NEW PEDAGOGICAL GUIDELINES: THE BOOK "JOYFUL CITIES: URBAN REGENERATION *REVISITED*"

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ABSTRACT

Authors of this paper just wrote and published a new and a rather experimental form of a book which will be primarily used as a literature on Urban Renewal course at Faculty of Architecture University of Belgrade. This book entitled Joyful cities: urban regeneration revisited has a broader purpose: to empower and facilitate modern approach in education and to help students to develop a critical thinking mindset. Also, to become a part of that pedagogical tool: the textbook itself.

Additionally, the book is developed by sharing principle: lead by full professor and followed by an ass. professor in a role of both editors and chapter authors, while the individual chapters of the same book are written by other co – authors, each an expert in their filed. All of the chapters are gathered around the topic of the future city, or as the authors sees it, the joyful city. In that sense, the topics covered in the book go from the main urban problems, such as slums and segregations, through the issue of innovation, participation and infrastructure, ending with the topics that uncover the secret of wellbeing today and the core of the city – its soul.

The students played a crucial role in development of this book. Didactics (learning by note talking) is almost abandoned today. In that sense, the book is an unusual way to spread the knowledge based on the new principle of direct coordination and unformal link between students and professors, encouraging them to be not only the participants, but the idea makers in the academic and pedagogical fields.

KEYWORDS _ *Joyful cities, Book, Pedagogy, Architecture, Urban Regeneration, Belgrade*

*THE MAKING OF*_INTODUCTION INTO THE UNIQUE COLLABORATION AMONG EXPERTS AND STUDENTS

In this paper we will present the Book entitled "Joyful cities – urban regeneration revisited". The Book was made as a result of years of teaching, observation, deep thinking and debating, followed by thorough research in the field of modern urban living. This book tackles every aspect of current "urban jungles" starting with critical approach to urban segregation, stress-filled lifestyle and pollution up to the genius loci, place identity and culture-led regeneration, focusing on various aspects of urban planning, social issues, and architecture, and covering themes such as social digitalization of cities, urban mobility, participatory planning and other. However, it is not meant just as the critique of the issues facing the modern city outcomes, but as well as a hope for a better, happier cities of tomorrow – the joyful cities.

The book is published with a broader purpose: to empower and facilitate modern approach in education and to help students develop a deep-thinking mindset. Also, to become a part of the pedagogical tool: the textbook itself. It represents the main literature for the subject entitled "Urban renewal", which is obligatory course for all of the students on the third year of Bachelor and Integrated Academic Studies at the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Architecture. Additionally, the book serves as a continuation of the previous literature entitled "Urban renewal of the cities in III millennium" from the same editor and author dr Eva Vaništa Lazarević.

Main editors of the book and authors are full professor dr Eva Vaništa Lazarević and assistant professor dr Jelena Marić. Publisher Vladimir Lojanica is the Dean of the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Architecture, and unique design and visualization of the book is a work done by assistant professor dr Vladimir Kovač.

The book is developed by sharing principle: led by editors, while the individual chapters of the same book are written by other co – authors, each an expert in their filed. All of the chapters are gathered around the topic of the future city, or as the authors sees it, the *joyful city*.

Authors of the chapters are carefully picked out as well established experts in pedagogy as well as in practice: *dr Eva Vaništa Lazarević, dr Jelena Marić, dr Aleksandra* Đukić*, dr Jugoslav Joković, dr Aleksandra Stupar, dr Milena Vukmirović, Zoran Rubinjoni, Snežana Dimitrijević, dr Zoran Keković, dr Jelena Dinić, dr Iva* Čukić *and mast.arh. Tena Lazarević.*

Didactics, well known technique of learning by note talking is almost abandoned in pedagogy today. Considering this, the book presents an unusual way to spread the knowledge based on the new principle of direct coordination and unformal link between students and experts – the professors, while encouraging them to be not only the participants, but the idea makers in the academic and pedagogical fields. In the beginning, when this book existed only as an idea of editors, the students played a crucial role in development of this book. Students on the university course "City and design" from the school year 2020-21 alongside with mentors (book editors) dedicated the whole semester into contemplating and brainstorming on the topics of strategic elements that are crucial for planning the city of tomorrow. Students Minja Gligorijević, Nevena Matović, Đordje Stefanović, Jovana Simić, Martina Mančev, Jana Šljivančanin, Sofija Mihajlović, Ivana Nikić, Nina Stević, Milica Knežević, Katarina Milovanovic, Filip Popović, Aleksandra Stefanović, Ivona Božić, Andjela Miljević, Katarina Đurović, Ada Pakljanac, Igor Krstić, Marko Petrovic, Željko Mijušković, Nevena Mišković, Anđelija Ćurčić, Nikolina Ješić, Teodora Stevanović and Marina Tušup contributed with extensive research on developing the individual chapters of the book. Based on this research, the editors later on chose the aforementioned chapter authors.

The concept and the outcome of the book was understood on different levels by all the three reviewers. According to the first reviewer, Vladimir Lojanica, the Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, the book delves into a profound intellectual and emotional reflection on beauty in the urban context. He states that the book explores how shifts in the perception of heritage influence new approaches

to urban regeneration and how the historical insight and analysis are presented as essential tools for confronting current urban challenges. For prof Lojanica, this book is equally relevant for students and city enthusiasts, serving as both an academic resource and a practical guide.

Second reviewer, Saša Milijić, spatial planner and the director of the Institute for Architecture and Urbanism in Serbia stated that the book approaches the concept of the "happy city" through a multi-layered and interdisciplinary lens, which successfully synthesizes diverse perspectives into a unified vision, with the intention to present complex urban regeneration issues in a clear, engaging, and educational manner.

Third reviewer, Darko Reba, professor at the Faculty of Technical Sciences in Novi Sad believes the book authors analyse the effects of modern information technologies and artificial intelligence on everyday life in public urban spaces. According to prof Reba, the central question raised in the book is especially timely: *Do new information technologies truly contribute to the happiness and well-being of urban residents?*



Figure 1: Graphic design of the book by Vladimir Kovač, 2024.

THE CONCEPT OF HAPPINESS, BEAUTY AND JOYFUL CITIES

The pedagogical guidelines are one of the most important outcomes of the book. The main concepts that the book embodies are the concept of happiness, beauty and joy. After the period of pandemics and devastating wars we needed a book that will focus on the beauty of living, and the harmony of living in a city. A book that focuses on our instinctive need to reach a comfortable place in our lives, that "happy place".

The concept of beauty has historically been intertwined with spiritual and philosophical discourse, encompassing notions of happiness, fulfilment, and aesthetic pleasure. The philosophical roots of beauty in architecture can be traced back to Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century, whose insights have been reinterpreted in modern times by Umberto Eco. Their works provide an intellectual foundation for understanding beauty as an essential element in both architectural concepts as much as in urban planning and contemplating the image or the functionality of life in urban areas. For architects, urbanists, and city planners, these principles should serve as guiding models, fostering thoughtful analysis and synthesis in shaping harmonious built environments. However, the consequences of architectural mismanagement are evident in urban chaos, particularly in regions undergoing rapid transformation, urban decay and population decline, urban segregation and overall pollution devastation.

On the other hand, in highly developed and cities with such aspirations, more known concepts are "Investors architecture" and "investors urbanism". The underlying factor in such urban disorder is corruption, which permeates public institutions and decision-making processes. This phenomenon has deeply infiltrated global centers of power, including the EU and the United States. Thomas

Aquinas, centuries ago, identified similar patterns of greed, disorder, and disregard for communal well-being, underscoring the enduring relevance of his observations. He advocated for proportion, balance, and purpose in design, principles that remain crucial for achieving architectural harmony. His assertion that unnecessary additions detract from the integrity of a design is particularly pertinent in contemporary urban contexts (Vaništa Lazarević & Marić, 2024).

Happiness in cities is not merely a product of economic prosperity but is deeply connected to spatial harmony, accessibility, sustainability, and social cohesion. Philosophical and psychological discourse suggests that happiness arises when individuals experience a sense of belonging, security, and aesthetic pleasure within their surroundings. Urban designers and architects play a fundamental role in shaping environments and these environments furthermore shape our feeling and emotions; our identity based on the emotional connection to a place – the sense of place. Kreitler and Kreitler (1972) in their book Psychology of the arts, argue how aesthetic experiences, including beauty in art and architecture, contribute to psychological satisfaction and emotional well-being. Ulrich (1983), Stamps (2004), Pretty et al. (2005), Linda and Hartig (2013) and many authors argue how important the role of specific elements of our environments, such as natural elements, as well as how the beaty in arts and architecture contribute to overaal quality of life, physical and mental health, attention restoration and higher perceived happiness potential. However, not only physical characteristics are responsible for the happiness in the city. Social inclusivity and equity are also vital components of happiness in urban life. Technological advancements and smart city initiatives also influence urban happiness. While digital connectivity offers convenience and efficiency, an over-reliance on technology can lead to social isolation and a detachment from physical spaces. A balanced approach, integrating technological innovations with human-centered design, is necessary to cultivate cities that are both advanced and emotionally enriching. Ultimately, happiness in modern cities is achieved when urban spaces cater to both individual and collective needs. Sustainable development, architectural beauty, and social responsibility must converge to create environments that nurture emotional well-being.

THE STORY TOLD BY THE BOOK CHAPTERS

The Authors of this book are using different chapters in order to address important guidelines concerning crucial aspects of both formal and functional characteristics of a city. We start this narrative chronologically from present times, representing current state of affairs, assuming that willing readers mastered the rest. In order not to make this publication just another cross section of all the prevailing topics on urban regeneration, main editor reflects each chapter with unique correlation between the chapter topic and overall sense of the book main idea – what it takes to create a happy city.

Chapter 01_City of Injustice

In this chapter author Eva Vaništa Lazarević addresses the issues of moder city incapacities for quality living, the issues of social segregation in urban environments, exploring the ever-changing concept of slums and how the approach of urban regeneration can explore the possible urban solution. One of the goals of the first chapter is to answer almost unresolvable question of bridging the gap inside cities, in particular: poverty, an absence of middle class, rapid enrichment, as is the case in all transitional societies, possibly by technological moves and urbanistic planning methods.



Figure 2: imagination of a modern slum, AI generated, Eva Vaništa Lazarević, Tena Lazarević, Jelena Marić 2024.

Chapter 02_Robot City

02.1 Perception, Digitalization, and Composition

The authors Aleksandra Đukić and Jugoslav Joković discussed how the digital transformation of cities influences urban composition, space utilization, and the public's perception of the urban environment. The interaction between technology and architecture is critically examined, using social media applications and other platforms, by monitoring patterns produced by inputs of citizens, to analyse whether cities can be really hospitable and inviting to different population, in order to spend time in them. This chapter raises the very contemporary and crucial aspects of digitalization in cities of tomorrow.

2.2 Inventive Cities: Urban Changes Between Necessity and Extravagance

Author Aleksandra Stupar is analysing the ongoing transformation of a city, "from necessity to extravagance", and tries to return soft and human characteristics to cities with highly developed

technology. She implements the innovative city slowly and surely in the new vernacular, everyday vocabulary. She praises comfortable public space, easier city transportation on foot and by bicycle, as well as improved public open space. Dr Stupar bases her thesis on Nordic countries as good practice examples, biophilic design, safety, and easy access to green corridors as described in the contemporary urban concepts such as "15-minute city". All of these features can significantly improve our experience in the city, our everyday life and overall "happiness" of the citizens.



Figure 3: imagination of a liveable open public space, AI generated, Eva Vaništa Lazarević, Tena Lazarević, Jelena Marić 2024.

Chapter 03_Guide Through the City _ From Point A to Point B

This section provides practical guides for improving urban mobility. It includes strategies for pedestrian-friendly design, urban transportation systems, and security measures to ensure safe and efficient movement through cities.

03.1 Pedestrian Guide

The chapter was based upon mobility system, concerning in particular pedestrians. Author Milena Vukmirović emphasizes the importance of pedestrian infrastructure in urban planning, exploring how cities can be designed to prioritize walking, reduce traffic congestion, and improve overall liveability. She addresses a crucial problem of parking, pollution, and overcrowding in Belgrade. Meanwhile, in Europe, the city administrations are working hard on improving the transportation perception of their citizens, sidewalks are being widened due to the addition of dedicated bike lanes and more greenery. Once crowded metropolitan squares are becoming public parks, like Trafalgar Square in London, or central squares in Vienna and Brussels. The general idea is an attempt to return inhabitants to the open public spaces and leisure and recreational activities.

03.2 Urban Mobility Guide

Similar to the main idea of the chapter above, authors Zoran Rubinjoni and Snežana Dimitrijevic, experts in the field of traffic engineering, offer insights into creating sustainable urban mobility systems, including public transportation and non-motorized options, aiming to reduce environmental impact while enhancing accessibility.

03.3 Guide for Peace and Safety

Authors Zoran Keković and Jelena Dinić in this chapter examine the concept of urban safety and security through design, suggesting ways in which cities can be planned to promote overall safety, minimize crime, and protect residents through strategic architectural and urban design choices. Essentially, authors are writing about the lack of a serious prediction of possible problems and long-term planning, including planning for friendlier environmental and urban safety in future cities.

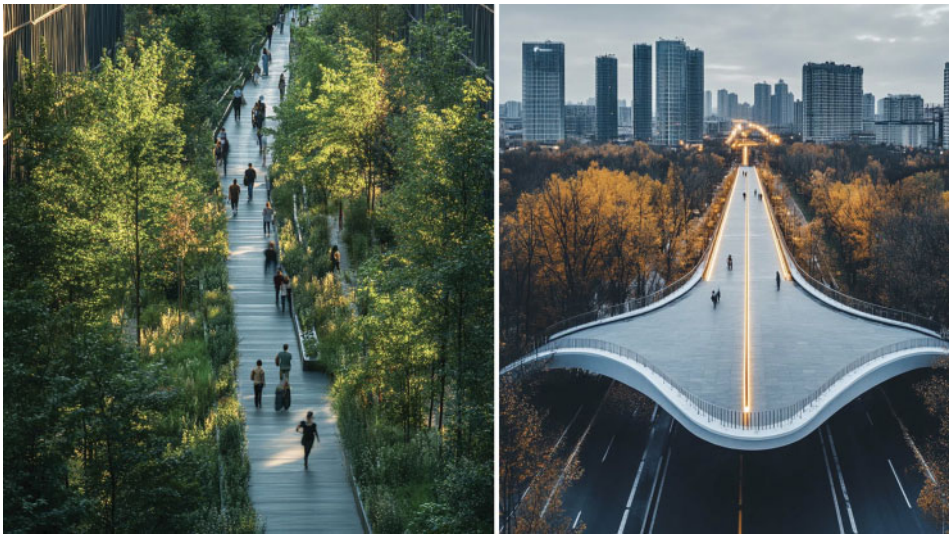


Figure 4: imagination of public transportation in urban areas, AI generated, Eva Vaništa Lazarević, Tena Lazarević, Jelena Marić 2024.

Chapter 04_I Love The City_Participation in Urban Planning

Author Iva Čukić in an untraditional and informal way discusses the importance and critical problems regarding public participation in urban planning processes. It highlights how involving citizens in decision-making can lead to more inclusive, responsive, and sustainable urban environments. is exploring and concluding her prospection on lack of social justice and participation. While giving the example of Leipzig in comparison with Belgrade, she often refers to keyword “equality”, considering allocation of resources, from health to education and environment. She gives an example of practical guidelines for city administration could reduce the possibility of a corruption and social injustice.

Chapter 05_Injection for a Healthier City

Authors Jelena Marić and Tena Lazarević in this section present their ideas for revitalizing cities, focusing on creating spaces that can enhance and foster health and well-being. It challenges the notion of “healthy cities” as either a utopian ideal or an inevitable future, exploring both possibilities in the context of urban design. It discusses in depth how urban environments can support physical, mental, and social well-being. From monoblock hospitals to Japanese gardens, the chapter argues how every segment of open space in a city correlates to the mind, body and soul of each of us. The chapter offers particular insights into the most important resource of the modern age, and the most important ingredient of the happy city – the public health – and tries to answer the question of how architects and urbanist can make people healthy and happy.





Figure 5: imagination of public participation in urban gardens; **Figure 6:** imagination of Japanese-like urban gardens; AI generated, Eva Vaništa Lazarević, Tena Lazarević, Jelena Marić 2024.

Chapter 06_ Soul of the City_Regeneration Through Culture

Finally, the main author and editor Eva Vaništa Lazarević in this chapter delves into the cultural regeneration of cities, arguing that cultural initiatives and the preservation of heritage are vital in giving cities a "soul." It explores how cultural projects can drive urban renewal, genius loci, sense of space, and sense of identity. It is important to state that cultural development will also gentrify lower quality cities, cities without a distinctive monumental heritage. She is writing about certain threats to all of the cities, for example climate change. By presenting comparisons between different cities, or phenomena concerning attractivities of life in particular cities prof Vaništa Lazarević tries to present the specific guidelines to upgrade general atmosphere in cities, making them less rigid and more friendly, making them more joyful, and making them more hopeful for the generations to come.

CONCLUSIONS

This book tries to bring colours in a current gray atmosphere considering the faith of our cities. It tries to explore, combine and articulate all important city features and re-imagine the future of city planning. It delivers a specific set of guidelines for urban policies, but more importantly, for education of all future architects who are just now developing their thought on architecture. This collection of essays offers a profound exploration of contemporary urban challenges and the evolving role of architecture in shaping our cities.

Key insights emerge around the importance of designing cities that prioritize human well-being, both physically and socially. Whether discussing the potential of "robot cities" or the concept of healthy cities, the open public space, or transportation and urban safety the book calls for a balance between technological advancements and human-centric urban spaces. It advocates for inclusive urban planning processes that empower communities to shape their environments, fostering cities that are not only efficient and sustainable but also equitable and resilient.

In conclusion, the essays collected here serve as both a call to action and a blueprint for the future of urban design, advocating for cities that are not only physically built but socially and culturally cultivated, offering spaces that inspire connection, creativity, and sustainability … beauty, harmony and joy.

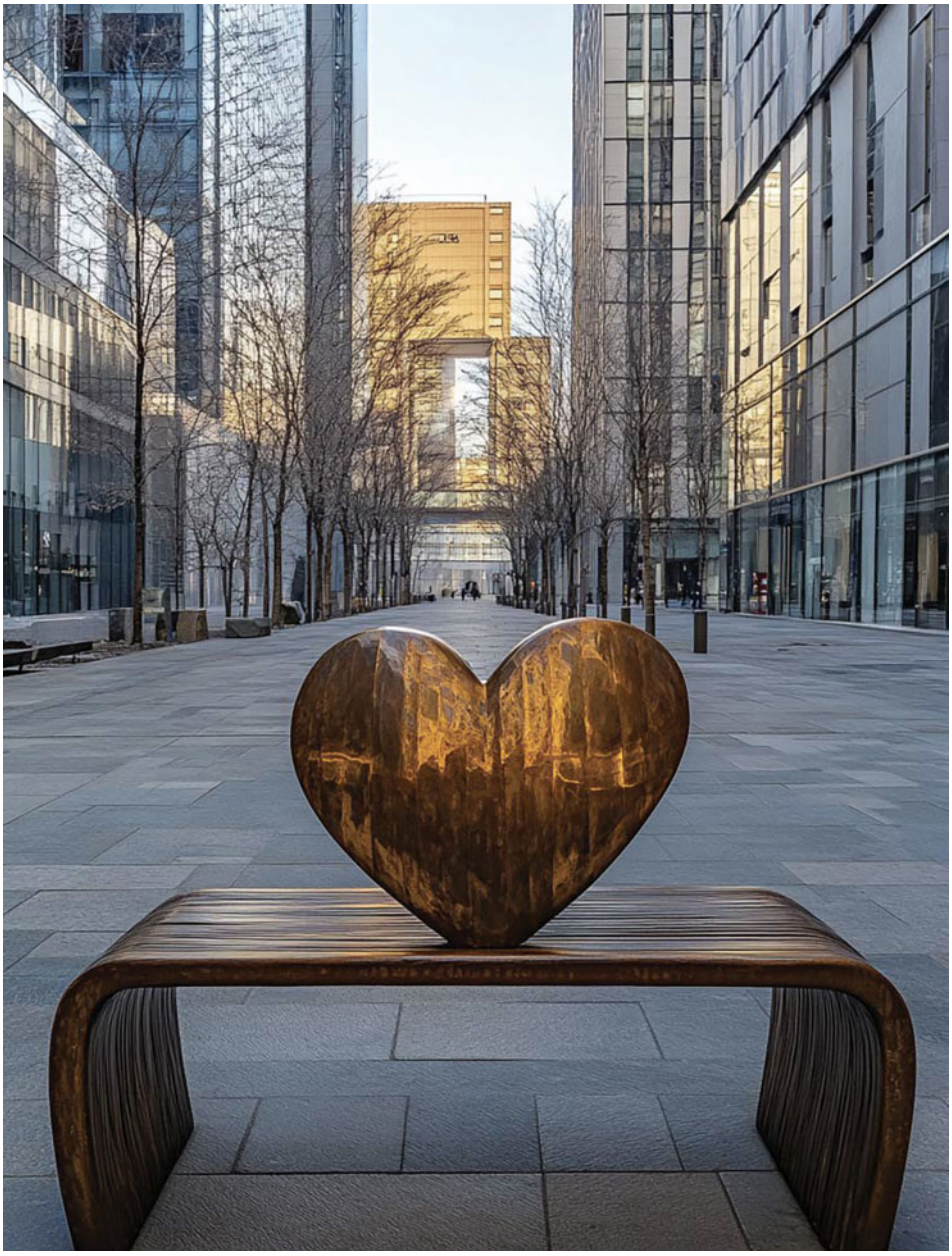


Figure 7: imagination of a heart-shaped urban bench, AI generated, Eva Vaništa Lazarević, Tena Lazarević, Jelena Marić 2024.

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