# Introduction

Ger Duijzings and Tauri Tuvikene

Urban street life has long enjoyed broad interest from scholars, writers and artists. Its vibrancy – spawning chance encounters and forms of productive friction – has been no small part of its enduring attraction. This volume looks at street life in postsocialist cities: specifically, its transformations in the wake of the radical post-1989 political and economic reforms. 'Postsocialism', however much it continues to be debated as a concept and as lived reality (Verdery 1996; Hann 2002; Dunn and Verdery 2015; Müller 2019), has hardly ever been explored at the 'street level'. The latter involves looking at micro-scale everyday life and face-to-face interactions in public spaces, as, for example, Erving Goffman famously did in his work (see particularly Goffman 1971). In the present volume we explore postsocialist streets as places where 'society meets itself' (Bahrdt 1974: 35): as key sites for mobility, dwelling and social interaction that have changed beyond recognition because of the unparalleled explosion of private car mobility. We want to ask what this massive car 'invasion' has meant for the urban fabric of cities in the former socialist world. Whereas in the capitalist 'West' automobiles became dominant via a gradual process that spanned the entire twentieth century, in the formerly socialist 'East' privately owned cars 'hit the streets' precipitously only during the 1990s and 2000s. Public transport, pervasive under socialism, was supplanted by a surging capitalist car culture, which, in fulfilling individuals' long-deferred consumerist dreams, changed how people move around and use public spaces. Streets accommodate new mobilities and forms of habitation, including the type of 'dwelling' that happens 'in motion', within the protective cocoon of the private automobile (Hannam et al. 2006).

While car culture in the West has been studied extensively (see Fyfe 1998; Norton 2008; Hall 2012; Moran 2005, 2010; Miller 2001; Featherstone et al. 2005; Mom 2014), there are few such explorations addressing the socialist and postsocialist world. Existing studies focus on automotive production under socialism and the concomitant growth of a 'consumerist' car culture in competition with the capitalist West (Siegelbaum 2008, 2011; Möser 2002; Kuhr-Korolev and Schlinkert 2009). They pay

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less attention to clashes with other transport modalities or the transformation of streets into car-dominated spaces, as there were fewer reasons for concern than in the West. These studies, in addition, do not track the changes into the postsocialist period, which is our aim here. Our work complements Burrell and Hörschelmann's edited volume (2014) examining socialist and postsocialist 'mobilities' (see also Tuvikene 2018), but whereas their treatment is more general, ours represents a fine-grained mode of enquiry, using ethnographic methods that are sensitive to local contexts (Duijzings 2018). Even though geographers have shown some interest in streets in terms of their toponomy and renaming after the end of socialism (Light 2004; Therborn 2006; Light and Young 2014, 2015), micro-scale ethnographies of everyday life and the vernacular strategies of adaptation to new circumstances in postsocialist streets are indeed largely lacking (but see Dalakoglou 2017; Steigemann 2019).

We argue that abrupt changes in the availability of private cars have led to radically transformed streetscapes. To take one, relatively extreme example, Albania allowed no private-vehicle ownership until 1991, when the first postsocialist government lifted the ban (Dalakoglou 2017: 38). The number of private automobiles shot up from zero in 1990 to 300,000 in 2007 (Dalakoglou 2017: 112). Now, with a population of three million, Albania has more than half a million registered vehicles (World Bank 2020: 99–100). Similar changes occurred everywhere across the formerly socialist world, as countries seeking to 'catch up' with the (supposedly) more advanced West saw the rapid emergence of a private car culture. This is our focus: the effects of this explosive growth in private car ownership on street life. We explore not rising car mobility per se (as is common amongst traffic engineers, focusing on enabling traffic flows) but rather its various ramifications on the urban environment. We shift attention away from an exclusive focus on circulation towards the 'convivial' aspects of street life, from the (networked) *ville* to the (social) *cité*, borrowing Richard Sennett's set of concepts (2018). We perceive streets indeed to be quintessentially social spaces, facilitating not only mobility but also forms of dwelling and social interaction, rival functions that may 'bite' one another (Prytherch 2018: 13). What makes the postsocialist context particularly interesting is the extraordinary pace of change and the 'drama' caused by radical regime change (Therborn 2006). Cars suddenly became the preferred and dominant mode of everyday mobility, causing problems that had largely been unknown under socialism. This volume explores these changes in concrete settings within specific cities, drawing attention to the recalibration of social life within public spaces. It advances an anthropological and ethnographic approach to

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everyday life as it unfolds in streets and public spaces, affected as they are by intense motorization and the related restructuring of the urban environment.

Transformations take place at different speeds and scales and with varying intensity in particular locales. While the material legacies from socialism – the built environment and inherited infrastructure – may resist change, allowing for historical continuities, other aspects such as styles of governance may adapt more rapidly (Sýkora and Bouzarovski 2012; Collier 2011). Social practices may change too, yet it is not uncommon for them to also become sites of everyday resistance to the new conditions. As can be observed in the case studies offered here, transformations can be locally specific, leading to diverse experiences of this specific historical juncture that we tend to subsume under the catch-all term 'postsocialism'. While often part and parcel of globalizing processes that 'touch down' differently in local contexts (see for example, Stenning et al. 2010 on the diverse impacts of neoliberal restructuring), transformations constitute singular historical experiences and trajectories for specific former socialist localities and cities.

Regardless of these local variations, this volume engages with concerns around urban governance and the right to urban space in a part of the world that was subjected to the 'shock therapy' of neoliberal reforms (Collier 2011). These reforms also led to new post-totalitarian 'openings': streets and public spaces, for example, began to offer opportunities for political protest, in marked contrast with the regimented public sphere of the socialist period. The art historian Piotr Piotrowski has argued that this opening up of public spaces after the end of socialism led to a surge in 'agoraphilia', revealing a 'drive to enter the public space, the desire to participate in that space, to shape public life' (Piotrowski 2012: 7). We look at this not so much from the perspective of its political manifestations but rather from the mundane viewpoint of everyday life. In our view, the right to the city is not just the right to raise, on occasion, one's voice, but also to be present and insert oneself into public spaces and thereby shape urban futures (Hubbard and Lyon 2018; Campkin and Duijzings 2016). Despite these new freedoms, in certain postsocialist contexts the streets and public spaces remain under strict 'agoraphobic' surveillance (to use again Piotrowski's term): the authorities need to assert themselves, because, as exemplified by numerous anti-government protests in Eastern Europe and beyond, losing streets to protesters means losing control (Fyfe 1998). As Leif Jerram has argued with regard to more distant historical examples, authoritarian regimes do everything they can to win (back) the street in order to stay in power (2011: 38–41).

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Even if the state's regimentation is unavoidable, each street contains and retains genuine elements of the 'public', even if its 'publicness' is suppressed or denied, as during socialism or in today's commodified spaces such as shopping malls, where protests are equally unwelcome. Citizens (particularly artists) have found ways of subverting the spatial order, sometimes carrying debates and art interventions into alternative spaces such as private apartments and basements, or forests and fields, and in so doing carving out spatial niches of relative freedom at semi-private or exurban sites (Cseh-Varga and Czirak 2020: 8; Bryzgel 2017: 2). Susan Gal and Gail Kligman's sophisticated approach to the 'public' and the 'private' as a 'fractal' distinction is helpful in this context, as it allows us to understand each concrete spatial situation as a mix of and balance between the two, from the socialist into the postsocialist period (Gal and Kligman 2000: 37–62; see also Duijzings 2010: 114–17). Their approach allows us to see and recognize 'publicness' in presumably private spaces and 'privateness' in public spaces, where people, for example, use their cars as an enclosed 'living room on wheels'.

## Streets and Roads

Every city consists of a complex meshwork of streets and roads that facilitates movement and allows citizens to interact. Streets help to sustain the social fabric, providing spatial anchors for communities and neighbourhoods and creating an 'identity' for the city and its constitutive parts. Streets are dynamic places replete with 'socially interactive mobilities' (Conley 2012), providing inhabitants with a mix of experiences involving conviviality and conflict. To properly experience a city, one is advised to stroll its streets and dwell in its public spaces, encountering people and observing their activities (Hubbard and Lyon 2018). As architect Allan Jacobs writes in the book *Great Streets*:

> There is magic to great streets. ... The best are as joyful as they are utilitarian. They are entertaining and they are open to all. They permit anonymity at the same time as individual recognition. They are symbols of a community and of its history; they represent a public memory. They are places for escape and for romance, places to act and to dream. On a great street we are allowed to dream; to remember things that may never have happened and to look forward to things that, maybe, never will. (1993: 11)

As cars have invaded these spaces, it makes sense to distinguish between 'streets' and 'roads', even if the boundaries between the two are not sharp and each can blend into the other. Roads, as thoroughfares,

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primarily facilitate motorized traffic, whereas streets are multifunctional 'convivial' spaces that, apart from facilitating mobility, also serve important social functions, providing the 'spaces for public congregation, encounter and community-making' (Hubbard and Lyon 2018: 938). The latter have many contradictory features, combining flow and friction, speed and slowness, and mobility and immobility, and as such are governed by formal and informal codes of conduct alike. For some, the street is a performative space, a place to be seen, while for others it is a place to seek anonymity and escape social control. In physical and material terms, streets tend to be linear and paved, and they often include pavements and shops. According to the doyenne of 'street studies', Jane Jacobs (1961), the ideal street has motorized traffic flanked by broader pavements and a variety of shops on both sides, and lots of attentive 'eyes on the street' (local residents and shopkeepers) observing what is happening, allowing for a degree of public safety, trust and security.[1]

However, streets vary considerably in terms of the density of social interaction, which is determined by historical and cultural context (Dines 2018). Some streets are livelier than others due to the presence of shops (Zukin et al. 2016) or because local inhabitants use the pavements as an extension of their living space (for the different and often conflictual uses of pavements, and their regulation, see Blomley 2011; Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht 2009). Not only do streets facilitate movement, they are also enjoyable to dwell in. At one end of the spectrum, we find the narrow passages, alleyways and dead-end streets, normally unsuited for vehicles, in historic city centres and informal neighbourhoods, which are often bustling with life but are also part of the parochial rather than the public realm (Dines 2018; Lofland 1998). At the other end, we find the commercial high streets in city centres, designated for shopping and leisure, which attract visitors from the rest of the city and beyond. Streets may be pedestrianized (Maslova and Tuvikene, this volume) or colonized by cars parked on pavements so that nobody can walk there (Gagica and Duijzings, this volume; see also Sherouse 2018), and so forth. Not every paved surface called 'street' deserves to be named as such: some are primarily roads or arteries facilitating the movement of motorized traffic. In brief, we reserve the term for an inclusive public space that is multifunctional and caters to a variety of usages, including the facilitation of different modes of mobility and transport, not only motorized traffic.

Roads, on the other hand, facilitate the flow of motorized traffic: they are not accessible to all. Together with thoroughfares, ring roads and highways, they provide the infrastructure for motorized traffic (Dalakoglou 2017: xi–xii). Normally spacious enough to facilitate traffic

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across demarcated lanes, they have smooth surfaces that make high-speed frictionless movement possible, excluding slower modes of transport (Dalakoglou 2017: 5). Unlike streets, enmeshed as they are with social interactions and manifestations of community life, roads are associated with speed, progress and modernity (Curro, this volume). Important in providing fast connections between localities, roads often cut through cities, towns and villages: as traffic slows down roads are temporarily transformed into streets (Stanisz, this volume; see also Kuligowski and Stanisz 2015). Movement nevertheless takes priority over the social and convivial aspects of streets. They remain 'traffic corridors', detached from the local context: they always impede social interaction and impact negatively on the social fabric of a local settlement or an urban neighbourhood (Jacobs 1961). On the other hand, roads and arteries may enable new neighbourhoods such as residential areas, suburbs and gated communities to emerge at the periphery of cities (Duijzings, this volume).

Roads, too, exist in many formats and sizes, connecting places of different size and at variable distance. Since their function is to facilitate rapid vehicular movement, meaningful social interaction with other road users (beyond what happens in the car itself) is reduced to a minimum, which is why Marc Augé labelled them 'non-places' (1995). Components of road and highway infrastructure such as bridges and flyovers may nonetheless develop social aspects and provide members of marginalized groups, such as homeless people and refugees, with opportunities to find shelter, establish encampments or engage in commercial activities (see for example Harris 2016 or Aggermann et al. 2008). In most cases, however, roads are seen as spaces for motorized traffic, not for social activities or forms of dwelling (see for example Moran 2005; Dalakoglou 2017; Harvey and Knox 2015). Road ethnographies indeed define roads as entities that facilitate high-speed movement, connect distant localities and create, if at all, social ties across spatial divides, such as between urban and rural places.

Critical urbanists such as Jane Jacobs (1961), Peter Norton (2008), David Prytherch (2018) and Richard Sennett (2018) deplore how high-speed vehicular traffic transforms streets into mobility corridors, thwarting their potential for conviviality. As Marco te Brömmelstroet points out, streets initially consisted of open spaces between buildings that performed an important role in the daily life of a community, offering opportunities to meet others, to play or to earn a living (Brömmelstroet 2020: 25; see also Prytherch 2018; Gehl 2011). Rapid mobility is indeed a historical novelty: only with the rise of the automobile did high-speed circulation begin to 'collide' with the hitherto dominant everyday

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uses of the street. At the beginning, motorized vehicles were seen as intruders and a hazard for non-motorized road users (as indeed they are) – but in the end the cars triumphed, with traffic engineers prioritizing motorists' right of movement (Norton 2008). Streets were turned into transit spaces, with vehicle (instead of pedestrian) velocity declared the 'normal' speed (Brömmelstroet 2020: 34). Traffic engineers idealized the free and uninhibited flow of motorized traffic, with pedestrians taking a back seat, as it were, regarded as key obstacles to such flows and blamed for jaywalking and reckless behaviour when they continued to walk 'mindlessly' on and across streets.

In his book *Fighting Traffic* (2008), Norton describes how, at the end of the 1920s, US traffic engineers began to create the blueprint for the automotive city – which was regulated in transport and traffic codes and standardized in street design, traffic signs and engineering paradigms (see also Prytherch 2018). Streets were turned into roads enabling flows of movement, diminishing and marginalizing their social and convivial functions. Because many street patterns were unsuitable and not designed for high-speed traffic (if 'designed' at all), city authorities and planners replaced them with rectangular street grids consisting of wider streets and thoroughfares, creating the conditions not only for the circulation of traffic but also for forms of crowd control, state surveillance and policing. The nineteenth-century modernization of Paris under Haussmann served as the template for these urban interventions aimed at traffic circulation and effective governance (Sennett 2018: 30–35).

Vehicular traffic strips down people's communicative behaviour, especially as it becomes motorized (Vanderbilt 2008). Moving around in cars, as quickly and seamlessly as possible, leads to the suspension of social engagement with other traffic participants and street dwellers, dissolving environmental awareness in the broadest sense, turning cars and other fast-moving vehicles into 'cognition-impairing machines' (Sennett 2018: 185; see also Illich 1973: 52). As a result, street sociality utterly recedes due to the ubiquity and importance of cars: the 'traffic world', as Brömmelstroet argues, overwrites the 'social world' (2020: 70).

During transit, social digressions need to be minimized, or otherwise (presumed) valuable time will be lost. This normative definition of streets as transit spaces is also discernible in some urban anthropological accounts: Roger Sanjek, for example, attends to dominant US traffic narratives by focusing exclusively on the 'stopping points' – the stationary places of activity where urbanites arrive after traversing the city – as the only locations where the 'social' happens (2000). We instead argue that 'the social' also happens in streets while one is traversing the city, and even on roads and in various 'non-places' seemingly devoid

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of sociality (Duijzings 2012: 110). Transit spaces may display the signs of social life, even if the latter are fleeting and volatile. The threatened sociality of transit spaces is analysed in Agata Stanisz's contribution (this volume), showing how modernized road infrastructure in postsocialist Poland jeopardizes the survival of roadside communities, turning these once flourishing sites of mobility into zones of stagnation. Once flourishing towns and villages had dotted a major road running from eastern to western Poland, but the construction of a new motorway deprived them of their economic and social raison d'être. Only concerted efforts and a political campaign for a motorway exit helped one particular town to retain its economic significance.

## Postsocialism

Whereas in capitalist countries the private car was prioritized, socialist policy deemed the automobile incompatible with collectivist ideals (Siegelbaum 2008: ix–x). Fewer cars meant greater chances for socialism to be realized: in public spaces collectivist ideals could be practised and celebrated. Since the 1990s, the former socialist countries have been 'catching up' with the purportedly more developed West, with private automobiles invading streets and effecting rapid (almost overnight) transformations, albeit with the socialist experiences lingering on in collective memory. It is this unique configuration of time and space, or this specific 'chronotope' of postsocialist street life, that we want to bring into focus, reconsidering the literature on urban street life and car mobility based on Western examples. Hence, we call for more diversified understandings of street life, considering contexts not previously studied, similar to Edensor's explorations of Indian streets (1998). We also seek to move beyond any simple comparisons meant to identify similarities and differences between different cases, instead exploring the potentials of adopting 'postsocialism' as an analytical lens to improve our understand of streets elsewhere.

### *Path Dependencies*

Here, we focus on Eastern and Central Europe as well as the former Soviet Union, with contributions covering a wide geographical area ranging from the former GDR, Russia, Poland and Southeastern Europe (Kosovo and Romania), to the Caucasus (Georgia) and Central Asia (Uzbekistan). We do not take countries such as China, Cuba or Vietnam into account since we believe that countries still socialist

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in name and governed through a one-party system require a separate analysis. Instead of lumping together former and current socialist countries, we have chosen to draw historical and transregional parallels with 'classic' automobile-oriented societies in the capitalist world such as Germany, Japan and the US. Applying a case study-based and ethnographic approach allows us to avoid drawing a monochrome, essentialized picture: we prefer to talk about postsocialist streets in the plural, rather than 'the' postsocialist street. The chapters show indeed that socialist and postsocialist countries have followed diverging paths taken, with (for example) extremely varied levels of car ownership and car mobility under socialism, to mention just one parameter.[2] Generally, socialist countries permitted only (very) modest levels of private car ownership. But there were striking variations: Albania banned private cars, as already mentioned, while neighbouring Yugoslavia developed a 'popular' socialist car culture, producing small affordable Zastavas for the masses.[3] Many socialist countries had their own brands and production plants (Romania had Dacia and ARO, Poland FSO, Czechoslovakia Škoda, the Soviet Union Lada, Volga, Moskvitch and ZAZ, and the GDR Trabant and Wartburg).

Even if they 'trailed behind' in terms of private car ownership, it would be a mistake – as has been common in mainstream 'transitology' – to assume that the former socialist countries simply reproduced trends in the West at a delay of four decades, as if socialism did not matter whatsoever and somehow never happened. It is better to adopt a regional and 'off-centred' perspective, analysing postsocialist streets as emerging from their socialist forbears and making the 'periphery' into a 'centre' of its own, with its own path dependencies, its own connections, openings and exits to various other parts of the world (Robinson 2011). Also, for other reasons it is productive to see postsocialist examples – usually ignored in urban studies and related disciplines – as instructive and far from 'peripheral', since transport legacies from the socialist past can inspire urban futures across and beyond Europe (Vazyanau, this volume; Tuvikene et al. 2020).

Filling the empirical gaps in research dealing with postsocialist streets and roads is not the only or even the primary aim of the book. Our aim here is to bring regional perspectives into dialogue with postcolonial critiques of area and urban studies, striving to make the periphery count in our theoretical endeavours. We rely particularly on the work of Jennifer Robinson, who proposes an empirically grounded comparative urbanism that would bring to the fore case studies from other parts of the world, which can help to destabilize the dominant sites of urban theorizing (Robinson 2011). We should 'think with elsewhere', between

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and across different cases: new ideas will emerge only if we shift our attention away from the usual sites of urban theorizing to alternative sites where urban change has evolved differently, such as in postsocialist cities. The case studies presented here do not merely fulfil a need to empirically chart a new *terra incognita*; they also invite us to reconsider similar issues around motorization unfolding in Western-dominated street studies.

Taking the 'postsocialist' as our purview means more than just looking at a given region in a specific period: it suggests a way of thinking about the relevance of particular socialist pasts and the intersections between 'socialist' and 'non-socialist' contexts (Stenning and Hörschelmann 2008). We have thus solicited reflections from specialists who have addressed these latter contexts, such as those of Japan and the US (see the postscripts by Joshua Roth and Peter Norton). This permits us to transcend the region and problematize simplistic spatiotemporal notions of postsocialism (Tuvikene 2016). Assuming that there is something specific about particular places at distinct points in time, we suggest the notion of 'chronotopes' or distinct time-space configurations. The postsocialist urban chronotope in any given place evolved from the locally specific socialist milieu, and hence is not a carbon copy of urban streetscapes in the West. Everywhere, specific socialist legacies continue to play a role, in the form of the built environment and street layouts or other remnants, material and immaterial alike.

### *From Socialist to Postsocialist Streets*

Instead of assuming that postsocialist streets are the belated 'copies' of 'more advanced' Western streetscapes, we highlight the specific characteristics of postsocialist streets without wanting to proclaim them 'unique'. No place, after all, is completely singular. Postsocialist urban chronotopes represent the coming together of materialities and physical realities, of individual destinies and social lives, of historically contingent local and global (or translocal) processes unfolding in places of 'socialist' provenance. Thus, the notion of 'postsocialist streets' provides a conceptual perspective tied to transformations that – while particularly pertinent for the region – may also be relevant in other parts of the world. A key aspect of postsocialist streets is the explosive growth of private car mobility, overwriting the 'socialist' legacies of public mobilities and collective modes of transportation in strictly regimented public spaces. Such growth has been accompanied by the commercialization and informalization of street life, both tied up with radical processes

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of neoliberal transformation. Even if street life has moved away from socialism, it remains unmistakably embedded in environments that display the traces of socialism, at least in terms of materiality. Postsocialist streets are 'post' both in the continuities they manifest with the pre-1989 past and in the radical changes evident in and on them. Continuity is stressed in the postscript by Luminita Gatejel, who argues that practices linger on after the shift away from socialism: for example, the informal 'survival' strategies that developed out of socialist automobility, dominated by shortages of car parts, continue to inform and inspire postsocialist forms of bricolage and tinkering.

A distinctive quality of the socialist city was the authorities' protruding panoptical (and panaural) presence (Duijzings 2010: 110) as well as the strict regimentation of streets and public spaces (Hatherley 2015). This included collective road construction which has been one of the most vividly remembered aspects of socialist governance: brigades of youthful volunteers were mobilized to construct roads without ever having a chance to use these roads themselves, as Dalakoglou recounts in the case of socialist Albania (2017: 38). Socialist control over public spaces culminated in the 'magistrales', the wide boulevards build for representational, ceremonial and political purposes, especially the annual parades and marches on key socialist holidays (Hatherley 2015: 37–90). Streets were controlled and mobility patterns were proscribed from the top, favouring public transport and disallowing private car mobility. Even in the cases where private automobility was permitted, streets were dominated by 'heavy' vehicles such as trucks and buses while the smaller cars usually served the needs of the nomenklatura.

Cars never dominated streets as they did in the capitalist West. The street scenes in early Soviet films or city symphonies such as Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) show the coexistence of various transport modes in large cities such as Moscow, Odesa and Kyiv. Nonetheless, socialist modernity's ambition was 'acceleration' and progress in all spheres of life, as in the West, in order to leave the proverbial 'backwardness' of the presocialist period behind. Motorized vehicles and electric public transport became tokens of progress, with the nomenklatura claiming individual vehicles as their personal prerogative, as already Emma Goldman noted while describing early revolutionary Russia (2020: 171–72; see also Siegelbaum 2008: 4). A key difference with capitalist countries was the dominant reliance on 'electrification' instead of fossil fuels in urban transportation, which today gives East European cities a certain edge, environmentally speaking, over their West European counterparts (Vazyanau, this volume).

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The 1980s and 1990s came nevertheless to be associated with 'stagnation', exemplified in the proverbial queues of people waiting for something. Late socialism was characterized by persistent supply problems and shortages, while the early 1990s were dominated by endless 'waiting' for the bus or tram as public transport crumbled, nowhere so forcefully depicted as in Chantal Akerman's film *D'Est* (From the East, 1993). Obtaining a car under socialism also involved prolonged waiting; it usually took more than a decade for citizens to obtain a private vehicle of their own (Gatejel 2011, 2014). Supply issues led to the hoarding of car parts (in hopes they could be exchanged for other items) and to informal practices of barter and tinkering. Many such practices have continued up until the present (Morris, this volume), as most people cannot afford a new car and rely instead on second-hand cars imported from countries such as Germany 'dumped' on the East European market.

### *Breaking Away from Socialist Streets*

Another key aspect of postsocialism is the vast socialist housing estates that continue to dominate the urban landscape. As socialist housing was almost entirely privatized after 1989, with tenants buying their apartments, these new property owners also began to purchase cars. Socialist planners had never anticipated the rapid growth of automobile ownership and thus neighbourhoods built during socialism lacked sufficient parking. Until the 1980s, public transport was the default means of getting around, its total share of motorized traffic hovering consistently between 75 per cent and 85 per cent (Pucher and Buehler 2005: 730). What had often existed under socialism was distant parking in garage areas (see Tuvikene 2010, 2019) for the privileged few who possessed a car. Although the situation has changed entirely, socialism remains a positive reference point for those who remember it, such as the elderly (Vazyanau, this volume). Amongst the younger generations, the socialist past nurtures visions of a more sustainable 'electric transport' future even if they have no first-hand memory of socialism. All in all, socialism continues to resonate, allowing for comparisons and providing benchmarks for the 'good life' that has been lost.

Car ownership has become a marker of the break with the socialist past and a 'vehicle' for expressing social and class distinctions between the 'winners' and 'losers' of transition. One can afford a new car only if one has a stable, well-paying job; the majority keeps relying on second-hand cars, generating different kinds of automobilities (Morris, this volume; see also Green-Simms 2017). As in most parts of

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the world, cars literally form vehicles of distinction, whereby a new 'middle-class' car represents an affluent 'middle-class' lifestyle (Yazıcı 2013). In the years immediately after the end of socialism, men invested in expensive-looking cars that would signal their success rather than in upgrades to their (private) apartments. This has since changed, although some people still cultivate and indulge in private car ownership by ostentatiously tuning up cars, speeding and participating in informal races. Pedestrians and drivers of smaller cars must yield to them, making streets sites of conflict (Henderson 2013; Hubbard and Lyon 2018). Those with large and fast vehicles have privileged access, while the less well-off have to give way.

Vehicles have a symbolic quality, not only offering the means to express social difference but also exemplifying the postsocialist moral order or lack thereof (Lipset and Handler 2016). Witness the common but informal 'middle-lane' for fast and sporty cars driving on exurban roads and through cities, or the use of emergency sirens and flashing lights by privileged state officials and others with connections (Ledeneva 2013: 145–49; Josephson 2017: 134). Speed equals social status, expressing 'liberation' from a former condition of subdued living, without cars, imposed by a repressive socialist state. Fast cars give drivers a sense of freedom, which is especially important for those with attitudes hostile to the state, as can be seen elsewhere, too (Tuvikene 2016; Lipset 2016: 9; Josephson 2017: 118). In the 'feral' years right after the end of socialism, but also today, driving at breakneck speeds on bad roads seems to compensate for the many 'lost' years spent without private cars, turning roads literally into graveyards: Albania's National Road SH1, between Tirana and Shkodra, and Romania's National Road DN2 from Bucharest to Bacău, to give just two examples, are both lined with numerous informal cenotaphs and floral tributes for people killed in traffic accidents.[4]

The postsocialist 'condition' is discernible in people's hostile attitude to the (previously repressive) state. Many drivers, not seeing the state as guaranteeing public order, show disdain for state officials such as the traffic police (Gagica and Duijzings, this volume). Although postsocialist streets may not seem so dissimilar from those in the capitalist West, extreme and transgressive street practices (such as speeding, queue jumping and various other forms of rule-breaking) seem to be more widespread, making traffic in cities such as Bucharest or Tirana look 'intimidating'. As the state hardly ever punishes this type of behaviour, people continue to improvise and solve traffic and other 'existential' issues, such as insufficient parking and a lack of a stable income, by artifice, usually following the maxim 'necessity knows no

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law' (Gagica and Duijzings, this volume). This streetwise 'informality' and breaking of rules consists not only of finding 'creative' solutions including hawking and offering (unsolicited) street services (such as washing windshields) but also of the application and exploitation of unwritten and vernacular rules of interaction that do not correspond to the official rules. In traffic, they complement or replace the formal codes that regulate interaction through universal road signage and engineered traffic devices.

In most cities, generalized private car ownership has led to the recalibration of publicness and privateness in streets. Following Susan Gal and Gail Kligman's notion of the 'public' and 'private' as a fractal distinction (2000: 37–62), we suggest that street life always has elements of both, even if occurring 'in public'. The explosion of private car mobility has indeed tipped the balance in favour of 'privateness', although elements of 'publicness' and social interaction are never far away, for example in terms of the eye contact and gestures needed to negotiate one's movement in concert with other traffic participants. People manage their copresence on streets through forms of 'mobile looking': 'identifying scans and the exchange of fleeting focused glances, punctuated by the occasional sanctioning look or integrating glance' (Conley 2012: 223). At a more general level, automobility has made possible new postsocialist forms of 'community' and (private) 'sociability' – in exurban residential areas, petrol stations, shopping malls, multiplexes and parking garages.

Street life displays important asymmetries in terms of (acceptable) gender behaviour, which is usually a reflection of entrenched gender expectations and inequalities. Women are discouraged from doing (or not allowed to do) what men can do on streets and in public spaces. This volume provides examples of mobility-related masculinities, including countercultural ones (Morris, and Curro), and of the limited access for women and their marginalization as pedestrians (Gagica and Duijzings). Cars may express gender disparities: as Joshua Roth notes with regard to Japan (2016), men typically experience driving in larger and faster cars as an activity that 'sets them free' and gives them a sensation of speed and power, whereas women use smaller, fuel-efficient cars to carry out common domestic tasks (driving to the grocery shop, taking children to school or to extracurricular activities). While mobility patterns are gendered everywhere, postsocialism adds another layer with 'traditional' socialist masculinities having come under threat by the radical political and economic transformations, marginalizing some men to become the losers of transition (see Morris, and Curro, this volume).

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### *Dwelling and Competing Modes of Mobility*

Our focus is not only on mobility but also on dwelling, and how the rapid increase in vehicular traffic has transformed street life. The latter has been underexplored in the 'mobility turn' literature, as the emphasis is, understandably, on motorized mobility: how it requires a complex system of infrastructural underpinnings, institutions and standardized practices, as well as ideological scaffolding that provide the preconditions for people's privileged displacement in vehicles (Urry 2004; Lipset 2016: 7–8). Private car mobility takes centre stage, exploring amongst other things the diverse experiences of driving and the 'democratization' of car ownership, producing what may be defined as specific (local, national or regional) cultures of automobility (Miller 2001; Argenbright 2008; Green-Simms 2017). It speaks for itself that the (car) mobility literature has neglected forms of dwelling or 'immobility' and the convivial aspects of street life, which primarily emerge by virtue of pedestrian and other 'slow' non-motorized traffic modalities that are marginalized (Brown and Shortell 2016). In most cases, this literature seems to (implicitly) accept car mobility as a reality entrenched past the point of no return (see for example Dalakoglou 2017).

The cultural studies 'street' literature focuses particularly on (visual) representations, reading and interpreting the language, signs and signifiers mobilized in fictional, academic and non-academic writing, as well as in photography and cinema, and more often than not ignoring the social and more ephemeral aspects of street life (see for example Hall 2012, and Hatherley 2015). One can draw a long narrative arc from Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), which can be 'read' as a celebration of conviviality on urban streets in the early Soviet city, to the bleaker depictions of car-dominated and congested postsocialist streets such as we find in Alexandru Solomon's *Apocalypse on Wheels* (2009). Not seeking to discuss here in detail the shift from utopian to dystopian 'cultural imaginaries', we believe it would be rewarding to delve deeper into the cultural representations of socialist and postsocialist street life, a task best accomplished by cultural studies specialists. What we intend to do here is different: to explore, empirically and ethnographically, through systematic fieldwork on the ground, how new forms of dwelling and mobility have reshaped postsocialist street life. While some of the contributors employ visual imagery, either in a metaphoric way (Möser, this volume), or through photography depicting a specific local context, they throw light on typical postsocialist transformations, in concrete street spaces, rather than centralizing signs or symbols per se.

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Street life has changed in terms of traffic interaction, the nature of fleeting encounters, the forms and patterns of communication, and the formal rules and informal codes governing conduct. One way to reflect on these changes is to understand them as shifts in intermodal traffic interaction and friction, based on the fact that people use new modes of transportation (see Conley 2012). Pedestrians, for example, experience limitations to their mobility due to the new postsocialist traffic regime that prioritizes private car mobility. In socialist times, pedestrians experienced safer streets because of the sparseness of motorized traffic. Although socialist urban planners may have been more attentive to the needs of pedestrians (Hass-Klau 2015), pedestrians were also here directed through tunnels and overpasses, following modernist city planning principles seeking to segregate road users.

Automobility now being the dominant form of mobility has led to a shift in understanding the function of streets and public spaces. Streets have been redefined as (private) mobility spaces, except for the dedicated pedestrianized areas that serve as refuges of consumerism and leisure (Maslova and Tuvikene, this volume). The contrast between traffic arteries and neighbourhood streets has become more pronounced, leading to the stigmatization (and even criminalization) of 'immobile' courtyard sociabilities (Curro, this volume). Traffic flows are increasingly separated, pushing pedestrians and cyclists to the street margins, onto (often unsuitable) pavements or bicycle lanes, tunnels and footbridges. In a country like Estonia, it has become compulsory for pedestrians to wear safety devices such as retroreflectors so they can be spotted by car drivers. As in the West, traffic engineering is largely a car-centred discipline, treating the presence of pedestrians as an impediment to traffic flows (Moran 2008: 130). The onus is on these pedestrians (including the inexperienced and infirm, such as children and elderly people) to adapt, protect themselves and behave responsibly. This approach cancels out the fact that pedestrians and cyclists hardly represent a safety threat and thus often do not strictly follow the rules. They also may have no other option: it is common for the authorities in highly congested cities such as Prishtina to transform pavements into designated car parks. As pavements were usually more spacious in socialist cities, they are indeed now providing ample space for parking. Pedestrians must meander between parked cars and other objects and use the middle of the street in making their way, the distinction between pavement and street blurred (Gagica and Duijzings, this volume).

The 'pedestrian shuffle' that Joe Moran describes for the UK (2008: 124–25) is common in postsocialist cities: pedestrians engage in jaywalking and rule-breaking, weaving between immobile cars stuck

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in traffic jams, not waiting for traffic lights and using other 'vernacular' strategies (Scott 2012: 30–56) to move on and make progress despite formal rules of channelling pedestrian traffic. Moran also refers to zebra crossings, where pedestrians wait for a suitable gap to cross (2008: 127) – in a city like Prishtina they are forced to use the 'mob' principle, crossing the zebra *en groupe*, practicing solidarity (especially with elderly people) and building up a critical mass that can deter and stop advancing cars. As in other parts of the world, pedestrians develop their own 'survival' strategies, which are country or city-specific: cities shape walking practices, producing different embodied skills of street navigation (Handler 2016; Middleton 2010; Short and Pinet-Peralta 2010). Barnfield (2017), finally, discusses practices of running that constitute a special kind of accelerated walking: elderly people running across zebra crossings in response to approaching cars remains an all-too-common sight in postsocialist cities.

Before the rise of the car, cycling was an accepted mode of everyday mobility in smaller and larger cities such as Budapest (see Tóth 2016). It suffered a steep decline after the end of socialism. Elderly people and children still use cycles in residential areas and parks, and many may still regularly cycle in the countryside, such that the bicycle has become for some a symbol of the rural past, a vehicle for 'peasants'. Cycling has nonetheless experienced a revival in the last decade or so, particularly amongst hipsters and mobile workers such as delivery people and couriers, who want to be able to move speedily around congested cities (for Sofia, see Barnfield and Plyushteva 2015). Smaller towns tend to be more reminiscent of the socialist period, with 'ordinary' cyclists (still) being present on streets. Some citizens prefer motorbikes (or the now ubiquitous e-scooters), providing an alternative to the car when one wishes not to compromise on speed (for Vietnam, see Truitt 2008). There has arisen an alternative bikers' sub- or counterculture, sometimes nurtured in and through male-dominated motor clubs (Jderu 2015).

A benefit of moving around, either as a pedestrian, cyclist or motorist, is that it enables moments of contemplation, even if one has to navigate and negotiate one's way with (anonymous) others. Public transport is particularly rife with encounters of this kind, making trams and buses intensely social spaces (Vazyanau, Gagica and Duijzings, this volume).[5] Public transport vehicles form an extension of the street, a shared 'mobile' space intersecting with 'real' street spaces at transit stops. Hence, a tram or bus can be seen as a 'street on wheels', with its own codes of conduct and distinct forms of engagement and detachment, compassion and solidarity, indifference and atomization. Public transport may provide opportunities for encounters across social and spatial

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divides, but it may also end up in segregation based on spending power (cheaper public transport versus more expensive private shared taxis). Even the most private and least sociable of all transport options – the automobile – remains bound up with public space, facilitating forms of social interaction, even if different and more mediated than pedestrian or passenger encounters (Thrift 2004).

With cars dominating the cultural imaginary, public transport is seen with a certain disdain. Films such as Nimród Antal's *Kontroll* (2003) or Toma Waszarow's *Red Light* (2016) show underground ticket controllers, bus drivers and passengers as creatures of the past, as the 'losers' of transition, not least because public transport has generally been in a state of disrepair, resulting in widespread system breakdown (Vazyanau, this volume). The freedom afforded by the car contrasts with the 'humiliating' dependence on public transport, unreliable services, old vehicles, failing infrastructure and the presence of other passengers (pervaded by members of weaker social categories such as the elderly). Taxis can be seen as a semi-public type of transportation, offering the highest degree of privateness. For drivers, taxiing is not just a way to earn money, it also offers chances to establish social connections and support networks (Gagica and Duijzings, this volume). Taxiing is a type of mobile dwelling, an informal and 'streetwise' activity: being a taxi driver requires having a nose for potential danger and knowing how to respond, being able to navigate streets better than anybody else (Olma, this volume; see also Gambetta and Hamill 2005). In postsocialist cities, the volume of available taxis (especially informal ones) has increased a lot and the reputation of drivers has correspondingly plummeted, since virtually anyone can become a taxi driver. Informal taxiing has seen a growth with the upsurge of ride-hailing platforms enthusiastically welcomed in various parts of Eastern Europe (Lanamäki and Tuvikene 2022). Olma (this volume) shows that taxi drivers have an intimate knowledge of their city's geography (though not necessarily of the street names, which have changed too often) and share vernacular *orientiry* or orientation points with passengers. His chapter problematizes the issue of wayfinding in a rapidly changing urban environment through the use of landmarks and mobile phones.

Critical voices have emerged that deplore the dominance of the car in postsocialist cities. Citizens complain about driving styles, congestion, traffic jams, parking problems and other drawbacks, subsumed under the term *avtomobilshchina*, coined by Robert Argenbright who tried to evoke with this 'an image of widespread, uncontrolled, and often violent misfortune' (Argenbright 2008: 684). They organize cycle protests or claim rights for pedestrians (Sherouse 2018). Traffic blogs

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and forms of traffic activism are on the rise, with people documenting excesses in daily traffic on YouTube or similar platforms, sometimes actively intervening in problematic traffic situations. Certain websites seem to have been set up solely to develop a following based on sensationalism.[6] This has been encouraged by motorized drivers now regularly using looping dash cams to collect evidence in case of an accident or insurance claim. Increased car mobility and motorization generate forms of confrontational publicness, with friction leading to aggression: in Bulgaria, for example, one 'ethnic' traffic accident, involving a Roma driver killing a Bulgarian, sparked widespread attacks on the Roma population across Bulgarian cities in 2011. New mobility practices have turned 'public' in new ways, occasionally resulting in violent frictions and confrontations bemoaned by 'civic humanists' (Blomley 2011). More and more citizens call for reforms, introducing, for instance, cycling infrastructure along the lines of Dutch or Danish examples, in cities such as Tallinn or Riga.

## Conclusion

In this volume, we demonstrate that postsocialist streets can afford or marginalize certain modes of mobility, with each mode having its own potential to bolster or jeopardize the social fabric of cities. Walking, cycling and public transport, despite their low prestige, enable a more profound engagement with other citizens, allowing for 'pausability' and 'permeability' (Conley 2012). Cars, on the other hand, commonly lead to distancing, individualism and an opting-out of 'society', spawning forms of anti-social behaviour. Bicycling and walking are locally embedded, while public transport allows citizens to venture out while engaging with (unknown and anonymous) others in mobile public environments. As Vazyanau argues in his contribution, social encounters in public transport and at tram and bus stops may seem trivial and insignificant, but they can foster civic engagement and publicness. In addition, (electric) public transport constitutes a socialist legacy that may be revitalized to achieve sustainable urban futures, and inspire other cities, shaping current and future urban realities.

This book explores street life and the ubiquitous tension between mobility and sociability through the lens of 'postsocialism'. As we argue, this constitutes more than just a regional or temporal marker. The contributions indeed use this notion, but they offer so much more than just stories of former socialist cities analysed against (debatable and inappropriate) Western benchmarks. The chapters show that 'postsocialism'

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has a variety of meanings: they all revolve around specific path dependencies in concrete sites, with emerging and locally specific traffic relations and forms of interaction in streets and public spaces. They include various reconfigurations of the 'public' and the 'private', different adaptations and lessons to be learned from the socialist past, and ongoing uncertainties amongst the authorities and the wider public concerning what directions to take and where to look for inspiration for sustainable urban futures.

Instead of promoting friction-free mobility, as traffic engineers do, we find inspiration in Thalia Verkade and Marco te Brömmelstroet's (2020) and other critical mobility scholars' vision of more equitable streets, revoking the 'right of the fastest' and protecting the slower and weaker participants in traffic: streets should be again made into 'sticky places', for example through traffic-calming measures (Josephson 2017). Being in transit should not be seen as a loss of time but as a meaningful 'passage' (Brömmelstroet 2020: 87). People enjoy moving around for a certain amount of time every day, which can be defined as a biological necessity and psychological need, as we are shaped and predestined to do so (2020: 42). The journey is purposeful and rewarding in and of itself, offering a trajectory that creates meanings, sparks memories and releases 'creative' energies (as 'slow' modes like walking and cycling tend to do). Slow motion also allows for lateral 'accounting' and a wider peripheral vision (Sennett 2018: 184–85). This can be a rich terrain from which positive narratives can be constructed, as being mobile (in a slow-paced manner) is central to what it means to be human. Democracy requires us to share spaces with others, to insert ourselves into unfamiliar places with unfamiliar people, to make eye contact, engage in small talk and seek encounters, all of which teaches us to negotiate and abide by our differences (Brömmelstroet 2020: 52; see also Snyder 2017: 81–86). As the Situationist Guy Debord argued in 1959, in *Situationist Positions on Traffic*: 'We must go from circulation as supplement of work, to circulation as a pleasure' (McDonough 2009: 141).

## Overview of Chapters

Although contributions to this volume come from different disciplines (history, anthropology and geography), virtually all chapters employ a combination of fine-grained ethnographic and qualitative (fieldwork) methods as is common in anthropology. They put flesh on the bones of the idea of postsocialist streets through the elements that we have unpacked here in this introduction.

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Thus, Kurt Möser's chapter (1) shows how streets played a key role during the 1989/90 'peaceful revolution' in the GDR. People 'went on the street', making streets into sites for demonstrations, celebrations and car parades. In the period following German unification, new infrastructure and signage led to a new street and road aesthetics, with Trabants being replaced by (used) cars imported from the West and the GDR's strict traffic discipline being overtaken by the new 'freedoms' offered by driving. The chapter provides several evocative images of 'die Wende' now inscribed in collective memory. The following chapter (2), by Rita Gagica and Ger Duijzings, describes the contradictions of street life in postwar Prishtina (Kosovo), focusing on the inner-city areas: these streets have become 'liberated' spaces, allowing various forms of performative behaviour, interaction and public deliberation hitherto virtually impossible. Yet Prishtina's heavily congested streets have also become sites of friction and conflict. Inhabitants find 'creative' solutions to cope with traffic conditions and parking problems. New postwar hierarchies are expressed in traffic, while activists try to do something about the worst excesses.

The following two chapters deal with changing street socialities. Costanza Curro's chapter (3) explores a form of dwelling in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi known as *birzha*: groups of young men hanging out on streets and squares in urban neighbourhoods. By their very 'im-mobility' they challenge the paradigm of mobility promoted by the Saak'ashvili government following the 2003 Rose Revolution: *birzha* groups are perceived as undermining this postsocialist shift, being reminders of the Soviet past who defiantly resist the government's efforts to westernize the country and leave behind the backwardness associated with the previous regime. As a result, they have been marginalized and criminalized. Curro discusses their leaning towards 'locality' and 'im-mobility' from a twofold perspective of exclusion and inclusion: the government's zero-tolerance policy, and the *birzha* members' attachment to their own neighbourhoods, cultivating local forms of trust and solidarity in a hostile social, political and economic environment. Jeremy Morris's chapter (4) focuses on automobility as a mode of self-fashioning for young male blue-collar workers in a Russian industrial town. It explores how the enduring working-class masculinity of the socialist era is inflected by globalization and transforming modes of production and labour, as transnational corporations and the informal economy challenge traditional factory work. It shows how ideals of masculinity have been subject to change due to consumption and DIY car ownership. Choices about what kind of car to own, whether to use credit to buy a Russia-built or fancy 'foreign' car, whether to learn how to repair a car or pay a stranger

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to do it – all these forks in the path of becoming automobile owners are related to statements about what kind of 'man' one wants to be. Cars as markers of masculinities intersect with aspirational fantasies and the stubborn retrenchments of 'traditional' socialist class identities.

The two next chapters draw attention to how urban centre-periphery relations help us to understand postsocialist streets. Ger Duijzings (5) provides an ethnographic portrait of the *centura*, the 70km long 'belt' or ring road around Bucharest, bringing into focus the rapid transformations at the periphery of a large and sprawling capital city. The ring mirrors all the city's contradictions, as it is home to a host of contrasting phenomena that coexist and rub against one another. The ring is also home to multiple 'displacements' of undesired but necessary urban institutions such as prisons, waste dumps, cemeteries and archives, all connected to the city through the *centura*. At the urban fringe, the social fabric is less dense, providing space for informal arrangements and opportunities, forms of 'traffic' and fleeting encounters. Sabina Maslova and Tauri Tuvikene (6) also juxtapose centre and periphery, evaluating Moscow's ambitious programme of pedestrianization and public space upgrading. Parks and squares have been revamped, zones for pedestrians created and street furniture installed, but only in the central parts of Moscow. These measures did not reach the suburbs, where the majority of Muscovites encounter a shortage of pedestrian infrastructure and resulting safety and accessibility issues. Hence, the beneficiaries of 'Western' pedestrian-oriented policies are wealthy citizens, tourists and visitors, whereas the majority of the population have not seen improvements in their more 'peripheral' neighbourhoods.

Postsocialist streets are also marked by other asymmetries in the form of public service disruptions that manifest themselves in urban contexts. Andrei Vazyanau (7) provides an ethnographic portrayal of life at bus and tram stops and in public transport vehicles, all of which can be seen as extensions of the street. Although these spaces are often seen as unsafe, they also serve numerous social functions. Paradoxically, declining public transport in Ukraine and Romania has meant that the stops have been transformed into lively social places: while waiting for the next bus or tram, people use the time to exchange information and to engage in petty trade, small talk and discussions about politics. As public transport is now increasingly 'modernized', its social functions tend to diminish. Social differences are amplified by the availability of private *marshrutkas* or small taxi vans which offer a faster and more frequent service, 'doubling' state-organized public transport. Nikolaos Olma (8) describes how Tashkent's population finds its way around the city by using *orientiry* or orientation points rather than street names.

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They refer not only to obvious landmarks but also to sites or buildings that vanished or were renamed. This chapter argues that the *orientiry* system is the de facto toponymic register used by city residents, serving as a vernacular cognitive map developed by the population in exchange with Tashkent's informal taxi drivers, who provide the city's most popular means of transport. Given that most taxi drivers are moonlighters who do not know the names of the streets, the exchange of environmental knowledge between driver and passenger is the key mechanism that generates *orientiry*.

Finally, the last contribution covers exurban sites along major roads. Agata Stanisz's chapter (9) describes a roadside community in Poland, located along an 'old' national road and a newly constructed postsocialist motorway, bringing into focus the destinies of provincial spaces and small towns. In socialist times, the national road (the 'Old Two') was the main transportation route between eastern and western Poland; it has been replaced by the new, modern A2 highway, celebrated as a milestone in the country's 'return to Europe'. These settlements supported livelihoods built on roadside services, which catered to the long-haul transportation of goods and passengers (motels, hotels, petrol stations, bars, restaurants, nightclubs, car repair and car wash stations). Since the opening of the A2, this roadside economy has suffered, except in the town of Torzym, which managed to secure a highway exit off the A2.

The final section contains a brief conclusion and three postscripts, by Luminita Gatejel, Joshua H. Roth and Peter Norton. They offer general reflections, based on their expertise, respectively, in socialist car mobility and automobility in Japan and the US. While Gatejel discusses the continuities (rather than discontinuities) of postsocialist car culture, Roth and Norton compare postsocialist contexts with those in Japan and the US, two examples of car-dominated societies which accommodated automobiles into their street spaces at an earlier stage. Roth discusses the Japanese habit of 'getting lost' as a form of cultural defiance against the 'hypermobility' of postwar Japan, heralding in fact the end of the 'postwar' period. He argues that the same phenomenon may be in store for the postsocialist world, announcing the end of 'postsocialism'. Norton offers a broader reflection on the relevance of the concept of postsocialism, highlighting at the same time the importance of anthropology and ethnography for street and traffic studies.

**Ger Duijzings** is Professor of Social Anthropology at the Universität Regensburg. Until 2014, he taught anthropology at the UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies. He did extensive research on

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the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and is currently studying urban transformations in postsocialist cities. He has published widely on these topics, amongst others, the edited volume *Global Villages: Rural and Urban Transformations in Contemporary Bulgaria* (Anthem, 2013), and the coedited volume (together with Ben Campkin) *Engaged Urbanism: Cities and Methodologies* (I.B. Tauris, 2016).

**Tauri Tuvikene** is Professor in Urban Studies at the School of Humanities, Tallinn University. His research covers the intersection of urban cultures, mobilities, cities and policies. His research interests include comparative urbanism and the (re)conceptualization of postsocialism, as well as the experience and regulation of urban mobility, ranging from automobility to walking and public transport. He has published widely on these topics in various journals as well as coedited (together with Wladimir Sgibnev and Carola S. Neugebauer) the book *Post-socialist Urban Infrastructures* (Routledge, 2019). He was Project Leader for a HERA-funded project on public transport as public space (2019–2022).

## Notes

1. Jane Jacobs was a vocal critic of modernist planning catering to cars and fast traffic. She defended instead dense, multifunctional streets where movement could freely mix with forms of play and social interaction. For modernists like Le Corbusier, the 'messiness' of the urban street produced unwanted 'frictions' and 'problems', whereas for Jacobs it fostered conviviality and the acceptance of difference.
2. In 1980, the GDR had the highest share of privately owned cars in socialist Central and Eastern Europe, with 151 cars per 1,000 inhabitants, as compared to 31 cars per 1,000 in the Soviet Union and 11 per 1,000 in Romania (Pucher and Buehler 2005: 726).
3. Especially the iconic Zastava 750, nicknamed 'Fića', a longer version of the Fiat 600 licensed to the Yugoslav car producer Zastava in 1962, see Živković 2016.
4. Ger Duijzings carried out explorative fieldwork along Albania's National Road SH1 in Spring 2022, documenting, on average, one cenotaph or floral tribute per road kilometre. For the Romanian case see an article written by two journalists for the Romanian daily newspaper and online news portal Libertatea: https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/drumul-crucilor-564-cruci-dn2-bucuresti-bacau-3699931. For Russia's bad roads and driving behaviour, see Josephson 2017: 117–35.
5. The sociality of public transport was also explored in the PUTSPACE project (Public Transport as Public Space: Narrating, Experiencing, Contesting) carried out between 2019 and 2022 and led by Tauri Tuvikene.
6. See for example traffic blogs and YouTube channels in Romania and Russia: https://www.trafictube.ro/ (Romania) or StopXam at https://vk.com/stopxam or https://www.youtube.com/user/stopxamlive (Russia).

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