

## CULTURAL CHANGES AND IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION IN EUROPEAN URBAN AGGLOMERATIONS.

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### Abstract

Recent years have brought many scientific studies, which include an analysis of the urban agglomerations. These urban units are often used in international comparisons and classifications of cities. Particularly intensive research is carried out in the field of social and cultural impacts of globalization. The fascination of the cultural changes is that it gives you keys which can help you to understand and explore the contemporary organization of the urban areas. Human activities are transforming the urban environment, and recent city building and rebuilding are influenced by the rediscovered historical styles and new design trends. The design of the built environment is what gives expression to the cultural forces in urbanization. The scope of study includes the analysis of the European territory with rich urban history. The author of this article decided to contribute to this stream of research and analyze the perception of the culture and arts in the European urban agglomerations.

**Keywords:** *culture, arts, globalization, urban agglomerations*

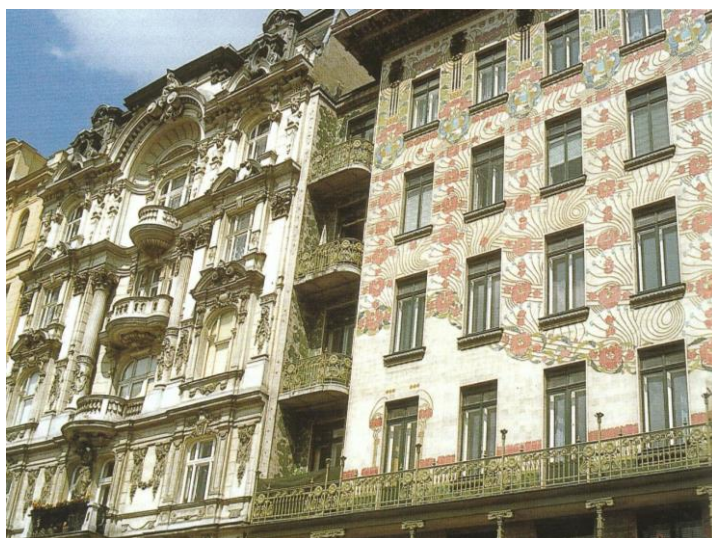
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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Cities are like a living organism. They are changing their urban design through time and space. The design of the built environment is what gives expression, meaning, and identity to the broad sweep of forces involved in urbanization. It is symbolic of all sorts of political, social, and cultural forces. As a result, each group of structures of a given period and type tends to be a carrier of the zeitgeist, or “spirit of its time“. Any city, therefore, can be read as a multilayered text, a narrative of signs and symbols. If we think in this way of the city as a text, the built environment becomes a biography of urbanization. The text metaphor can be developed in a several ways. It is possible, for example, to analyze particular settings in the terms of their grammar, the way that buildings and spaces take on meaning in relation to one another. Similarly, it is possible to search for meanings that are conveyed by means of the graphic equivalent of allegory. Perhaps the most illuminating way to develop the metaphor, however, is to look for the equivalent of key pages or passages in the narrative: settings that are emblematic of the overall political economy, or fragments of the built environment that mark turning points in the story, or significant events or relationships. Yet in reading any text carefully we must also take note of the subtext, “reading between the lines“ in order to understand the full story. Architectural styles are not simply imposed, layer on layer, onto metropolitan form but they are diffused differentially through time and space, creating distinctive morphological subareas (Knox, Paul L. – McCarthy, L. 2005).

### 2. DIVERSITY OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM IN EUROPE

In the analysis of the European territory with the rich urban history we can see many differential influences. For example in the biggest urban agglomeration of Austria in Vienna we can see that many famous architects have found their inspiration in nature (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Detail of the facade of the Viennese Secession Building (Ch. Vandermotten, 1999)

Also in other European cities we can see multiple examples of inspiration in nature. We can mention for example Barcelona where the most famous Catalan architect Antonio Gaudí has found perfection in details. In his building Casa Milà better known as La Pedrera (see Figure 2) he tried to imitate waves. In his works he was inspired also by gothic, Islamic and romanesque art. From Art nouveau he took curves and polished picturesqueness. He has the desire to break all bonds with tradition, remind forms of the past and at the same time to deny them with his unexpected variations of proportion, rhythms or decor (Châtelet, A. – Groslier, B.P., 1990).

The majority of epochs in every country has their own architectural style of building, but in some socio-politico-cultural contexts, creative imagination might have missed and it was known as copying or imitating earlier styles. The architecture is often full of reminiscences.

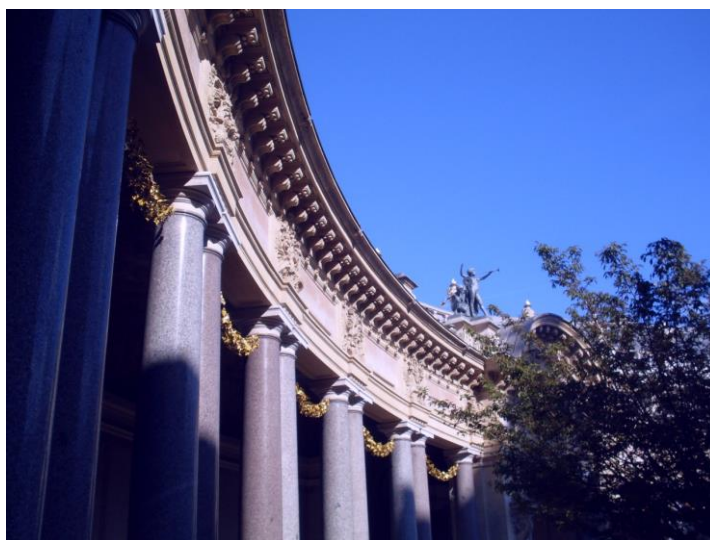


**Figure 2.** Detail of the facade of La Pedrera Building. Vyslůžilová

City centers in Europe are usually full of palaces that reflect on ancient history. Like Petit Palais (see Figure 3) with his ionic columns and peristyle. This palace was built for the Universal Exhibition in 1900.

Some styles have transgressed the borders and have become universal references, for example colonnades and Greek pediments, baroque facades of Central Europe in the 18th century, Haussmann buildings in the 19th century, international skyscraper towers of various generations in the 20th century. However, certain details, the nature of the material or some colors may indicate more precisely the geographic area or country, i.e. the cultural domain. The ornamentation has been since ancient times a great importance in the urban space. It is a particular usage of an architectural element, in a purely aesthetical target.

The urban scope has an object both functional and aesthetic: it must be at the same time tool and artwork. Architect is an inventor of forms and can at some point give the state of technology, funding opportunities, the pressure of ways of living, jobs, and inheritance patterns, and the dominant ideologies that he can achieve. These forms and ornamentation are corresponding to the task of his epoch (Bastié, J – D  zert, B. 1991).



**Figure 3.** Detail of the colonnade in Petit Palais. Vyslůžilová

The urban planning of the last decades has been characterized by the role assigned to art and culture. The economic interest of culture as a source of life in the city is becoming more and more important. Cultural strategies are often used to improve the image of the city. A living and cosmopolitan cultural climate is considered as a key factor in city marketing and internationalization strategies. This climate can attract capital and people who have received higher education. Participation in cultural activities is seen as a means of integrating young unemployed people, new residents and disadvantaged groups in the local community (Vandermotten, Ch. et al., 1999).

### **3. GLOBALIZATION IN SOCIAL SPACE OF URBAN AGGLOMERATIONS**

Globalization applies strongly to social relations, in political life, and ethical debate. Globalization is changing the time of the world. Migration and tourist flows, the projection of models of society, traditional vectors of diffusion of social and political innovation and cultural products in the cities, are supported and accelerated by the instantaneous circulation of information. The link with globalization is established by the rapid movement of models, modes and cultural products.

The market economy of cultural goods also expresses a different facet of the urban hierarchy, not necessarily based on the command and the economic and financiers flows.

Cities such as Paris or Milan build part of their rayons on the culinary art, haute couture, museums, design and furnishings, or cultural property of mass (film, video, publishing) (Bretagnolle, A. et al. 2011).

The area of the organizational culture has seen profound cultural effects of decentralization in France. One example may be the Gironde with its analysis of the development of cultural policy. The department in its social geography, organization of urban and rural areas, cultural and political areas builds cultural facilities in all their diversity, technicality, functionality and symbolism in the center of territorial strategies in cultural activities.

The hypothesis of cultural facilities such media spaces (under which are at the center of interactions) between public contexts of development and cultural practices that bring together stakeholders in a remarkable public visiting these remarkable events, here forms the central focus. It is creating a link here that leads to an attempt to discover some spatial logic in the deployment of cultural facilities in the department.

The dynamics of decentralization in the forefront of social and spatial fragmentation of current research on best social cohesion forms of cultural activity factor of integration and reactivation of public space policy, in particular through the city.

In the cultural development of area Gironde there is participation also from Aquitaine region. The lifestyle of the local community is differentiated by their relationship to culture and cultural space, depending on the specific socio-geographic organization of departmental space. The area covering Gironde department in this regard is strongly metropolized.

In the center of the department is situated urban agglomeration Bordeaux built around with an attractive metropolitan region. Metropolitan unit groups Bordeaux and its peri-urban circuits that correspond to the agglomerated and peri-urban municipalities.

Most general relationship of metropolization brings two groups of society. On one side weight materialized spatial functionality of the city and its agglomeration. On the other hand urban creation of lifestyle of communities in relation to the main dynamics of industrialized societies whose have continued their process of modernization and individualization. Indicators are mobility, the speed of movement of information, the creation of activities in networks, the most general logic of notable productions of social and collective activities. Along with metropolization there is implemented a demonstration of postmodernity through the most diversified communities in their territories. Social space of metropolization seen in recent decades, profound changes in cultural practices. These changes are accompanied by new social geography (Favory, M., 1998).

Metropolization currently produces inevitable phenomenon through cities in France more than elsewhere. The same term is subject to general use in geography, and thus always has a tendency to be excessively or improperly used. It should be noted that metropolization is a process that affects a particular type of places i.e. metropolis, but that is indirectly related to the whole urban system of France.

Metropolization closely involves two major types of approaches urban phenomena. The first horizontal approach from the start examining cities as individual units in the basic statistics of the population, and is interested in the relationships between them (complementarity, addiction), hierarchy and urban systems through these relationships acquire a certain historical permanence. The second vertical approach from the start examining each location as an area characterized by socio-spatial organization, morphology, country, economic activities or symbolic attributes. These two approaches have undergone a geographic history and explain the great diversity of work on the French cities between measures of spatial analysis and social micro geography.

In fact, metropolitan dynamics simultaneously abide range interurban relations between cities (high-speed trains development of connections between the city of Lille and major

cities of Benelux) and an interurban range of socio-spatial changes of urban spaces (transformation of area Euralille around the railway station TGV Lille-Europe). The process of globalization is very significant in the territory of the French Republic and especially in its major cities (Delpirou, A. et al. 2010). Manifestations of globalization are rapidly expanding also into smaller towns.

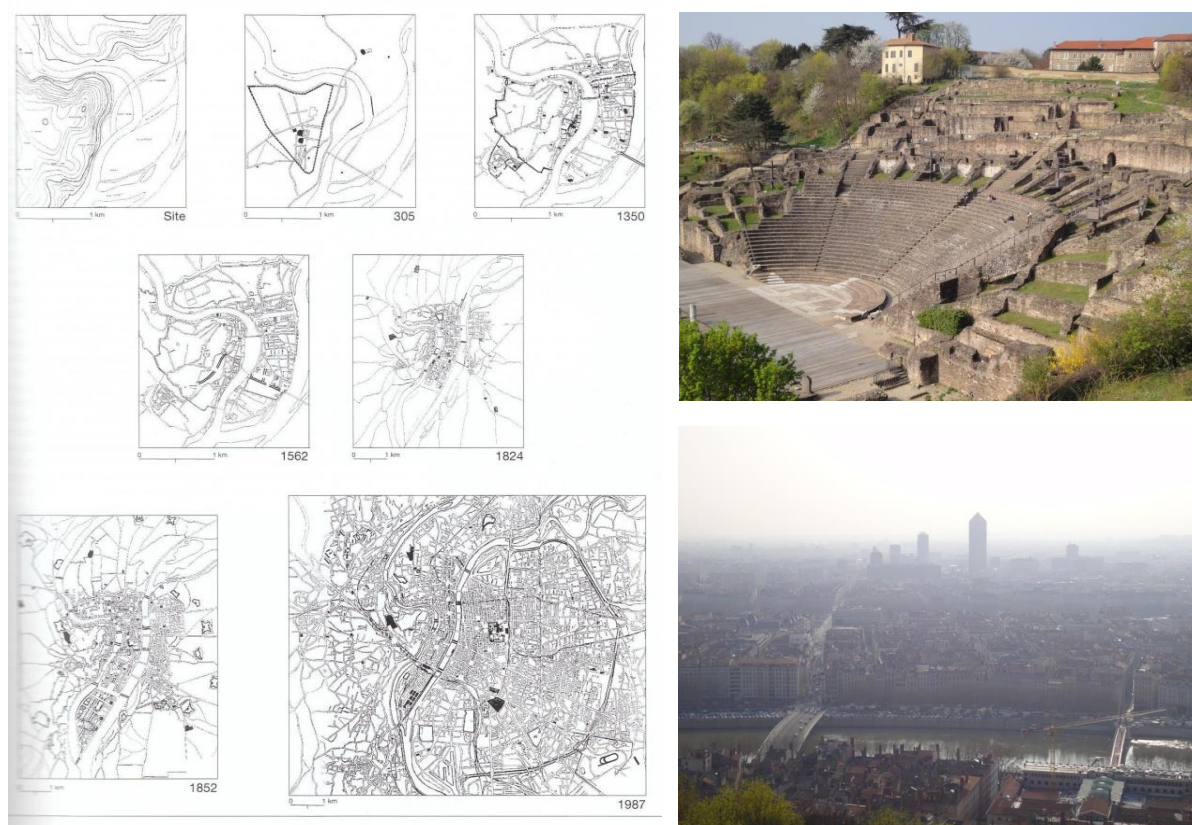
The Slovak Republic, according to A. Bitušíková and D. Luther (2010) is also marked by processes of globalization, reflected the social, economic and cultural level. Slovak cities experienced in the last decades, a number of changes allowed and accelerated the political, economic, social and cultural transformation of society after 1989. An important consequence of this transformation was the opening to the outside world, which resulted in changes not only in their options for efficient use of economic market but also the openness of the socio-cultural field and freer expression of artistic values.

#### **4. HISTORY AND GROWTH OF THE CITY**

To become a large urban agglomeration the city needs to take the time to grow. On a series of maps (see Figure 4) we can see city Lyon with his growth from his first establishment become now large urban agglomeration. Nowadays Lyon also deserves the second place in the chart of the largest urban agglomerations in France (Chalard, L., 2006).

There is quite a different, but an equally useful way of looking at urban changes in terms of movements in the hierarchy of sizes. Geographers have devoted many studies to the size distribution of cities in different countries and at different times. They have concluded, for instance, that countries in an early stage of development are characterized by a primate distribution, in which one (or less often two) major cities contrast sharply with a large number of small cities. But as economic and social development takes place, so the hierarchy evolves into a rank-size distribution, in which city sizes can be plotted (in long form) against their ranking in the hierarchy to give a straight line (long-normal) distribution. For such analysis to be meaningful, a prerequisite is to define urban areas in a rigorous, fully comparable way – which is what the European Urban Systems study has aimed to do (Hall, P. – Hay, D., 1980). In this article the scope of study includes the analysis of the European territory with rich urban history. Europe gives a wide spectrum of inspiration for many researchers and shows many possible directions in research of this unique territory.



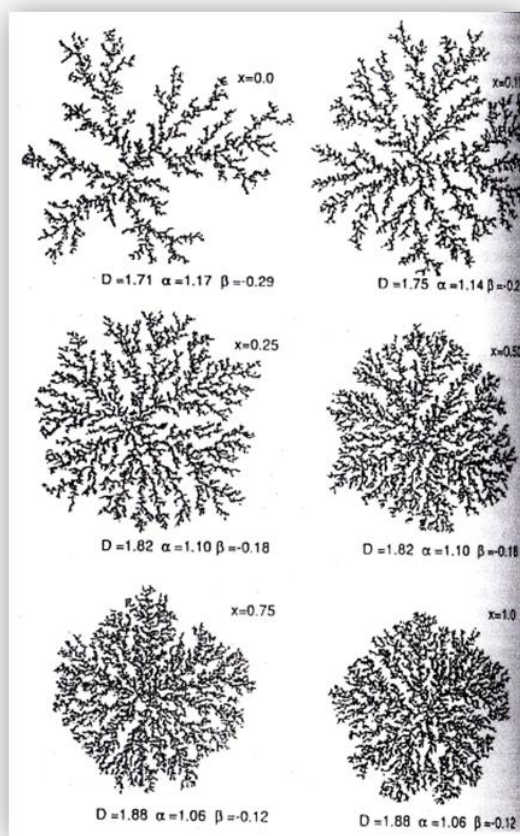


**Figure 4.** City growth of Lyon from Roman times to nowadays (G. Gardes In Ch. Vandermotten, 1999).

Many authors have analyzed the European territory in a historical way e.g. Peter Le Galès (2003), Paul M. Hohenberg – Lynn Hollen Less (1985), Michel Foucher (1993), etc.

The first mentioned author Peter Le Galès (2003) in his work “Le retour des villes européennes” shows in the detail the urban growth of European cities and regions. The second authors Paul M. Hohenberg and Lynn Hollen Less (1985) in their work “The Making of Urban Europe 1000-1950” presents the nearly thousand-year history of Europe. The last mentioned author Michel Foucher (1993) in his work “Fragments d’Europe” also deals with European history and is focusing on urban agglomerations. Some authors tried to show a possible visualization of urban growth.

On Figure 5 we can see a model of the possible spatial agglomeration growth using a fractal method which was proposed by M. Batty et al. (1991). This model reminds growth of coral but we have to be careful and take it just like a model because sometimes the reality is different. Model “DLA” (Diffusion-Limited Aggregation) was developed in physics to explain for example diffusion in the liquid gel, or oxidation of elements. The results of simulations carried out by these authors on other side are much closer to the observed fact that the traditional models that use for example gradients of land value, parcel size or density of the transport network (Moriconi-Ebrard, F., 1993).



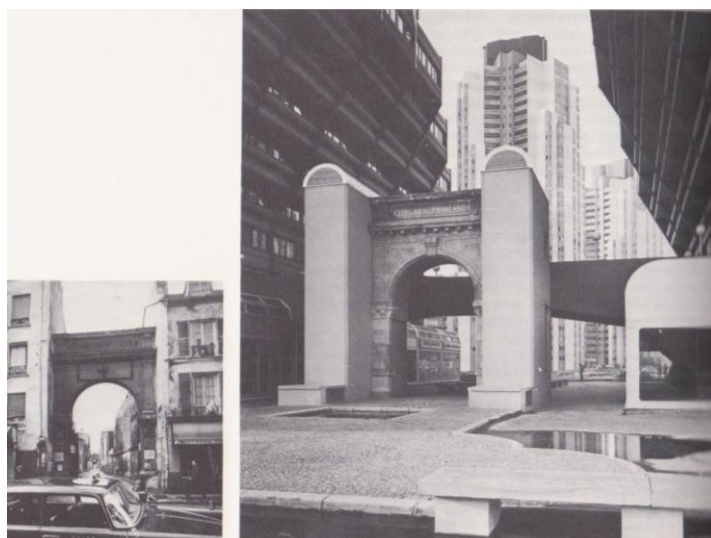
**Figure 5.** Model of the possible spatial agglomeration growth using fractal method (Batty, M. et al. In Moriconi-Ebrard, F., 1993)

## 5. MODERN ARCHITECTURE AND GLOBALIZATION IN THE CITY

In this place we can pose an important question: “Is it an impact of modern architecture in cultural space which is creating an aesthetical problem?” More or less we can confirm this growing problem. In most European big cities there is a problem with the aesthetic look of the city. Especially in core cities where can be found also an impact of modern architecture in mostly cultural space.

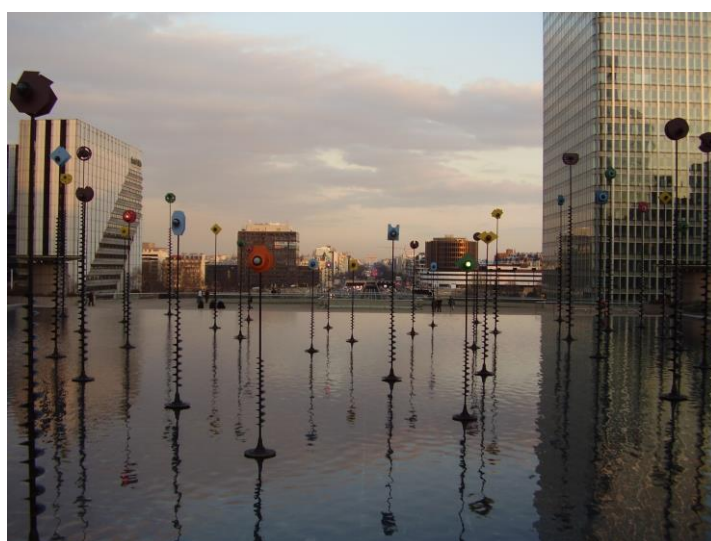
For this is important care of historical buildings and their legal protection like is doing organization UNESCO which created Cultural Heritage Laws Database (Loi du 7 août 1931 sur la conservation des monuments et des sites, modifiée par le décret du 14 Juillet 1993) to not loose cultural heritage which can be replaced with buildings without any artistic value.

A significant example of aesthetical dissimilarity can be found at historical monument Porte de Flamands situated in the 19th district of Paris (see Figure 6). European cities with their urban beauties should not be pushed out with something with short duration only because of the economic benefits for some individual groups. The real values that should be protected are hidden inside historical buildings with the messages of our ancestors.



**Figure 6.** Paris : Porte de Flamands - XIX<sup>e</sup> arr. (Duby G., 1985)

We can say that sometimes is better to place modern architecture outside of core city where is more space for new creations and where can be art in harmony (see Figure 7). Like Ludwig Mies van der Rohe said the famous dictum “Less is more”. The urban growth outside of central cities and economical, social and cultural development in other zones in urban agglomerations with protection of their historical cores gives more opportunities how to support this hypothesis.



**Figure 7.** Paris: panorama in La Défense.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

This article was created to appeal to the people from different branches that can endeavor to the protection of cultural heritage. At the end of this article, we would like to emphasize few points important for culture. There is a big importance of knowledge about other cultures. It can show the multiculturalism of the world and cultural changes through time and space. If we know deeply about the consequences in the history we can clearly promoting cultural diversity without any mistakes. To keep the cultural diversity and their historical messages of



cities we have to care of historical buildings for future cultural uses. On the administrative level, there should be involvement of cultural institutions on local development. We should not forget to propagate our cultural values during our lives that after can be left for the next generations.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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