the concept of "worldmaking" attracted much debate in urban cultural studies (Birdsall and Kalkman 2018), my reading of this concept begins with the historical-materialist writings about *mondialisation* by the French sociologist Henri Lefebvre. Neither a simple translation of the English "globalization" nor an alternative to it (cf. Nancy 2007), Lefebvre's *mondialisation* pointed at the world as historically specific dimension of social practices, of which the Anglo-American term "globalization" captured just some. Lefebvre (2009) discussed *mondialisation* as central to urbanization processes around the planet, and argued that practices of space-production were informed by alternative imaginations of the world, in themselves often contradictory and competing. The concept of *mondialisation* helps to advance recent debates on the "worlding" of cities (Ong and Roy 2011; Simone 2001) by drawing attention to the multiple visions, imaginations, and experiences of the world and the ways in which negotiations, conflicts, and sometimes synergies between them inform urbanization processes in specific locations.

Lefebvre's comments may be usefully confronted with those of Martinican writer and scholar Édouard Glissant and his concept of *mondialité*. Writing during and after the Cold War, Glissant reflected about the world beyond its expansionist concepts inherited from the colonial period and reconceptualized a historical condition when "the thrust of the world and its desire no longer embolden you onward in a fever of discovery: they multiply you all around" (1997: 195). Starting with a study of Antillean literature, Glissant theorized the ways in which worlds were assembled under the pressure of political and economic violence stemming from the colonial period and more recent ones.

Building upon Lefebvre and Glissant, I understand worldmaking as a dimension of social practices that refer to various, competing, and normative visions of world-wide exchange and collaboration. They are world-wide in the sense that they encompass the whole planet or, more modestly, that they are not restricted to specific places. Worldmaking may be practiced in incommensurable and yet intertwined ways. In Glissant's analysis, some global visions come with claims to universality, conveyed by antagonistic, Cold War era discourses about the "worldwide

commercial market," "universal defense of freedom," "the proletariat's final role," and "permanent revolution" (1997: 152, 178). Glissant (1997) contrasted these with subaltern (Spivak 1985) ways of conceiving and practicing the world, notably in colonial and postcolonial contexts: by fragmentation rather than by claims to coherence, by a constant reinvention and renewal rather than by accumulation, by strategic opaqueness rather than by transparency.

The perspective of worldmaking helps to address the complexity of Cold War exchanges between the Second and the Third worlds, both among the countries concerned and in relation to other worldmaking practices, notably those spearheaded by the "First" world. During the Khrushchev period (1953–64), the Soviet Union presented itself as an anticolonial and antiracist force, which offered to the newly independent countries a political and economic future alternative both to the path-dependencies inherited from colonialism and to the blueprint of American modernization theory. While during this period, Soviet aims were largely geopolitical, with economic gains considered relevant in a long term, by the 1970s, mercantile motivations began to prevail (Yagodovsky 1975). Yet the socialist countries were far from a homogenous block, not only because of the various "splits" between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, Albania, and China but also because of the differing political and economic trajectories and priorities of Eastern European satellites (Stone 1996). These disparities were exacerbated in the wake of the 1970s oil crises and the debt crisis that followed both in Eastern Europe and in what by then was called the "Global South."

Even more diverse were the motivations of African, Asian, and South American countries to enter into these exchanges. They differed between southern Comecon members (Mongolia, Vietnam, Cuba), deeply dependent on Soviet resources, and countries pursuing independent variants of socialist development, such as Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah, Iraq under the Baath party, or Chile under Salvador Allende. But even countries with elites hostile to socialism, such as Nigeria, encouraged collaboration with Eastern Europe in order to expand their resources and staff or to seek leverage against the West. Whatever their geopolitical positions, partners in these exchanges exploited the specific political economy of state socialism, including the state monopoly on foreign trade, its central planning, the inconvertibility of currencies, and the privileging of barter transactions (Stanek 2020).

These accelerated exchanges created a need for expertise about Africa and Asia in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, including expert knowledge about cities and urbanization in these contexts. Since the 1950s, institutions in charge of producing such knowledge were established or renewed in socialist countries. In the Soviet Union, they included the Africa Institute, the Institute of Oriental Studies, and the Patrice Lumumba Peoples' Friendship University in Moscow. Research institutions and departments of geography, ethnography, economy, urban and regional planning, and architecture participated in this effort (Rimsha 1976). Specialized institutions were founded, too, such as the Postgraduate Course of Urban and Regional Planning for Developing Countries in Szczecin and the Institute for Tropical Architectural Research in Gdańsk, both in Poland (Gzowska and Bujas 2020). They offered scholarships for students and researchers from the Global South, with the Soviet Union being by far the most generous donor (Katsakioris 2010). Eastern European scholars and practitioners contributed to the establishment and advancement of research and educational institutions in Africa and Asia, among them universities in Kumasi, Zaria, Algiers, Tripoli (Libya), Damascus, Baghdad, and elsewhere. Supported by conferences, publications, and journals, the research spectrum produced by Eastern European institutions was very broad. It straddled general overviews of urbanization processes in Africa (Gornung et al. 1983), South America (Mashbits 1985), and Central Asia (Ozerova and Pokshishevskij 1981) and detailed studies of agricultural production, medical geography, and development of specific industry branches and regional transportation systems.

Adaptive and Appropriative Comparison

Socialist worldmaking challenged the hegemony of urban knowledge about the Global South that, since the 19th century, had been produced in the colonial centers in Western Europe, including comparative knowledge (RIBA 1911; Royer 1932; van Es et al. 2014). Upon their arrival in the newly independent countries in Africa and Asia, Soviet and Eastern European planners and urban scholars argued that the experience of the socialist countries was more useful for the decolonizing countries than that of their former metropolitan centers. For example, Polish planner Wiktor Richert who worked in Ghana in the 1970s argued that for West Africa, more important were "development experiences of countries which took this arduous road already, rather than ready-made patterns of developed countries, however modern and scientifically founded" (Richert 1973: 5). This broad statement points at many, often diverging, comparative practices that took place in the framework of socialist worldmaking. In particular, they included what can be called "adaptive comparison," employed in order to adapt planning concepts from socialist countries to locations in the Global South, and "appropriative comparison," which compared urban knowledge produced in northern centers, both in the West and in the East, in order to appropriate this knowledge to the needs and means of the newly independent countries (Stanek 2021).

Adaptive comparison was practiced by professionals in countries embarking on socialist development path, notably southern Comecon countries, dependent on Soviet resources and expertise. Teams of local and Eastern European scholars were applying Soviet planning concepts and methods to locations in Africa and Asia. Comparison between these locations and the Soviet Union was an essential part of this process, which aimed at determining similarities and differences between these two contexts. The analysis of these differences directed the adaptation of Soviet concepts and methods to the conditions on the ground and informed more theoretical debates about the principles of such adaptation.

A case in point was multiple studies focused on "regionalization" of several African and Asian countries, notably India (Bhat et al. 1963; *Voprosy Geografii* 1968). Based on the Soviet operative concept of the region and the practice of regionalization, these studies combined empirical analyses of existing conditions (natural resources, transportation networks, population distribution, division of labor) with visions of their optimization within a centrally planned economy (Alampiyev et al. 1962; Zeitlin 1981). For example, the authors of a Soviet-Mongolian regionalization study argued that the implementation of the Soviet concept of the region in Mongolia required its adaptation to "economic, historical and other conditions and characteristics" of the country (Alampiyev et al. 1962: 18) (Figure 31.1).

This and other studies show that what was exported together with Soviet operative concepts were also categories of geographic difference from Soviet geography (Fuchs 1964; Zeitlin 1981). Besides economic, historical, climatic, geological, and seismic conditions, Soviet scholars theorized geographic differences by means of ethnographic concepts, such as "ways of life" and "national traditions." Largely drawn from the Soviet experience of planning and research in Central Asia (Kalinovsky 2018; Leykina and Pokshishevskiy 1979), these concepts were referred to by Soviet planners who claimed their relevance for the Global South. For example, Anatolii Nikolaevich Rimsha, the co-designer of the Kabul master plan and the author of the book *Town Planning in Hot Climates* (1976) stressed the role of climatic factors for Global South urbanization, but also of national traditions and ways of life. These categories were considered, although to varying degrees, in Soviet studies of cities and architecture in Sub-Saharan Africa (Filippovich 1964; Voronina 1964).

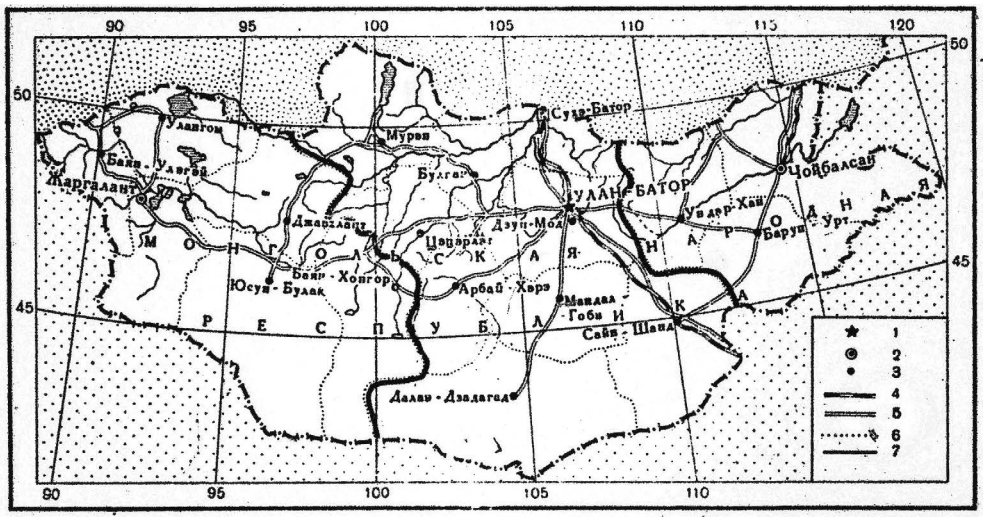

Figure 31.1 "Economic Zones of the Mongolian People's Republic (Preliminary Draft)," 1962. Alampiyev, P. M. V. V. Kistanov, M. B. Mazanova and D. A. Chumichev, (1962) "An Attempt to Delimit the Main Economic Zones of the Mongolian People's Republic," *Soviet Geography* 3(5): 24.

Adaptive comparison had multiple parallels with comparison practiced in the framework of Western European colonialism, which "produced equivalences based on a mix of prescribed similitudes and cued distinctions—and the implicit mandate that others be ignored" (Stoler 2002: 207). The Soviets were keen to avoid such parallels and instead presented themselves as an anticolonial power. They claimed that the Soviet Union "liberated" Transcaucasia and Central Asia from tsarist colonial oppression and championed economic modernization, social emancipation, and national cultures of these regions. The concepts of ways of life and national traditions were put forward in support of this position. While never free of racialized phantasies, paternalistic attitudes, and formulaic uses, these concepts and the planning practices that referred to them conveyed a tension between the ultimate aim of merging various ethnic groups in the USSR and the carefully controlled promotion of local languages, customs, traditions, and Islamic religion (Lubin 1984). Reflecting upon such dialectical analysis, according to which the past needed to be both removed and preserved as a modernizing resource, scholars recently argued that this dialectics was the closest approximation of a specifically Soviet understanding of postcolonial difference (Chukhovich 2014).

However, Soviet anticolonial credentials were often rejected both within Central Asia and in the Global South (Kalinovsky 2018). In "Central Europe" (post-Habsburg space), Soviet claims clashed with the narrative about the region's history of subordination, exploitation, and devalorization by foreign empires, with some considering the Soviet Union as a successor rather than a gravedigger of the Russian Empire (Polónyi 2000: 45–6). Following this narrative, several Czech and Slovak, Hungarian, Polish, and Yugoslav professionals argued that their countries shared a history of foreign domination with their counterparts in Africa and Asia. This argument was often myopic to the regions' own history of "internal colonization," notably in Poland. Yet when referred to by urban scholars and practitioners, this argument allowed for "genetic" comparisons (Robinson 2016a), which drew parallels between historical conditions that shaped urbanization processes in both the Second and Third worlds. Such work was often pursued by Eastern

Europeans in countries that did not follow the Soviet path of socialist development, including Algeria (Jałowiecki 1978), Libya (Wadeco 1979–85), Syria (Seibert 1978), and Iraq (Miastoprojekt (Kraków) n.d.). In these locations, Eastern European experts drew upon specific planning methods, instruments, and concepts that had been part of the modernization efforts in the region since the 19th century, of which socialist modernization was just the most recent installment.

Among such practices was the theorization of the rural-urban continuum in West Africa by Hungarian architect Károly (Charles) Polónyi, who drew on 1930s Eastern European debates about rural underdevelopment (Polónyi 2000) (Figure 31.2).

Intertwined rural and urban settlements were described by the Polish sociologist Bohdan Jałowiecki (1978), who studied the urbanization of Algiers and reconceptualized the city's expanding bidonvilles (shantytowns) beyond Western orientalist imaginaries. Rural architecture and urbanization were also the focus of Polish scholar Zbigniew Dmochowski who employed surveying techniques from interwar Poland in his three-volume book *Introduction to Nigerian Traditional Architecture* (1990). In turn, Piotr Zaremba, head of the Postgraduate Course in Szczecin, pointed at accelerated urbanization as a shared condition of postwar Eastern Europe and the developing countries, which he studied as an advisor to governments in West Africa, the Middle East, and South and South-East Asia (Gzowska and Bujas 2020; Zaremba 1967). Similarities between West Africa and Eastern Europe were also pointed out by Richert. In his book on *Spatial regional planning in Ghana* (1973), Richert referred to Polish regional planning in order to advance the concept of region in Ghana against its understanding inherited from colonial planning (cf. Belo-Giwa 1967).

When referring to Eastern European planning concepts and methods, Polónyi, Jałowiecki, Dmochowski, and Richert rarely aimed at "adapting" Eastern European planning and geographical expertise to the Global South. Rather, they saw themselves as sharing with their Global South colleagues a "peripheral" positionality that they embraced as a vantage point from which to compare knowledge produced both in the West and in the East, and to appropriate this knowledge to the needs and means on the ground. Such "appropriative" comparison was explicitly advocated by Richert and his collaborator, Ghanaian sociologist and urban planner Austin Tetteh (cf. Tetteh 1962). Richert and Tetteh conveyed the course in regional planning at the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi (Ghana), which compared planning practices in various countries "with different forms of government" and assessed their application prospects in Ghana (Richert 1973: 80). In line with longer methodological traditions in Central Europe (Moravánszky 2012), Richert and Tetteh embraced the peripheries as places from which ideas forged in the centers are questioned, tested, modified, and appropriated. This claim came with an awareness of the non-synchronicities, omissions, and, in Glissant's terms, the "opaqueness" that characterized peripheral worldmaking practices.

Historical Revisionism

This brief overview showed socialist worldmaking as a comparative frame that was distinct from other such frames and, at times, specific when comparative terms and positionalities were concerned. But this review also signaled the variety of ways in which socialist worldmaking intersected with colonialism and its path-dependencies, and with globalization. During the last decade, these intersections have been the focus of many historians of the Global Cold War (Dragostinova 2021; Mark et al. 2020; Mëhilli 2017; Sanchez-Sibony 2014). In line with the understanding of postsocialism as an opportunity to debunk Cold War era epistemologies (Chari and Verdery 2009: 19), this scholarship contradicted the Western perception of the socialist

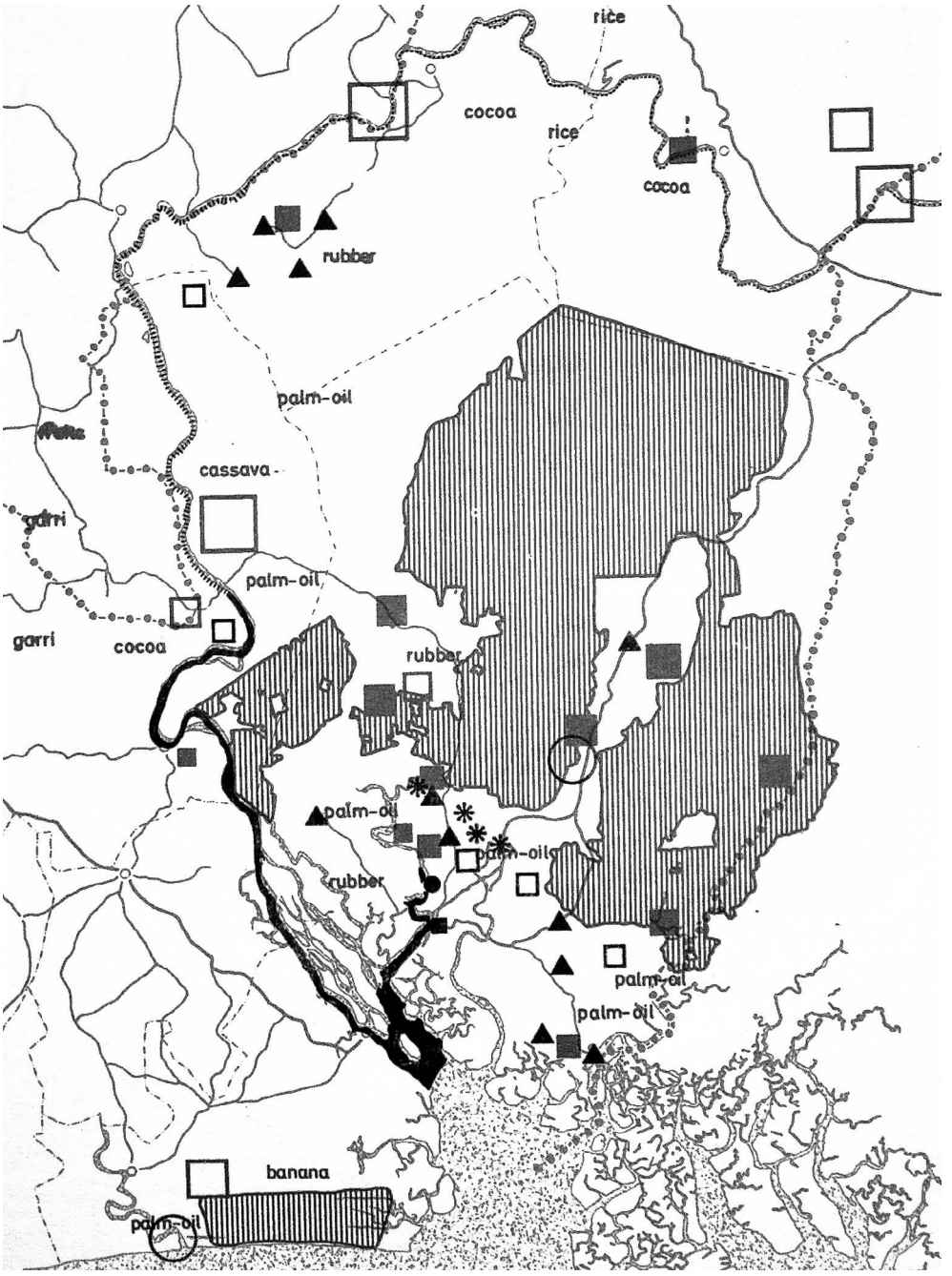

Figure 31.2 "Natural Resources of South Eastern State (Nigeria)," 1969. Design Institute for Public Buildings (KÖZTI, Hungary), "Survey and Development Plan for Calabar" (Calabar: Tesco-Közti Consulting Engineers [NIG.] Ltd., 1969), 3.3. Private archive, Budapest (Hungary).

countries as isolated and as privileging political over economic objectives. Accounting for this scholarship allows to revise postcolonial urbanism and global cities research as comparative frames. A more careful understanding of the worldmaking processes that produced both frames, and a study of their historical emergence that does not omit non-Western actors, is an essential condition for expanding current "geographies of theory" (Roy 2009). In particular, I would like to point out two directions of such revision.

First, the focus on socialist worldmaking during the Cold War advances our understanding of the postcolonial encounter beyond conceptual patterns derived from its colonial precedent. Accounts from Global South cities that engaged with the socialist countries, such as postindependence Accra and Lagos, and postrevolutionary Baghdad, reveal that independence meant an opening of these cities toward worlds beyond their former colonial metropolises. This was an experience shared both by ordinary people and by professionals, scholars, and decision-makers. For the latter, decolonization resulted in a multiplication of flows of technology and know-how. Global South decision-makers often experienced the juxtaposition of these competing knowledges as empowering, as it challenged the hierarchies of knowledge and prestige inherited from the colonial period. But it was also frustrating, as they confronted disparate research traditions and incommensurable statistics of economic and social development, often exaggerated for propaganda purposes.

The resources that the Soviets offered to their Southern counterparts did come with political leverage. Yet, in postcolonial countries that were not Comecon members, the Soviets never attained a hegemonic position comparable to that which the Europeans had enjoyed during colonialism. As shown by historians, rather than "proxies" or "stooges" of the "superpowers," leaders of most independent countries used resources from both sides of the Cold War to advance economic development, state building, and regional diplomatic aims (Sanchez-Sibony 2014). In particular, Global South elites often continued to be educated in their former colonial metropolises, where they absorbed Western Cold War discourse that devaluated Eastern Europeans' technology and expertise. Their encounters confirmed the double bind of the postcolonial condition when the condemnation of colonial exploitation went hand in hand with the appreciation of colonial expertise. Yet at the same time, rather than perpetuating the dichotomy between the colonized and the colonizer, the encounter with Eastern Europeans as a third "other" sometimes triangulated this dichotomy (Polónyi 2000: 82). This is particularly relevant for postcolonial urbanism as a comparative frame, as Eastern European experts could not rely on colonial era hierarchies of prestige and needed to substantiate their decisions in different ways. Comparative procedure proved to be useful in this respect. A case in point was surveys of Baghdad and its master plans (1967, 1973) delivered by a large and interdisciplinary team of Polish planners. Their reports included several comparisons of planning and research practices from South Asia and the Middle East with those from North America and Western and Eastern Europe (Miastoprojekt (Kraków) n.d.) (Figure 31.3).

Second, the study of socialist worldmaking provides an impulse to rethink the tenets of global cities research and its core criterion for comparing cities according to their "mode of integration with the world economy" (Friedmann and Wolff 1982: 329). Rather than the "white gap" on the map, by which Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were routinely represented in global cities research during the Cold War (Friedmann 1986: 74; Müller 2020), recent historical studies showed that, like the rest of the world, during the 1970s the socialist countries were both affected by and responded to the "shock of the global," including the oil crisis, rising interest rates on international markets, industrialization outside the West, and the increasing intertwinement of global trade (Ferguson et al. 2010). The debt crisis in Eastern Europe, followed by attempts at "market socialism" in several satellites, resulted in more mercantile priorities in their foreign

Figure 31.3 "Historical Development of Baghdad. Planning Office Master Plan of Baghdad," 1967. Vol. 1B: "Complementary Drawings and Diagrams." Polservice Consulting Engineers Warsaw-Poland, representing Miastoprojekt Design Office Cracow – Poland. March 1967, 1/I. Michigan State University Libraries, East Lansing, MI (USA).

trade, exemplified by joint ventures with Western firms that were established in the socialist countries (Pula 2018) and "tripartite" collaboration between Western, Eastern, and Southern firms in the Global South (Gutmann 2011).

Eastern European organizations in charge of architectural, planning, and urban research participated in these processes by obtaining commissions on an increasingly global and competitive market of design and construction services. These commissions included studies that accounted for the impact of the emergence of this market on the urbanization dynamics in Africa and Asia. A case in point was the "General Housing Programme for Iraq," which was led by the design institute previously engaged in the master plan of Baghdad (Miastoprojekt (Kraków) 1976–80). While this study, like the master plan before it, drew on then-current debates in Western Europe and North America, its tone subtly shifted from that of appraising international planning culture to that of its mediation.

Such shift can also be seen in the work of urban and regional planners from the Postgraduate Course in Szczecin (Gzowska and Bujas 2020), and in particular in Piotr Zaremba's work in People's Republic of China. Zaremba first worked in this country during the 1950s, and he returned to China during its controlled opening toward the capitalist market in the 1980s. At that time, he contributed to the planning of harbor cities in the Guangdong province and the special economic zones. While Zaremba's first engagements in China had relied on Poland's specific, postwar experience of socialist reconstruction and modernization (Zaremba 1959), the second reflected his wide international experience, including his work as a UN consultant. By the late 1980s, Zaremba reversed the direction of knowledge transfers, when he delivered plans for a special economic zone in Szczecin (Poland), based on the Chinese experience (Bujas et al. 2018) (Figure 31.4).

Zaremba's work shows that socialist worldmaking contributed to global economic integration in ways that have been under the radar of global cities research. His work conceptually aligned

Figure 31.4 "Area I – Szczecin Międzyodrze," part of the special economic zone planned by Piotr Zaremba for Szczecin (Poland), 1988. Piotr Zaremba, "Strefa wolnocłowa w Szczecinie – jednym z elementów Specjalnej Strefy Ekonomicznej w rejonie ujścia Odry," typescript, 12. Private archive, Szczecin (Poland).

places according to their relative position within the emerging global economy, and contributed to their integration with this economy by means of operative planning concepts that Zaremba mobilized among technocratic elites in China and Poland during the 1980s.

Conclusions

Just as scholars within socialist worldmaking made a strategic use of their distance from the world capitalist system in order to produce a new type of urban knowledge, so too the differences between their experience and current comparative debates provide an opportunity for historicizing the political economy of comparative urbanism, old and new. This chapter has pointed at several such differences. Comparison within socialist worldmaking testified not only to an extension of candidates, concepts, and positionalities of comparison, but also to the emergence of new centers of urban knowledge production in the socialist countries and in the Global South. Their geography, in itself uneven and unequal, was facilitated by the political economy of state socialism, and so were their research conditions, including the size and the composition of research teams, the length of their stays abroad, the resources available to them, and thus the feasibility of some, rather than other, methodologies.

Many of these institutions vanished in the course of the "creative destruction" of research infrastructure in postsocialist Eastern Europe and by their destruction *sans phrase* in Iraq, Libya, Syria, and elsewhere since the 1990s. It was in this context that new comparative urbanism emerged.

Launched during a decade of a seemingly unchecked Western hegemony in the wake of the Cold War, new comparative urbanism offered to dislocate the candidates of comparison beyond London, Paris, Toronto, New York, and Los Angeles while at the same time reinforcing the position of these very cities as centers of comparative urban knowledge.

With the waning of the unipolar international order led by the United States, urban scholars are returning today to the Cold War in order to understand the territorial logic of the escalating Sino-American rivalry (Schindler et al. 2021). In this context, recent historical scholarship on the Cold War, and in particular its reading through the concept of worldmaking, offer specific lessons for "more global urban studies" (Robinson 2016a). Such reading stresses the fact that research questions, terms, methodologies, institutions, and the logistics of urban research are produced and reproduced from within constraints and opportunities afforded by historically specific political economies of intellectual labor. Yet rather than accepting the delineation of these political economies according to geopolitical narratives writ large, including that of a bipolar "new Cold War," the concept of worldmaking directs scholars' attention to the often entangled, historical-material reality of mobile resources, knowledges, regulations, institutions, and lived experiences of collaboration, education, and research. This approach is comparative at its core, as it points to the ways in which horizons of research emerge at the confrontation, antagonism, and negotiation of existing and arising worldmaking regimes, and requires urban scholars to position themselves within and across them.

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