

The gift of architecture: Spaces of global socialism and their afterlives

Monday 13 June – Tuesday 14 June 2022

University of Manchester

Online and in-person

Convenor:

Professor Łukasz Stanek, University of Manchester

Conference support:

Ksenia Litvinenko, University of Manchester



Day 1: Monday 13 June 2022

09.30 – 10.00 Registration and coffee

10:00 - 10.20 Welcome and introduction by the conference convenor

Session 1: Co-production

Chair: Dr Huda Tayob (University of Manchester)

10.20 – 10.40 **Professor Ruth Prince** (University of Oslo)
Afterlives of Soviet Gifts in East Africa: The “Russia” Hospital in Kenya

10.40 – 11.00 **Professor Ana Ivanovska Deskova** (Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje), **Professor Jovan Ivanovski** (Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje) and **Professor Vladimir Deskov** (Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje)
Building the City of Solidarity: The Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje

11.00 – 11.20 **Dr Miruna Stroe** (Independent Scholar)
The Parliament of Khartoum, Sudan: Cezar Lăzărescu and the Design Institute Carpați, 1972-1978

11.20 – 11.40 **Ksenia Litvinenko** (University of Manchester)
Accepting the Gift of Darkhan Youth Palace of Culture, 1971-1978

11.40 – 12.50 Response by Chair and discussion

12:50 – 14:30 Lunch Break

Session 2: Temporalities

Chair: Professor Albena Yaneva (University of Manchester)

14.30 – 14.50 **Professor Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov** (Higher School of Economics in St. Petersburg)
Given Time and the Time of the Gift at the Aswan Dam Construction, 1960-1970

14.50 – 15.10 **Dr Ke Song** (Harbin Institute of Technology)
China's Architectural Gifts from the 1950s to 1970s

15.10 – 15.30 **Professor Taoufik Souami** (Paris School of Urban Planning)
The International of Architectures and Urban Planning between “Brother

Countries”: Modernity as a Gift? The Case of Algeria

15.30 – 15.50 **Professor Hannah Le Roux** (University of the Witwatersrand)
Housing for All: South Africa’s Immanent Gift, 1937-2022

15.50 – 17.00 Response by Chair and discussion

17.00 End of Day 1
Dinner

Day 2: Tuesday 14 June 2022

09.00 – 09.30 Registration and coffee

Session 3: Reciprocity

Chair: Ksenia Litvinenko (University of Manchester)

09.30 – 09.50 **Professor Łukasz Stanek** (University of Manchester)
From Imperial to Socialist Gift: The Campus of the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi.

09.50 – 10.10 **Professor Duanfang Lu** (University of Sydney)
Gifts and Aid Projects in China’s Diplomatic Discourse, 1949-1965

10.10 – 10.30 **Professor Anna Bronovitskaya** (Independent Scholar)
Complexities of Soviet Architectural Policies in Central Asia: The Cases of Alma-Ata (Kazakhstan) and Tashkent (Uzbekistan)

10.30 – 10.50 **Professor Fantahun Ayele** (Bahir Dar University)
The Gift of Architecture: The Case of the Polytechnic Institute in Ethiopia

10.50 – 11.10 **Dr Michał Murawski** (University College London)
Violence, Hierarchy and Public Spirit: The Economic Aesthetics of the (Architectural) Gift, from High Stalinism to Wild Capitalism

11.10 – 12.00 Response by Chair and discussion

12.00 – 13.30 Lunch Break

Session 4: Appropriation

Chair: Professor Ola Uduku (University of Liverpool)

- 13.30 – 13.50 **Kuukuwa Manful** (SOAS University of London)
The Multifarious Gifts of School Building(s) in Ghana
- 13.50 – 14.10 **Kojo Derban** (University of Ghana) and **Dr Joseph Oduro-Frimpong**
(Ashesi University)
The National Theatre of Ghana and the Politics of Reciprocity
- 14.10 – 14.30 **Dr Thuc Linh Nguyen Vu** (University of Vienna)
Many Gifts in One: Polish Architecture in Vietnam as a Resource in the Post-'89 World
- 14.30 – 14.50 **Professor Christina Schwenkel** (University of California, Riverside)
Unplanned Obsolescence: The Capitalist Dilemma of Decayed Buildings as Solidarity Gifts in Vietnam
- 14.50 – 16.00 Response and Chair response.
- 16.00 End of conference

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Conference Paper Abstracts

Professor Fantahun Ayele, Bahir Dar University

The Gift of Architecture: The Case of the Polytechnic Institute in Ethiopia

In May 1953, a mutual defence agreement was signed between Ethiopia and the United States. The agreement allowed the US to use a communications base in Asmara for defence communication, intelligence gathering, and satellite tracking purposes. In return, the US government agreed to provide military assistance to Ethiopia. As the independence of Somalia became imminent, the Ethiopian government insisted that the US should substantially increase its military assistance to Ethiopia. When Washington rejected Ethiopia's request, the Emperor warned that he would be forced to turn to the East to get the required arms. Accordingly, in July 1959, Emperor Haile Sellase visited Moscow and signed a long-term credit agreement of \$100 million with the Soviet Union. As a gift to the people of Ethiopia, the Soviets began the construction of a technical school in the resort city of Bahir Dar. The buildings included classrooms, offices, dormitories, a library, and a multi-purpose auditorium. On 11 June 1963, the Emperor inaugurated the Bahir Dar Technical School. The school soon began to offer training in agro-mechanics, electrical technology, industrial chemistry, textile technology, wood technology, and later metal technology. As part of the technical cooperation, 14 Russian instructors were assigned to teach major area courses at the technical school later renamed the Polytechnic Institute. The outbreak of the Ethiopian revolution in 1974 strengthened Ethiopia's relations with the East, mainly the Soviet Union. Ethiopia's closer relations with the Communist world substantially benefited the Polytechnic Institute. Ethiopian instructors were given scholarship to pursue their studies in the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries. In the last 60 years, the Institute produced world-class scientists like the late Kitaw Ejigu who was NASA's spacecraft and satellite systems chief engineer. Using untapped archival documents and other pertinent sources, this study attempts to investigate the history of the Polytechnic Institute.

Professor Anna Bronovitskaya, Independent Scholar

Complexities of Soviet Architectural Policies in Central Asia: The Cases of Alma-Ata (Kazakhstan) and Tashkent (Uzbekistan)

The centralized planning and control were fundamental features of the Soviet system, but their implementation was anything but straightforward. The relationships between the "centre" (Moscow-based regulation bodies) and "peripheral territories" differed significantly even within the same region. The paper discusses the cases of two Central Asian capitals: Alma-Ata and Tashkent.

All republics had to follow the general turns of the Communist Party line in architecture, such as rejection of the Modern Movement in favour of the Socialist Realist historicism in the early 1930s, and the next U-turn in the mid-1950s, when the historicist decoration was condemned as "architectural excesses" and the course was set to economical and functional modernist architecture and construction of prefabricated mass housing. The sets of construction norms and rules were also developed centrally, as were standard designs for various building typologies.

Designing offices, set in republican capitals and other big cities, were supposed to adapt these standard designs in the field of mass construction for local conditions, but since the late 1950-s the most important buildings were also designed locally. Any project with a budget over 3 million roubles had to be approved in Moscow. Expertise in novel engineering construction, in particular, in seismic resistant structures, was also provided by the centre.

Aside from that, the architecture of every republic depended on the ambitions and resources of the local leader. Dinmukhammed Kunaev, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, was personally interested in architecture. His emissaries scouted promising young architects from around the Soviet Union and sent talented Kazakhs to study in Moscow and Leningrad while the architectural school in Alma-Ata was maturing. Kunaev was able to choose the best projects and he supported them, helping to get approval from Moscow. When the new master plan for the Kazakh capital was developed in Leningrad, it was challenged in Alma-Ata and eventually replaced by another, developed by local planners. By the 1970s, almost all new buildings in Alma-Ata were locally designed, with the exception of two twenty-stories residential towers 'gifted' by Mosproekt.

In Uzbekistan, the local Communist Party leader, Sharaf Rashidov, was less supportive of Tashkent architects, so the local architectural community was smaller and less flourishing. When the catastrophic earthquake demolished much of the city in 1966, Tashkent was rebuilt with the help of many Soviet republics that provided both architectural projects and workforce. Most of the important buildings in Tashkent were designed outside of the republic or by Moscow architects who moved to the city.

As a result, the architectural heritage of 1960 - 1980s is relatively popular in Almaty (former Alma-Ata) today, and unpopular in Tashkent, where many buildings have been destroyed or radically renovated in post-Soviet times.

Kojo Derban, The University of Ghana

Dr Joseph Oduro-Frimpong, Ashesi University

The National Theatre of Ghana and the Politics of Reciprocity

In Accra, Ghana's capital, the National Theatre of Ghana building is a distinct and outstanding state edifice. The Chinese government designed and constructed it as a gift to Ghana's government to symbolize China's political friendship with Ghana. The idea and construction for this building were first conceived in 1985 and completed in 1992, when Ghana had just emerged from two decades of military rule. In this paper, we are interested in two critical matters: first, design issues that the architects encountered and had to overcome to complete the building, and second, the context of exchange and reciprocity set within Sino- African relations. Through this focus, we move beyond facile debates regarding whether the National Theatre building is a mere gift of the Chinese or the Chinese government's contribution with the ulterior motive of solidifying their presence in Ghana to secure economic interests. By focusing on the National Theatre building, our aim is to provide grounded insights into the complicated workings around the politics of gifted buildings.

Professor Ana Ivanovska Deskova, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje

Professor Jovan Ivanovski, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje

Professor Vladimir Deskov, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje

Building the City of Solidarity: The Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje

In 1963, the city of Skopje suffered an earthquake of catastrophic proportions which left beyond repair approximately 75% of its buildings. The Yugoslav government immediately issued a call for help for the afflicted city, capital of its southernmost federal unit – Socialist Republic of Macedonia, which activated international response of unprecedented scale. What followed was a unique case of a city reconstruction, under the auspices of the United Nations. Owing much to Yugoslavia's "non-aligned" position within the Cold War polarity of East and West, for over a decade Skopje received abundance of aid coming from more than 80 countries worldwide. The trauma of the natural disaster became a trigger for transformation and in a short but intense period of about 15 years, Skopje underwent a process of reconstruction that dramatically changed its appearance and the quality of living. Different countries helped in different ways. The role of Poland in this international campaign of solidarity was substantial. Polish urban planners contributed in the design of the Skopje's Master Plan, with Adolf Ciborowski as a project leader. The most notable architectural gift to Skopje was the Museum of Contemporary Art – an institution which is still considered as a symbol of international solidarity, equally for its architecture and the origin of the art collection it houses. On the one side was initiative of the international visual artists' community to donate artworks as an expression of defiance of the creative spirit over the destruction; on the other, the idea of the Polish Government to donate design for one of the most important cultural institutions. The paper will elaborate the circumstances under which the Museum emerged, the process, the appropriation and reception as well as the recent efforts to nurture the idea of solidarity through contemporary collaborative efforts and practices.

Ksenia Litivnenko, University of Manchester

Accepting the Gift of Darkhan Youth Palace of Culture, 1971-1978

In 1971, the Moscow office of the Giproteatr Institute, one of the most prominent organisations in the Soviet Union specialised in the design of buildings for culture and performing arts, was commissioned to build what would soon become a Youth Palace of Culture in Darkhan, a new industrial centre of Communist Mongolia. The building served as a diplomatic gift approved on the level of the Soviet–Mongolian foreign economic and political relations and was in line with a bilateral agreement of Friendship and Mutual Economic Assistance signed between the two countries in 1966. This paper reflects on the episodes of commission, negotiation and construction of the building and asks: what was at stake for Darkhan to 'accept' such a gift of architecture? Through archival and oral history research, the paper demonstrates that while Mongolian institutions and actors involved in the project gained agency by actively negotiating the building's program and its decoration, such agency and decisions could be claimed only in the vocabulary of Soviet industrial urbanism – within the logic of so-called "tiered system for public service," norms and building performance standards, and scripted bodily practices required for the maintenance of the gifted building. Indigenous spatial imaginaries of cultural spaces of pre-state-socialist Mongolia were altogether excluded from such a negotiation. Therefore, choosing to accept the gift of the Youth Palace of Culture meant subscribing to attributes of

the modern urban culture of an industrial extraction-centred townscape and European settler worldview as a new standard for urbanising Darkhan. The modern architectural gift of the Youth Palace of Culture linked together economies, building cultures, and spatial imaginaries radically dissimilar from one another not only thanks to the unique architecture of international economic exchange in global socialism but also due to epistemic injustice aiding velocity of architectural gift-giving between the Soviet Union and Mongolia.

Professor Hannah Le Roux, University of the Witwatersrand

Housing for All: South Africa's Immanent Gift, 1937-2022

This paper concerns the gift of “housing for all” that is contained in South Africa’s most popular political manifesto, the Freedom Charter of 1955, that was collated by the Congress Movement and the architect and Communist Party of South Africa member Rusty Bernstein in particular. The demand for decent, affordable housing came from all subaltern groups, but was particularly acute for the African working class. The form of (potentially) gifted housing has changed over time: a stripped down version of the Ville Radieuse in 1937, bungalows similar to the state’s NE51/9 types in the 1950s, sites and service schemes in the 1970s to 90s, and 4 story apartment blocks in the 2000s. Since the African National Congress, the opposition movement that promised housing was banned and exiled through the middle years of this period - 1960 to 1990 - their gift could not be actualised until the party came into power, and so took on different definitions over time.

Housing as an immanent gift therefore came without a fixed form, but its variations nonetheless convey a narrative of influences that become especially complex while party leaders were in exile. The exile communities lived in various locations that were recipients of socialist housing aid or policy including Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique and the UK, and also trained in Cuba, Ethiopia and East Germany. Some exiled Black architects were trained in East Germany as recipients of scholarships. Later, as exile ended in the early 1990s, left wing Dutch and Scandinavian experts - already networked with the ANC through aid to the exile camps in Tanzania - would become influential in proposing models of social housing. In pulling together a network analysis of these figures, influences and housing types, the paper will visualise how the gift of architecture for Africans can remain a promise over decades, while also morphing in form as partners in its realisation change in their level of influence. This reflects, in turn, on questions of gift architecture’s fluctuating identity between a physical and social thing, as well as on the persistent path dependencies that delimit it.

Professor Duanfang Lu, University of Sydney

Gifts and Aid Projects in China's Diplomatic Discourse, 1949-1965

This paper aims to understand the meanings of gifted aid buildings from socialist to Third World nations during the Cold War through a historical investigation into how gifts and aid projects were discussed in China’s diplomatic discourse in 1949-1965. Adopting qualitative content and discourse analysis, it identifies rhetorical particularities, formations, constellations and shifts in narratives on gifted aid buildings based on related diplomatic records from the Chinese Foreign Ministry archive in Beijing. It traces the historical context in which the discourse of gifts and aid projects arose and shows how the

discourse in turn influenced the perception of socialist internationalism and the relation between China and Third World nations. Its exploratory analysis deepens and expands the understanding of the possibilities and limits of gifted aid buildings in diplomatic relationship.

Kuukuwa Manful, SOAS University of London

The Multifarious Gifts of School Building(s) in Ghana

European-style schooling in West Africa was instituted from the outset as a tool of political conquest, social domination, religious control, and economic power. The first physical spaces for schooling were ad hoc – with rudimentary lessons in “the three Rs” held within the same forts and castles that traded in enslaved human beings. However, from these coercive foundations in the 15th century, Africans came to see schooling as key to navigating an increasingly European-controlled region and then accessing the benefits of “Western (European) modernity”. Thus, over the following centuries, Africans came to actively build schools, contribute to, and advocate for schools in their communities and nations.

When Ghana became independent in 1957, there was an eagerness and enthusiasm for schooling that aided a massive, rapid, and extensive educational expansion program that resulted in the construction and expansion of hundreds of schools across the nation. Between 1957 and 1966, more than 70 secondary schools were established, constructed or expanded. Due to a combination of funding conditions, sociopolitics, geopolitics, and trade, the architectural design of what were referred to as the “leading secondary schools” in the country was led by European architects, including Eastern European architects in the 1960s.

As part of a broader study on “The Architecture of Education in Ghana”, this paper explores the afterlives of some of the secondary schools designed and constructed in this era. Using archival and field research methods, it examines the coercions, co-option, and contestations around secondary school buildings and the building of secondary schools.

Dr Michał Murawski, University College London

Violence, Hierarchy and Public Spirit: The Economic Aesthetics of the (Architectural) Gift, from High Stalinism to Wild Capitalism

According to classical anthropological theory, the gift is the opposite of the commodity. The economies of “traditional” societies are founded on gift exchange; and those of “modern” societies on commodity exchange. Actually-existing socialist societies, however, occupied a paradoxical role: they were (are?) high modern societies, but ones whose economy, society and culture were founded on a de-facto form of gift exchange. Nowhere is this more clearly visible than in architecture. Grandiose architectural ensembles were presented as gifts - whether by one (dominant) society to another (subordinate) one, as in the case of the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, “gifted” by Stalin’s USSR to Poland in 1955; or by party elites to the people. In each case, the gift is inseparable from various forms of violence and hierarchy (the receiver is obliged to reciprocate the donor, either in kind or by demonstrating fealty); but they also tend to contain within them a substantive public good - a “public spirit” - which is tied in a complex and uneven way to the violence inflicted by the giver on the recipient. Elements of these gifting practices existed in monarchic and

aristocratic societies; and continue to function today in "late capitalist" and/or "wild capitalist" contexts, whether in the guises of the welfare state or of billionaire philanthropy.

This talk will examine the aesthetics, politics and economics of architectural gift-giving - and the attendant forms of violence, hierarchy and public spirit - focusing on Warsaw's High Stalinist Palace of Culture and Science; as well as two Wild Capitalist instances, both designed by zeitgeisty starchitects Diller Scofidio+Renfro: Zaryadye Park, presented by Vladimir Putin to the people of Moscow in 2017; and the High Line and Hudson Yards, presented by oligarch-sovereign-philanthropist Michael Bloomberg to the people of New York during 2009-2019.

Dr Thuc Linh Nguyen Vu, University of Vienna

Many Gifts in One: Polish Architecture in Vietnam as a Resource in the post-'89 World

Although the contacts between Vietnam and Poland have a long and multifaceted history, little scholarly attention has been devoted to the history of the connections between these two states situated at the border—and occasionally also at the center—of the socialist world. The story of the shared Polish-Vietnamese past and present can be traced back to the 1950s when it was intrinsically tied to watershed moments of the global Cold War and decolonization such as the Korean War, and the First and Second Indochina War.

It is precisely the tension between the rich history of bilateral connections and the scant attention that they attract that serves as a point of departure for my talk. I will explore the afterlives of these diplomatic and cultural relationships through the prism of buildings that were either built or modernized by Polish experts—as gifts—in Vietnam. The talk will begin by chronicling how actors from “semi-peripheral” states actively wove themselves into the constellation of global socialism and decolonization by partaking in modernization projects (such as the harbor in Hải Phòng, the sugar factory in Văn Điển), in constructing and renovating public institutions such as schools (trường THPT Việt Nam) and hospitals (Bệnh viện Hữu Nghị Đa Khoa Nghệ An) in the newly postcolonial Vietnam.

Some buildings—such the school in Hanoi and the hospital in Vinh —proved to be more enduring than the regime that erected them. By zooming in on how the buildings have been used as tools for scaling up diplomatic and economic capacities of both countries, and for addressing domestic crises over the past several years, my talk will highlight architecture as a gift and as a resource that can be mobilized despite the radical regime change of 1989/1991. The talk will tell a story of architecture that enables practices that escape—or perhaps even counter—politically organized forms of agency, rules and norms that were part of organized structures of global socialism. In doing so, architecture, and the practices surrounding it, reveals lasting, even if precarious, socialist roots of unanticipated interrelations after 1989/1991.

Professor Ruth Prince, University of Oslo

Afterlives of Soviet Gifts in East Africa: The “Russia” Hospital in Kenya

In post-independence Kenya, dreams of a development focused on health infrastructures, the most impressive being the building of modern, state-of-the-art public hospitals. These solidly built structures embodied an anticipated future, of medical modernity, public service and a modern state, and an associated politics of international solidarity and equality. Yet,

these buildings, financed by external powers, also materialized very different visions of Africa's place in the world amidst cold war politics. In this presentation, I will focus on a large public hospital in Kenya, built in 1968 as a gift from the Soviet Union, designed by a Soviet architect with material imported from the USSR. Still known today by its nickname, "Russia", the hospital building symbolized the triumph of struggles over colonialism and a new era of inclusive health-care provision, third world solidarity and east African progress. This perspective indeed materializes in the bureaucratic work surrounding the building of the "Russian" hospital in Kenya during the late 1960s. Yet the archive reveals that such developmental projects were by no means uncomplicated enactments of planner's visions. They required enormous bureaucratic and planning effort, involving multiple actors and bureaucratic tools, meetings, minutes, letters, as well the architectural design, plans and materials. And they generated their own developmental trajectories, independently of the visions of their donors.

Professor Christina Schwenkel, University of California, Riverside

Unplanned Obsolescence: The Capitalist Dilemma of Decayed Buildings as Solidarity Gifts in Vietnam

Following a decade of US air raids that obliterated Vietnamese cities during the Cold War, East Germany helped Vietnam rebuild its infrastructure in widely publicized acts of international socialist solidarity. Gifted infrastructure produced an elaborate network of entwined systems and buildings to support industry, housing, and training of an emerging proletariat. This modern infrastructural network, designed to be enduring, decayed prematurely. In this paper I explore how the unplanned obsolescence of a gifted modernity raised critical questions about temporality and accountability that underpin the logics and ethics of gifting economies: who is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of gifted architecture across time? When does the gift stop giving, or, for how long do the relations that gifts cement endure, and with what responsibilities and expectations? Focusing on technical schools and housing blocks, two nodes in the larger urban network of gifted infrastructure, I show how residents in my field site of Vinh drew on the language of the gift to evoke the affects and alliances that gift-giving foments, and the long-term commitments it commands. As a moral system of gift exchange, solidarity—as distinct from aid and charity—materialized through collaborations (labour) and technical transfers (buildings and their modifications) that my respondents understood as a pledge without expiration. Scholarship has shown how notions of time are central to gift-giving practices and the obligations they compel in terms of when "repayment" (reciprocity) should be made to sustain relationships. Urban residents in Vinh, however, located obligation not with the receiver of the gift, but with the donor. With capitalist redevelopment of the city, they sought to rekindle gifting practices to counteract the decline of socialism, the decay of buildings, and retrenchment of the caretaker state.

Dr Ke Song, Harbin Institute of Technology

China's Architectural Gifts from the 1950s to 1970s

In recent years, China's foreign aid projects in Asia and Africa under the initiative of the Belt and Road Initiative attracted increasing international attention. The "Chinese model" in the contemporary global arena of foreign aid, as identified by many scholars, has intrinsic relationship with the Chinese socialism of the postwar decades from the 1950s to the

1970s under the leadership of Chairman Mao Zedong. This paper reviews the development of China's foreign aid and foreign aid architecture in these decades, focusing on the relationship between the aesthetics, politics and knowledge of the foreign aid projects. From the perspective of history of knowledge, it analyses the evolution of the design approaches of China's foreign aid architecture, with a focus on the influence of Western modernism on Chinese designs. By examining such examples as the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH, 1973) and the Tanzania-Zambia Railway Terminus (1976) in Dar es Salaam, the paper reveals how Chinese architects strategically absorbed the merits of Western modernism, including the exquisiteness and monumentality of American formalism and the climate response of the tropical modernism, and how a specific version of Chinese modernism had been created in the 1970s, by referring to the design standards and templates formulated in China. The paper argues that this Chinese modernism, with "Chineseness" manifest in both aspects of aesthetics and politics, was based on the "Maoist pragmatism" as China's state ideology of the 1970s, and was situated in a complex network of transnational flows of knowledge of that time, which further contributed to the multiple forms of the global postwar modernism. By regarding Chinese foreign aid architecture of that period as an intellectual heritage, the paper aims to shed new light on architectural gifting in global foreign aid in both history and future.

Professor Taoufik Souami, Paris School of Urban Planning

The International of Architectures and Urban Planning between "Brother Countries": Modernity as a Gift? The Case of Algeria.

After independence, many Soviet and Polish technicians, teachers, and professionals were arriving to Algeria within the framework of cooperation between Algeria and their countries of origin. Resulting either in short missions or longer stays, these exchanges were an opportunity for the "transfer" of models and know-how in architecture and town planning. On the one hand, Soviet and Polish architects, engineers and town planners were among the personnel sent to Algeria; on the other, the Soviet Union and Poland contributed to the construction of buildings, districts and even small towns. Among the latter, Boumerdes is a revealing example of urban and architectural forms that resulted from these exchanges. These forms largely reflect the codes and perceptions of "modernity" advocated and disseminated during the 1960s. In addition, the transfer concerned the "modernity" of ways of life which organised individuals by separating them according to the activities of work, residence, leisure and recreation, and by programming places, spaces and discourses appropriate for these activities

Professor Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov, Higher School of Economics in St. Petersburg

Given Time and the Time of the Gift at the Aswan Dam Construction, 1960-1970

Silver tray (Figure 1) depicts the map of river Nile with engravings of the Aswan hydroelectric dam (bottom), a tractor (right) and a peasant couple in front of the wheat field (left). The inscription in Russian reads: "Agricultural reforms and land reclamation! Symbol of peace and friendship from workers. 22 May 1964, United Arab Republic." This was a gift given to Nikita Khrushchev when he attended the blocking of the Nile that marked the first major step in this Soviet-sponsored construction which was conceived in the late 1950s and which after its completion in 1970 became the world largest earth-fill dam. It expresses a temporal idiom of many developmental and diplomatic gifts, including half-dozen other

objects that Khrushchev received on that 1964 occasion which include medals with his and UAR President Gamal Abdel Nasser portraits, models of the dam, and depictions of Egyptian architectural history from the pyramids to Aswan. The idiom is that of gratitude and a sense of debt of the “people of Egypt” for this help. But what are the temporalities of “giftness” in this project? How can we conceptualise gratitude that apparently preceded the gift itself — and did so by several years before the construction was completed? What, and when, was then the gift? This paper charts the history of this gift embedded in a longer-term postcolonial and state-socialist temporalities and those of progress and Cold War geopolitics, in the temporalities of international credit and aid, and of complex labour relations on construction site in upper Nile as well as in the USSR where the production of the dam's key hydroelectric equipment took place. My goal is to critically revisit a classic concept of Maussian reciprocity by showing non-linear and multiple relations between gifts and counter-gifts.



Professor Łukasz Stanek, University of Manchester

From Imperial to Socialist Gift: The Campus of the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi.

This paper discusses the production of the campus of the College of Technology, then Kwame Nkrumah University of Science of Technology (KNUST), in Kumasi as conditioned by three gift-giving regimes straddling the late colonial period and Ghana's first independence decade. Opened in 1952 as part of the colonial push towards development of British West Africa, the foundation of the College was presented as a parting gift of the Empire, resulting in a rush to finish the first phase of the campus before the day of Ghana's independence. At the same time, the fact that the land for the College was donated by the Asantehene (the king of the Asante people) and the local chiefs, informed the design and

construction of the campus, including the need to account for the cycles of farming that took place on the campus' land, and the confrontation with the recurring request of the neighbouring communities to reciprocate the original gift of land by means of infrastructural investments. During the early 1960s, the development of the University responded to its assigned role as an engine of Ghana's socialist modernisation. The contested memory of this period, associated with the personal involvement of president Kwame Nkrumah, continued to inform the planning and design of the campus during the deceleration of the economic development in the wake of the 1966 coup. This paper studies the persistence, superimposition, and interferences between these three gift-giving regimes and their impact on the temporalities of production of space on and around the campus. In so doing, it attempts to historicise socialist gift-giving as part of longer urbanisation dynamics in Ghana during the Cold War and after.

Dr Miruna Stroe, independent scholar

The Parliament of Khartoum, Sudan. Cezar Lăzărescu and the Design Institute Carpați, 1972-1978

The Parliament building in Khartoum is probably the most renowned Romanian project abroad, quite unique in approach and complexity. It is illustrative of the early goals of the Romanian government in providing architectural services abroad, which steered towards prestige rather than economic gain. Architecture, and especially representative official buildings, quickly became part of the arsenal of "seduction" used by Nicolae Ceaușescu to posit himself as a champion of the "socialist developing countries," among which he included Romania as well as several African and Middle Eastern countries.

Cezar Lăzărescu oversaw the design team at the Design Institute Carpați. A seasoned architect, a hard-core modernist, Lăzărescu was used to working closely with high-ranking political characters. However, his status was rather delicate after his fall from grace following the political change in the wake of Gheorghiu-Dej's death. Being asked to prove his worth again and again in the most challenging projects, Lăzărescu employed his innate charisma to convince statesmen of his architectural ideas.

It is the case of the Sudanese Parliament which, in Lăzărescu's view, was a successful project that the Sudanese people identified with because it was the result of a seamless collaboration between local professionals and Romanian designers. Lăzărescu's presentations of the project in the press were always carefully crafted exercises in diplomatic communication: the importance of president Nimeiri's creative directions, the local workforce involvement, Ceaușescu's visit once completed, were all dutifully mentioned.

However, the project was far from an innovative architectural pursuit. Using the Romanian expertise, the project heavily relied on prefabrication, especially in the aesthetic expression of the façades. While claiming that the design was sensitive to local realities, it was in fact an adaptation of methods and expressions already exercised in previous Romanian projects, all sharing the brutalist aesthetic of standardised concrete façade elements.

This project was both the first and last of its kind, as following its completion there was a shift in approach: to turnkey projects rather than collaborations, and to economic gains rather than prestige. The paper will focus on this project set against the larger context of the Romanian architects' projects abroad, as a unique manifestation of a specific strategy of architectural gift-giving.