

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Planning and the Market in the Conditions of Systemic Transformation: Finding the Proper Balance

Journal of Architectural and Planning Research

Proposed Upcoming Theme Issue

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Over the last few decades, laissez faire capitalism — as ideology and practice — has become the global status quo. Many nations in the world are struggling to adjust to this new world order by promoting their economic competitiveness in the context of liberalized markets of goods, services, and capital. In the mean time, the role of the state and other public institutions has dramatically shrunk at the behest of international financial institutions and bilateral donors.

These trends have been particularly profound in the countries of post-socialist Eurasia — Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, China, Vietnam, Mongolia, Cambodia, etc. Often referred to as “societies in transition” or societies undergoing “systemic transformation,” these countries have experienced economic liberalization in its most radical form. Central planning — the poster child of state socialism — has been fully abandoned. Market forces have come to dominate most sectors of the economy, as well as urban and regional development. As a result, urban planning and design now play a limited, reactive role and respond only belatedly to actions undertaken by the private sector.

This model of urban development eventually started to generate serious problems such as sharp social polarization, inefficient patterns of growth and decline, and significant environmental damage (the latter being especially severe in China and parts of the former Soviet Union). Thus, only a decade after the start of the post-socialist transformation, the Central and East European countries began to appreciate the necessity of planning in a market economy, especially in the area of urban and regional development. But planning in the new environment is completely different from planning conducted under socialism and, arguably, more difficult to implement. Besides, planners in the transitional states were routinely confused by parallels between planning in capitalist and socialist conditions. The planning requirements of the European Union, for example, sometimes seemed stricter than those used during the socialist period — a fact that many East Europeans (professionals, politicians, and citizens alike) interpreted in contradicting ways. Thus, a complex debate has now emerged across post-socialist Eurasia regarding the domination of the market, the necessity of planning, and ultimately, the proper balance between these two seemingly alternative models of development.

The *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* announces a call for abstracts for articles that examine this issue of profound importance across post-socialist Eurasia. Contributions from scholars of various disciplines using diverse theoretical and empirical approaches are welcome, as are explorations of this question in nation-specific contexts. Possible focus areas include comparisons of the specific forms the transition has taken in the different countries, the present state of balance between planning and the market, the impact of neo-liberalism on specific economic and urban sectors, and possible future scenarios of urban and regional development. The editors are especially interested in analyses that seek to explain the course of the transformation and its effect on the people, cities, institutions, and environment in the transitional countries.

Potential contributors should submit abstracts of no more than 250 words (excluding references) to r.j.anderson@ncl.ac.uk or a.slaev@abv.bg by March 2010. Authors of selected proposals will be notified of acceptance on or about April 1, 2010. Complete paper drafts will be due by November 1, 2010. All submissions will be blind-refereed following regular journal guidelines.