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Abstract

The City of Košice, which is currently the second largest in Slovakia, underwent an exponential territorial growth during the second half of the 20th century. The reason behind it was the industrialization of East Slovakia as part of the Czechoslovakian government program after the Second World War. City was chosen as the centre of a new industrial area in eastern Slovakia following the Czechoslovakian communist coup d'état and the culmination of Cold War at the end of 1940s. This included the relocation and extension of already existing, nationalized old factories or the localization of new ones, most notably East Slovakian Iron-works. Inevitably, many new housing estates needed to be built to accommodate workers with their families, causing the expansion of the city borders in all directions. Part of this process happened via the annexation of the neighbouring villages, when connected with Košice, sometimes even involuntary. The paper maps the development and change of Košice's borders using archival sources, maps, research results by regional historians and daily press.

Keywords

Košice, communist regime, industrialization, city limits, extension

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From City to Agglomeration: Socialist Industrialization and Development of City Limits in Košice, Slovakia 1945-1989

Introduction

In terms of political geography, the eastern Slovakian city of Košice is in a particular position since it lies close to the state borders with Hungary, Ukraine and Poland. The area of the city has been continuously inhabited since the Early Stone Age.¹ The city walls were completed in 1290², while for the next 500 years they firmly defined the limits of Košice. Their liquidation began at the turn of the 17th and 18th century.³ Yet, the fundamental shift in the territorial organization of the city occurred only after the restoration of the Czechoslovak Republic at the end of the Second World War when Košice was reunified with the country.⁴ The change in territorial organization was largely due to the process of extensive industrialization and associated hierarchization of cities, which were characteristic for the urban development of East Central European cities

1 Lamiová-Schmiedlová and Miroššayová, *Archeologická topografia*, 7.

2 Halaga, *Počiatky Košíc*, 3.

3 Němec, *Košice 1789–1918.*, 17.

4 Šutaj, *Parižska mierová konferencia*, 402.

during the second half of the 20th century.⁵ In this period, the area of Košice extended considerably during various phases of rapid development. The city crossed its historic geographical boundaries. Hence, the primary goal of the study is to map the development of Košice's built-up area ('*intravilan*' = *urban surface*) after 1945 in relation to industrialization and specific stages during which the fundamental territorial changes took place. The research presented here focuses on finding answers to the following questions: what factors influenced the process of expansion of the urban area of Košice, what was the relation between the industrialization and expansion of the city and how these changes are reflected in archive materials and relevant sources. The analyzed changes are still ongoing and play an integral part not only in the overall planning and urban development of Košice, but also they are relevant in terms of city economics. This is one of the reasons why I plan to include the presented results in my dissertation thesis, which is to be submitted in 2022.

I chiefly rely on the fonds of the local Department of Planning and the Department of Home Affairs as primary sources, stored in Archív mesta Košice [Košice City Archives, AMK]. I evaluate the official yearbooks that different municipal institutions produced. These provide me with a basic chronological orientation, as of very beneficial. I also use periodicals as sources: both of a professional nature, specifically the magazine *Architektúra ČSR* [Architecture of Czechoslovakia], and local dairies.

Two key notions of this study shall be conceptualized: *socialist industrialization* and *Košice's urban area*.

Although, the specific term *industrialization* is absent from the work of Marx and Engels, the concept is clearly present, however, the authors were concerned solely with capitalist industrialization. It was only Marxists after Marx who used their analysis as the basis of theory and practice of industrialization under socialism.⁶ Notably, Russian economist and sociologist Yevgeni Preobrazhenski in his work *New Economics*, which was originally published in 1926.⁷ Nonetheless, any form of discussion about the possibilities of directing the industrialization process of the Soviet

5 Tomka, *A Social History*, 348.

6 Kitching, "Industrialization", 257-258.

7 Preobrazhenski, *New Economics*, 312.

Union was halted after Stalin's rise to power at the end of the 1920s. In 1929, the First Five Year Plan was adopted, which proposed an ambitious programme of heavy industrialization. This could not be achieved without an extreme centralization of the power, near complete elimination of private industry, collectivization and the use of propaganda.⁸ Large funds were pumped into industry, especially within metallurgy, engineering and industrial construction with the goal to catch up with developed countries. After World War II, when the formation of the Eastern and Western Blocs was well under way, and the industrialization of the Soviet Union was seen as a success that resulted in a radical increase of its gross industrial production. The international prestige of the USSR also increased due to the Soviet Union's victory. States forming the East bloc started to implement similar economic principles and policies. Czechoslovakia implemented the Soviet model including a centrally planned economy, nationalization, orientation on heavy industry and focus on producing the means of production.

In terms of chronology, one can distinguish two types of industrialization in Czechoslovakia. Prominent Czech economic historian *Vaclav Průcha* suggests that industrialization that took place within the short span of time between the end of the war till the turn of the 1940s and 1950s with its primary goals of reconstruction of the country after wartime and reducing the gap between the Czech and Slovak parts, was inherently different from the subsequent *socialist industrialization*.⁹ The Czechoslovak communist coup in February 1948, and the deterioration of international relations in the late 1940s, with the onset of the Cold War, led not only to an ideological strengthening of industrialization but also to increased pressure from the Soviet Union to accelerate the industrial pace in countries within the Soviet bloc and put even greater emphasis on heavy industry.¹⁰

State and party leadership selected Košice to be the centre of the new industrial area in East Slovakia because of several reasons. Long before 1945, Košice used to

8 More on topic of Industrialization of USSR Davies, *The Industrialization of Soviet Russia*, volume 3., 601. See also Carr, *Foundations of a Planned Economy*, volume 3., 643.

9 Průcha (ed.), *Hospodářské a sociální dějiny*, volume 2, 269.

10 Průcha, *Hospodářské dějiny evropských*, 157.

be the economic, social and cultural centre of the Upper Hungary/East Slovakian region, respectively. Some industries developed in the 19th century, such as food and building industry or foundry. From a social point of the view, the aim of nationalizing the contested city and the definitive replacement of the Hungarian population with Slovakian also played an important role.¹¹ In geographical terms, it was due to its proximity to the borders with the Soviet Union that made the import of natural resources easier, together with the ideological reasons.

Since this study is concerned with the physical expansion of the city, I will understand Košice's urban area as the central and continuously built up part of the cadastral area of Košice. One may divide the timeline into seven main phases: 1. Definition of the historic core; 2. Residential parts of the city and construction gaps; 3. Areas of production plants; 4. Areas of civic amenities; 5. Road areas; 6. Railway areas; 7. Water bodies and streams.¹² Such division was chosen mainly due to its complexity.

I will look at the phenomenon of *socialist industrialization* in terms of the interdisciplinary field of border studies, specifically its historic-cartographic approach.¹³ This is one of the traditional uses of border studies and is based on the mapping of changes in borders, their morphological properties and socio-geographical research of border areas. In the past, it was applied mainly to research on the delimitation and demarcation of state borders after the First World War. However, the historical-cartographic approach includes, among other things, an analysis of the relationship between borders, state regimes and the morphological characteristics of borders, so I consider it suitable for examining changes in urban boundaries during the existence of the totalitarian regime.

11 Ficeri, *Potrianonské Košice*, 336.

12 AMK, Košice a životné prostredie. Problémy tvorby životného prostredia mesta Košíc. Podkladový materiál pre plenárne zasadnutia OV KSS, MV KSS, MsNV a ďalších orgánov. Košice 1968. 17-19.

13 Kolosov, "Theoretical approaches", 35. See also: Wilson and Donnan (eds.), *A companion to Border Studies*. 620.



City plan of Košice at the end of the first phase of its territorial development in 1959.
(Author's own collection)

The Initial Phase of Changes to the Borders of the Urban Area of Košice 1945-1959

The initial phase was marked by continuous housing crisis, a legacy from previous periods, which was characteristic also for other cities in Czechoslovakia and even the whole of Europe.¹⁴ Addressing the critical shortage of housing became the main goal of construction development in the city.¹⁵ As a result, several small housing estates were built during the 1940s and 1950s in an additive way in the southern and northern part of Košice. Economically, more important was the approval of *Budovateľský program*¹⁶ [Building Program] by the Czechoslovakian government in 1946. The program, among other things, brought two important changes, the transition to a planned economy in the form of a two-year-plan, which was followed with a five-year-plan (1949-1953), as well as the official beginning of industrialization of East Slovakia. Several changes within Košice's territorial structure and its overall urban development during the reference period reflected on these decisions.

The *Magnezitové závody* [Magnesite plants], a national enterprise were created after the nationalization (1945) of the company that had mined and processed magnesite in Košice since 1901¹⁷. Originally located in the northern part of the city, this plant was relocated in 1948,¹⁸ further to the north, outside the cadastral territory of the city, to the neighbouring village of Ťahanovce. Similar to that was the fate of *Strojáreň a zlievareň Karola Poledniaka* [Karol Poledniak's Machinery and Foundry], one of the biggest industrial entities in the city before 1945. After the nationalization, the factory was extended and in 1947¹⁹ construction began on a new plant, south of Košice, between the original airport and village *Barca*. The production of this plant ceremoniously began in 1950 and at the same time, the factory was renamed to *Východoslovenské strojárne, závod Sovietskej armády* [East Slovak Engineering Works, Soviet Army plant]. These cases were the first indications of

14 Zarecor, *Manufacturing a socialist modernity*, 11.

15 AMK. Malinovský, "Architektonický rozvoj mesta", 15.

16 *Budovateľský program tretí*, 1946.

17 Gulyás, *Magnezitový priemysel*, 38.

18 Augustín, *Magnezitové závody*, 101.

19 AMK, *Kronika mesta Košíc. Hospodársky život v rokoch 1945 – 1975 I. časť. Strojársky priemysel*. 22-26.

what was to come in the following decade in terms of the industrial development of Košice. These two enterprises were among the largest employers²⁰ in the city, so the aforementioned changes also marked the beginning of a trend when Košice's economic centres were located outside its cadastre area.

This period witnessed the first attempt to locate a large metallurgical plant in the immediate vicinity of Košice. In 1951²¹, there was a decision to build the *Hutný kombinát* [Iron-works] west of Košice. Due to various reasons that mostly concerned insufficient planning and supply, building of Iron-works was never realized, leaving immense financial losses for the Czechoslovak economy. A contributing factor was the parallel construction of other large projects in Czechoslovakia, in particular *Nová huť Klementa Gottwalda* [Klement Gottwald's New Ironworks] in Ostrava. The related ambitious plans in relation to the development of the urban area and the population of Košice failed. Also, as of the two masterplans adopted in the 1950s, very little was implemented in practice.²²

To sum up, in the first phase, Košice had to cope with reconstruction after the Second World War, housing shortage and the beginning of the industrialization program, without a definitive city's masterplan, at the same time.

20 AMK, fond Odbor plánovania, č.š.: 6, č.s.: 28/1955. Mestská plánovacia komisia pri MsNV v Košiciach. Prehľad o stave zamestnancov u jednotlivých hospodárskych organizáciách. 1955.

21 Londák, *Otázky industrializácie Slovenska*, 82.

22 Sekan, "Storočie plánovania Košíc", 26-27.



The construction of the residential area called Košice-West. On the right, it is block no. 14-18 in ulica Ipeľská (1964). (Fortepan/photo by Viktor Gábor)

2nd Phase - Development of Košice in Western Direction 1959-1972

At the end of the 1950s, the city was fully affected by the ongoing *socialist industrialization*. Despite the failure of the Ironworks' building, the Czechoslovak government insisted on their plans for making Košice the "steel heart" of the republic. Government Resolution no. 1040 of 19 November 1958 approved the construction of the East Slovak Ironworks nearby Košice. The construction of the factory

itself began in January 1960 within the cadastral area of several neighbouring villages.²³ Again, the need for a new masterplan arose, which was completed in 1959.²⁴ It was the key document for the purposeful development of the *agglomeration* Košice until then.

“The city was then on the threshold of development. The benefits that arose from the presence of [river] Hornád was no longer enough, it was necessary to move to new areas. A new concept development had to be sought. Košice was to grow from 83.000 inhabitants to 120.000 in 1965. In 1975, according to the masterplan it should have 180.000 inhabitants. The alternative solution considered was clearly in favour of the construction of the Nové mesto [New Town] on the western side of the [hill] Terasa, where approximately 50.000 inhabitants per 316 hectares were to find housing.”²⁵

In addition to meeting the housing requirements that the stated population growth in the city was supposed to bring, it was also necessary to install the appropriate civic amenities, which led to a substantial expansion of the housing zone. The outer, peripheral part of the city, outside *Košice's urban area*, named *Terasa* [Terrace] was chosen for the aforementioned housing estate *Nové mesto* [New City]. The selected areas were equipped with no utilities and partially used for agriculture.²⁶ Excavation works for *Nové mesto* began in February 1962²⁷ and were completed in 1972.²⁸ The housing estate was organically interconnected with the older part of the city via a main road and sidewalk for pedestrians. With its distinctive name, it also played an important ideological and political role as the centre of the socialist economic region. This fact was very much true even in 1985,²⁹ when the building of

23 Namely *Šaca*, *Veľká Ida*, *Sokolany*, *Haniska* and *Bočiar*. See Balog, *10 rokov VSŽ*, 151.

24 Malinovský, “Vývoj východoslovenskej”, 109.

25 Malinovský, “Vývoj východoslovenskej”, 111.

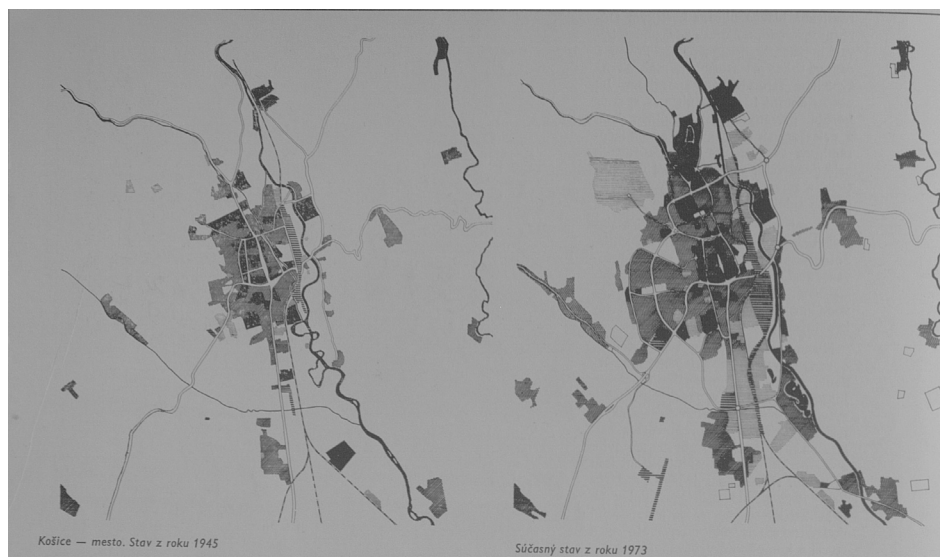
26 AMK, f. Odbor plánovania, č.š.: 26. Investičná úloha pre výstavbu sídliska Malá terasa – sever. 1960. 2-6.

27 Horváthová, *Architektonický a urbanistický*, 16.

28 Malinovský, “Vývoj východoslovenskej”, 111.

29 Motýl, “Ako vyrástol”

the City's National Committee *Biely dom* [White House] was completed there. Thus, for the first time in the history of Košice, its political centre was not located in the historic centre or in its close proximity. To this day, the City Council is still based in *Biely dom*. It was thus, in the second phase, when the territorial expansion of Košice to the west began.



Comparison of the territory of Košice in 1945 and 1973.
(Architektúra ČSR 3/1975 p. 110.)

3rd Phase - Annexation of the Surrounding Villages 1968-1976

The third stage of the expansion of Košice's city borders is characterized by the annexation³⁰ of the surrounding villages. This process consisted of two steps: first in 1968 when eight villages became part of Košice and in 1976 when another four were added.³¹ The annexation in 1976 was associated with the creation of the

30 Annexation occurs when a municipality extends its boundaries outwards, absorbing neighbouring territory. See Ross and Levine, "Annexation", 20-21.

31 AMK, Kronika mesta Košíc. Politický a verejný život 1945 – 1978. Politický život v roku 1976. 13.

new masterplan,³² because population growth in the city was faster than the 1959 masterplan anticipated. As a result, there was a faster depletion of residential areas proposed for housing construction. These circumstances led to the requirement to revise the masterplan and develop a new one. In most cases, annexed villages were connected with the city by continuous built up area. However, annexation could have taken place without the consent of the villages concerned. As I will show, after the democratization of Czechoslovakia in 1989, this proved to be a trigger of disputes. In general, determinants of Košice's consolidation can be divided into three groups: spatial - urbanization, economic and administrative - legal. In the next part of the study, the focus will be on the initial two that are relevant for us.

As the city was steadily growing in the 1960s, it became clear that (new) available areas for Košice's further urban development were insufficient.³³ With the addition of the first group of villages at the end of the decade, prospective areas fundamentally expanded, especially to the east side and significantly affected planning in the next stage. Among other things, the new masterplan also stated that Košice experienced a large movement due to employment because job opportunities in surrounding rural areas hardly existed. Naturally, their inhabitants gravitated towards Košice, where there was a high concentration of jobs but lacked workforce. Moreover, at the beginning of the 1970s, a few urbanization initiatives were taken in the Slovak part of the country, for instance *Urbanizačný projekt Slovenska* [Urbanization Project of Slovakia], within which the Košice urban region was formed.³⁴ In this period, Košice took a leap towards the *hospodársko-sídelná aglomerácia* [economic-residential agglomeration].

When deciding on annexations, economic considerations were of equal importance. Before 1968, several key industries were dispersed in the area of the surrounding villages, their merger led to at least a partial correction of this situation. However, primary production capacity of Košice – East Slovaki Ironworks still spread

32 AMK, f. Odbor plánovania, č.š.: 56. URBION – Slovenský inštitút pre územné plánovanie v Bratislave. Smerný územný plán pre hospodársko-sídelnú aglomeráciu Košice. Predbežný návrh. Sprievodná správa. 9

33 AMK, f. Odbor vnútorných vecí, č.š.: 57, č.s.: 101/1. Volebný program MsNV Košice 1968-1972. Všeobecná charakteristika mesta. 5.

34 AMK, f. Odbor plánovania, č.š.: 56. URBION – Slovenský inštitút pre územné plánovanie v Bratislave. Smerný územný plán pre hospodársko-sídelnú aglomeráciu Košice. Predbežný návrh. Sprievodná správa. 44-53.

over in two districts of *Košice – mesto* [Košice – city] and *Košice – vidiek* [Košice – countryside]. It seemed that the issue of the industrial area of the ironworks was definitely resolved during the annexation of villages in 1976.



The construction of the residential area called Košice-West. On the left, it is block no. 4-14 of Trieda SNP (1964). (Fortepan/photo by Viktor Gábor)

However, the change came after the Velvet revolution in 1989 and with the ongoing restitutions in the 1990s. One of the allegedly annexed villages, Sokolany, entered into a lengthy legal battle³⁵ over the plots with Košice on which factory is based. At the end of the 2020, Slovakia's Supreme Court definitely ruled that the land belongs to the Sokolany cadastre, not to Košice. The City thus lost property tax, which in 2019 amounted to about seven million EUR.³⁶

4th Phase - The expansion of Košice to the Eastern direction

In the past, construction in the eastern territory was off-limits not only by the river, but also by the industrial area of magnesite plant and by the railways. Yet, with the plans for Košice to reach 300.000 inhabitants by the year 2000, a new space designated to housing estates was necessary. The development during the final stage was coordinated by the masterplan, which was created in 1976 and which we partially covered in the previous part of the article. In addition to raising the requirements for the implementation of urbanization processes, the plan also dealt with planning of the city until the year 2000 including the western and southern areas but mainly in the eastern direction.³⁷ That is how the plans for *Východné Nové mesto* [East New City] housing estate emerged in the first half of the 1970s.³⁸ Construction was to start in 1985, and the proposed residential area was to accommodate 102.000 inhabitants on an area of 687 hectares,³⁹ which would made *Východné Nové mesto* the second biggest housing estate within Slovakia.

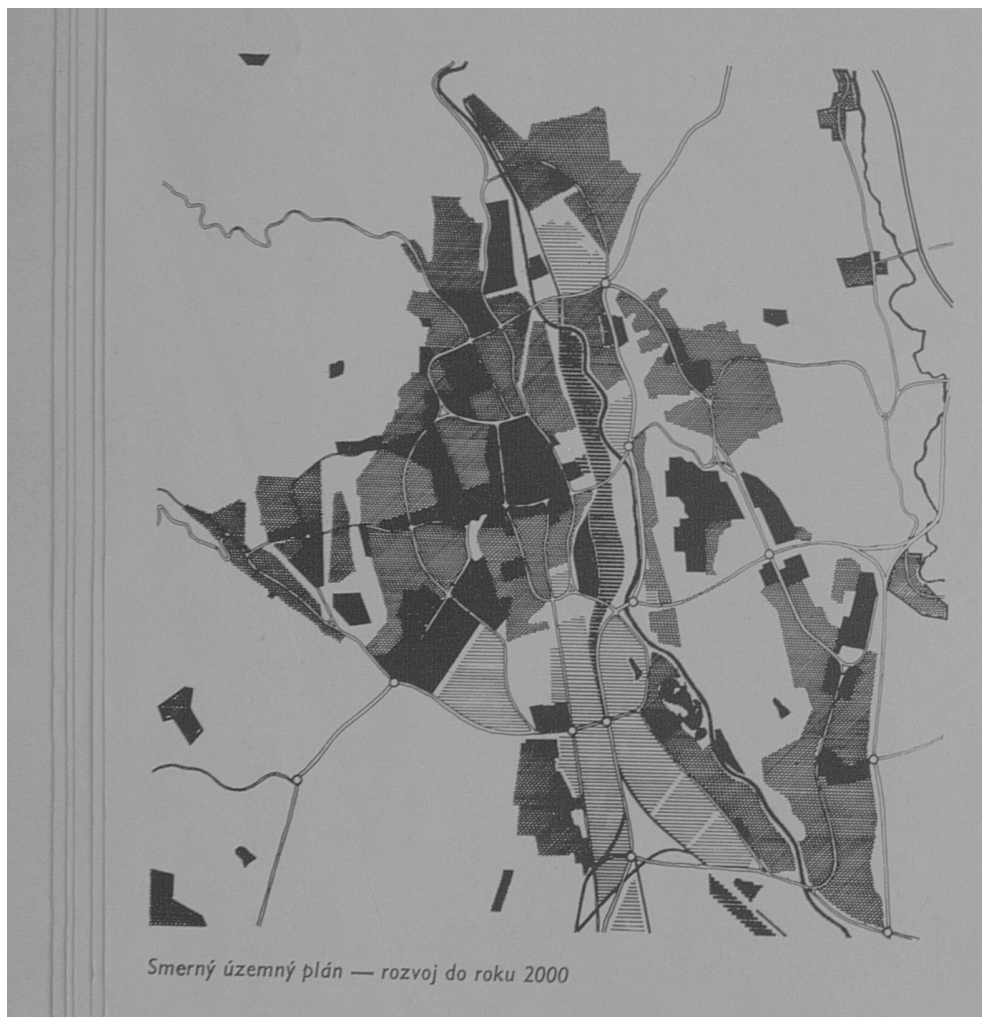
35 Pozemky pod U.S. Steel Košice patria do katastra Sokolian, rozhodol súd. Korzár Košice 9.11. 2020 <https://kosice.korzar.sme.sk/c/22531084/najvyssi-sud-pozemky-pod-u-s-steel-kosice-patria-do-katastra-sokolian.html>

36 Pozemky pod U. S. Steel Košice patria do katastra Sokolian, rozhodol súd. <https://kosice.korzar.sme.sk/c/22531084/najvyssi-sud-pozemky-pod-u-s-steel-kosice-patria-do-katastra-sokolian.html>.

37 AMK, f. Odbor plánovania, č.š.: 56. URBION – Slovenský inštitút pre územné plánovanie v Bratislave. Smerný územný plán pre hospodársko-sídlnú aglomeráciu Košice. Predbežný návrh. Sprievodná správa. 17.

38 Krásný, "Urbanistická studie Košice" 130-131.

39 Krásný, "Urbanistická studie Košice" 130-131.



Development of the city of Košice until the year 2000, according to plans from the mid 1970s. Growth to the east (Fourth phase) can be seen at the right bottom.
(Architektúra ČSR 3/1975 p. 110.)

Since economic progress is closely linked to huge energy consumption, already with the construction of iron-works, the possibility of locating a nuclear power plant near Košice was considered.⁴⁰ A decade later, the specified plans for nuclear power plant appeared,⁴¹ which was to be located 20 kilometres east of Košice and its

40 Ivanička, "Geografické základy"

41 Kecerovčania proti výstavbe jadrovej elektrárne. Noviny.sk 19.10.2017. <https://www.noviny.sk/ekonomika/31344-kecerovcania-proti-vystavbe-jadrovej-elektrarne>.

workers were to be housed in the upcoming *Východné Nové mesto*. In the following years, several geological surveys were carried out. Anyhow, plans for nuclear power plant were never realized and *Východné Nové mesto* was constructed only to a small extent. Several factors contributed to this result. First of all, the fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia in 1989, secondly, the split of Czechoslovakia in 1992 with the measures to protect the agricultural land fund⁴² and, last but not least, the Chernobyl disaster as the key factor. In 2007, the intention of a nuclear power plant was revived for a short time.⁴³

After the plans of the *Východné nové mesto* had fallen into the dust, the development of the eastern urban area continued due to a high demand from the real estate market. In 2008, project *Panoráma* [Panorama] started the construction of the new residential complexes.⁴⁴ During the years 2020-2021, a new masterplan was to be completed, which was to manage construction in the city for the next decades, with an emphasis on the development of Košice's river area.⁴⁵ However, due to the ongoing conflicts between the City of Košice and the Department of the Chief Architect, including the architects who worked on the masterplan, the work was suspended.

The masterplan from the 1970s thus remains valid and the second largest city in Slovakia has to deal with a non-existent spatial planning concept, while experts warn on the unfathomable consequences of this situation in the future.

42 Slov-Lex, právny a informačný portál. 01.01.2004. <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/1992/307/20040101.html>.

43 Jahnátek plánuje v Kecerovciach atómku. SME Ekonomika 17.10.2017 <https://ekonomika.sme.sk/c/3540578/jahnatek-planuje-v-kecerovciach-atomku.html>.

44 V Košiciach vyrastá nové sídlisko. Košice: Dnes 14.12.2015 <https://kosicednes.sk/zaujímavosti/v-kosiciach-vyrasta-nove-sidlisko/>.

45 Lendel, "Architekti stratili".

Conclusions

In the presented study, I have experimented to map the development of the Košice's urban area in relation to industrialization after 1945, and to specify phases during which fundamental territorial changes occurred. Industrialization of Czechoslovakia in the second half of the 20th century is, in this study, understood as consisting of two phases. During the first phase, industrialization focused on the renewal of the post-war economy, transition to the planned economy and settlement of the Czech and Slovak parts of the country. The main characteristics of the second phase are the ideologically motivated adherence to the Soviet example and the emphasis on heavy industry. Industrial development in Košice also corresponded with such a division.

By analyzing archival and cartographic sources, I was able to identify four stages in the development of the borders of Košice, from 1945 to the present: 1. Initial phase; 2. Development to the west; 3. Annexation of the neighbouring villages; 4. Development to the east. It was established that fourth stage is still ongoing. During the second and third phases, we recorded the transition of Košice; first to the agglomeration and later to the economic-residential agglomeration.

It turned out that out of many consequences for the city that underwent socialist industrialization, changes of city boundaries is one of the most relevant in the field of urban history. To this day, Košice has had to deal with effects, which were left on the city and most probably will do so also in the future. Shaping of the city borders necessarily meant changes in the territorial structures, one can see changes, particularly with the relocation of the economic and political centres.

Archives

Archív mesta Košice, fonds:

- Odbor plánovania
- Odbor vnútorných vecí

Archív mesta Košice, narrative sources:

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