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1 In 1929, Paul Devinat, official of the International Labour Office and author of *Scientific Management in Europe* (1927), was sent to Zlín (in today's Czech Republic) to report on the extraordinary growth of the Bata Shoe Company after World War One. Founded by Tomáš Baťa in 1874, this factory was at the time the largest footwear manufacturer in Europe, employing 12.000 workers and producing 75.000 pairs a day. Next to a thorough explanation of Bata's management system and industrial organization, Devinat's report for the *International Labour Review* described the living conditions in Zlín and the company policies concerning workers' housing, leisure, and health (Devinat 1930a, Devinat 1930b).

2 Indeed, Bata's manufacturing success ran in parallel to the transformation of Zlín into a modern industrial garden city. In his conclusion, Devinat defined Bata's system as unique "*to a given environment and at a specific stage in the evolution of that environment*", and stated: "i*t would be impossible to predict a priori what* [the Bata system] *would become in another's hands, or applied to another environment*" (Ibid: 186). The truth is that, a few years later, the unpredictability of history would be proved: Tomáš Baťa died in 1932, and the company pushed forward its international expansion, exporting capital and investing it in the construction of factories and industrial towns.

3 Between 1929 and 1935, the building department of the Bata Shoe Company planned the construction of a series of modern industrial satellite towns in Europe, Asia, and America. These settlements were to be built following modern functional and typological guidelines first explored in Zlín, aiming to replicate a model of industrial urbanism at a global scale. By the end of this period, however, their development was far from advanced, and their original town plans, following a modernist grid, had been replaced with new ones, based on garden city ideas.

4 A transnational explanation of the conditions that complicated their construction and motivated the change in their design is a gap in the existing literature on the urban footprint of the Bata Shoe Company. Some of the Bata towns have attracted the

attention of scholars from a wide assortment of disciplines. Most of these studies place the towns in a particular national or disciplinary context—for example, social and economic history of the towns in Switzerland (Ehrenbold 2012), Netherlands (Meer 2013) or Europe (Ševeček and Jemelka 2013, Jemelka and Ševeček 2016); local architectural histories (Widmer 1992, Pavitt 1994, Moravčiková 2003, Topolčanská 2005, Syska 2013, Ambruš 2014, et al.); or urban utopianism (Horňáková and Ševeček, 1998, Horňáková 2009, Říha, 2009). Yet what is missing is bringing the dynamic process of circulation and diffusion on ideas of urbanism across the company's production network into the story of these towns.

5 Carola Hein (2018b) has pointed at how historical research on transnational urbanism has underrepresented the role of corporations in spreading planning and architecture ideas. While studies on, for example, port cities or oil landscapes show how commodity flows reshape urban spaces (Lars 2011, Hein 2009, 2018a), the way corporate organizations transport and transform their spatial practices as their geographic scope of operations broadens, and the role of local contexts in such processes, remains 'blackboxed'. Thus, a stronger focus on the institutional logics of global organizations, looking at other sources (company memos, internal correspondence, interviews) and interdisciplinary methodological explorations are needed to make sense of such processes of diffusion and change in studies of urban history.

6 This article used the conceptual framework of sociological institutionalism to study how questions of meaning and social legitimacy of urban form influenced the design and construction of the industrial towns of the Bata Shoe Company throughout the 1930s. While historical institutionalism focuses on questions of path dependence and long-term political transformations, sociological institutionalism emphasizes ideas and cultural factors in the building of institutions, examining how these create meanings for individuals and inform choice. Thus this approach has the potential to offer new insights on why and how an institution, such as an industrial firm, would incorporate within its structure specific design practices—particularly considering that beyond practical matters, questions of expression and symbolic meaning are deeply embedded in architecture and urbanism. For that, this research triangulated the study of secondary sources and research into the archives of Bata's Building Department, with the analysis of how the urban form of the towns changed through time.

7 By exploring interrelations between the cases of Zlín, Batanagar (India), Best (The Netherlands), and East Tilbury (United Kingdom), the research reveals the institutionalization of modern ideas on urban planning and architecture within Bata's structure, and the role of external legitimation in justifying their utilization or withdrawal abroad. More specifically, the study found how architecture and urbanism —understood as a set of external practices and symbols, or myths—were embedded in Bata's organizational environment, and adopted ceremonially; how gaps existed between a formal structure—building blueprints—and actual construction activities; and the role of external legitimation in the adoption or withdrawal of architectural and urban myths.

8 The neoinstitutional approach is relevant for other disciplines concerned with the study of contemporary urban phenomena linked to transnational corporate activities, and with exploring concepts such as global production networks (GNP). GNP has been proposed as a way of understanding the trans-scalar economic and social dimensions of economic globalization which goes beyond chain concepts (value, commodity), to

embrace a network discourse and a focus on production processes over commodities (Henderson et al. 2002). While the GNP framework considers 'social' and 'territorial' embeddedness of firms—respectively, embeddedness in a corporate culture originated in a specific place (Hess 2004), and in the particular places where activities occur (Henderson et al. 2002)—how global production networks affect local built environments and their transformation processes has been identified as a theoretical and empirical knowledge gap (Krätke et al. 2012, Kelly 2013, Phelps 2017, Kleibert and Horner 2018). By highlighting the importance of external legitimation and creation of meaning for organizations, including firms, the neoinstitutional reading holds the potential of bringing new insights into the transformation of the built environment by corporate actors beyond a specific location, region, or nation, particularly in relation with how places in a corporate network are transformed by flows of architectural and urban knowledge and corporate culture, and, at the same time, these places transform those flows as they embed territorially.

Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

9 Neoinstitutional frameworks of analysis have gained momentum in urban research, specifically using insights from historical institutionalism in the field of planning history and theory. Historical institutionalism defines institution as the "*formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy*" (Hall & Taylor 1996: 6). Most notably, historical institutionalism emphasizes path dependency, using concepts as critical junctures, and positive and negative feedback. Thus, planning scholars have considered how institutions regulate urban planning systems, their production, use, and transformation (Sorensen 2017), how processes of institutionalization of planning systems and policies occur, and how rules are created and co-evolve (Sorensen 2010, 2015, 2018, DĄbrowski and Lingua 2018, Faludi 2018).

10 Sociological institutionalism, a second stream of neoinstitutionalism, emphasizes ideas and cultural factors in the building of institutions. While historical institutionalism focuses on explaining long-term political transformations, the sociological approach examines how institutions create meanings for individuals and how those inform choice at specific junctures (Hall and Taylor 1996). Meyer and Rowan (1977) argued that organizations adopt external practices, symbols and ideas that are highly regarded in the social and cultural environment, or have proved successful for other organizations —that is, they are externally legitimated—in order to increase their own social legitimacy. Furthermore, these so-called institutional myths are adopted in spite of their potential conflict with efficiency, in order not to undermine legitimacy. In Campbell's words, institutions favor showing a "*logic of social appropriateness*" versus a "*logic of instrumentality*" through their activities (Hall and Taylor 1996: 16). However, in order to reduce the impact on efficiency, organizations never fully embrace such myths; they are adopted in a ceremonial manner. That is, there is a decoupling between the formal structure of the organization—its "*blueprint for activities*" (Meyer & Rowan 1977: 342)—and its day-to-day technical activities. When a myth does not serve anymore its legitimizing purpose, a new one is added to the formal structure of the organization. In turn, when adopting a myth proves to be successful, homogenization or isomorphism across organizations might occur (DiMaggio and Powell 1991).

11 Adding questions of meaning or symbolic expression allows for deeper insights on why and how an institution such as an industrial firm would incorporate within its structure specific approaches to the practice of architecture and urbanism. Indeed, architecture and urbanism are not only about complying with limitations imposed by regulations, budgets, or technical possibilities, but its practice must balance such practical matters with individual expression, aesthetics, and feelings (Giedion [1941] 2008, Blau 1988). The architect and urbanist has to "*convince a client, mobilize the complex enterprise of building, inspire the public (and not offend it), and work with the culture, visual skills, and symbolic vocabulary not of the client but of its time*" (Larson 1993, 16). In this way, Mauro F. Guillén (2006) explained how, at the turn of the twentieth century, new industrial sponsors began funding building and urban planning projects that stressed through their design functional aspects in the context of chaotic industrialization.

12 The methodology used for the present article involved the triangulation of the study of secondary sources and research into the archives of Bata's Building Department, with the analysis of how the urban form of the towns changed through time. Town plans of Bata's industrial satellites were read as documents embodying 'institutional myths' that proved to be successful in supporting the company's growth in Zlín. Such ideal 'blueprints for activities' abroad (literally building blueprints) are then compared with the circumstances around their construction. By adding the rationale of actors involved and their historical context, the article looks at to what extent those original myths entered in conflict with efficiency on building sites, how their implementation was decoupled from day-to-day activities, or if myths were abandoned and replaced when legitimation was in question.

13 Thus, in first place, literature reviewed included works on the political, social and cultural history of the Czech Lands, on the circulation of American scientific management ideas in Europe, and on history of shoe manufacturing, together with that pertaining to the history of Bata Company, Zlín, and nineteen satellite towns. Secondly, documents from Bata's Building Department, kept in the State District Archives in Zlín (SoKA Zlín), were studied. These included internal correspondence, meeting minutes, photo albums, and other documents produced between the years 1931-1939. The focus was set on the first batch of satellite towns in construction abroad, namely Batanagar, East Tilbury, Best, Hellocourt (France), Ottmuth (Germany; today Krapkowice, Poland), Borovo (Yugoslavia; today Vukovar, Croatia), and Chełmek (Poland). As Bata centralized management in Zlín during its international expansion, the archive shows the backstage of the company's activities abroad, the progress of construction of the satellite towns, and moments of exchange of information across locations.

14 Finally, successive versions of the regulatory town plans of the first batch of satellite towns, also kept at the SoKA Zlín, were studied with regard to the morphology of their street grid and urban blocks, how urban functions were organized, and which building typologies were used. Shifts in these aspects of urban form in those towns were cross-referenced in a timeline with facts from literature and archive materials. The aim was to find evidence that explained the rationale of these changes and their legitimizing purpose. Although fieldwork was carried out in nineteen of Bata's company towns, its role in this research article is small, giving access to some pieces of literature on local history used in the literature review.

The Bata Shoe Company and the Transformation of Zlín in the 1920s

15 Founded in Zlín by Tomáš Baťa in 1874, the Bata Shoe Company grew from being a small workshop to become a gigantic concern in the 1920s—employing 12.000 workers and producing 75.000 pairs a day, the largest footwear manufacturer in Europe by then (Devinat 1930a). Its manufacturing success ran in parallel to the transformation of Zlín into a modern industrial garden city—showcasing rational construction and functionalist planning—to accommodate a growing population. Several issues coalesce in explaining Bata's industrial rise and its institutionalization of architecture and urbanism practices.

16 First, by taking part in industrial mobilization during World War One, the company shifted its production towards mass production. Mechanization and standardization gained momentum in Bata's workshops, but also manpower increased substantially (Ibid, Cekota 1968, Pokluda 2004). A strategy of low prices and low wages helped recover wartime levels of production as postwar crisis hit independent Czechoslovakia. In the meantime, the company furthered the use of methods to optimize and reduce waste inspired by American ideas on scientific management circulating in the country at the time (Devinat 1927, Devinat 1930a, Cekota 1968). Scientific management, or Taylorism, is an influential set of ideas and techniques for increasing efficiency and reducing waste in industry, synthesized by American engineer Frederick Winslow Taylor in 1912. Taylor's ideas were circulated internationally by his many followers, including Frank and Lillian Gilbreth with their time-and-motion studies or Hugo Münsterberg with his psychological approach, and were fundamental for the ideation of the assembly-line manufacturing system and Fordism by Henry Ford (Taylor [1911] 1967, Gilbreth 1912, Guillén 2006).

17 Bata further reduced costs by incrementally completed the vertical integration of several other industrial functions both up and downstream its supply chain. This strategy began during the war, when rationing and poor supply of raw materials took industrial production to the verge of collapsing (Cekota 1968, Harna 2009, Agnew 2004). By the 1920s, Zlín was home to a conglomerate of 250 departments dealing with all sort of auxiliary tasks. These included, but were not limited to, a sales department with its own network of shops, paper mill and cardboard factory, a printing plant, a building department, chemical industries, machine-building workshops, rubber processing, power plants, a sawmill, brickworks, and tanneries (Philipp 1928; Devinat 1930a; Cekota 1968).

18 To address potential conflicts between capital and labor, Bata's management implemented strategies aimed at developing in the workers a sense of reciprocal interest in the profit of the undertaking. Research on the history of shoe manufacturing pointed at how, as this trade modernized, it was difficult to achieve a total deskilling of labor, as some procedures required skilled workers next to the machines (Miranda 2006). Thus the need to address the human factor in production. First, Bata's workforce was divided in autonomous teams under the command of a head, who acted as the company's "*tenant*" (Cekota 1928). Thus within Bata's conglomerate every unit operated as an 'independent' contractor offering to each other products or services (even the leasing of space or electricity consumption) to other units, at a profit (Devinat 1930a). Second, this system of autonomous workshops was

underpinned by a profit-sharing scheme that rewarded the sound management of these units. All in all, by fostering entrepreneurship among its employees, Bata aimed at retaining their fundamental co-operation (Devinat 1930b).

19 With a growing industrial population, Bata developed ambitious plans of industrial welfare that implied drastic changes to the urban development of Zlin. Housing shortage, lack of urban amenities and services, poor sanitation, or inadequate water and electricity supply were some of the issues that challenged both Bata's possibilities for additional industrial growth, and the public legitimation of its management and mass production system. In the 1920s Tomáš Baťa became mayoral candidate, as he understood that, to protect the interests of his concern in transforming the urban sphere without opposition, he needed to have those validated by the residents in an election.

20 Tomáš Baťa's party platform entailed to inextricably intertwine the development of both corporation and city, institutionalizing within the corporation the practice of urbanism. In parallel to the expansion of the factory grounds, the town would be rebuilt as a garden city ten times bigger than the old Zlín:

> *The aim of a Greater Zlín is to achieve the prosperity of its inhabitants. Plenty of employment would ensure plenty of food.... The lack if proper housing, dress, and education also means poverty....The badly designed houses plague our housewives with heavy work all day.... We must design our houses so that the women will be relieved of much of today's physical work. This could be done in cooperation with the town. A single person or small group cannot build the power house, the gas supply system, the water and sewer system.... Our representatives... are returning with new ideas and inventions dealing... with the standard of living.*
>
> (Cekota 1968: 208)

21 Among others, his promises included universal supply of electricity, water and sewage, new roads, a school system, and sound municipal finances. Baťa also promised to lower municipal taxes, and to transfer the costs of electricity production and maintenance of roads to his company. Finally, Baťa would build corporate housing quarters and public facilities for workers free of cost for the municipal budget, and in return, the company would not pay any building tax (Baťa 1942, Cekota 1968, Pokluda 2004). Eventually, fifty-six percent of the voters in the municipal elections of 1923 elected Tomáš Baťa as mayor (Baťa 1942). This way, he saw politically legitimated his ambitions to modernize Zlín on the basis of industry.

22 As the city transformed, specific forms and meanings in urban space became trademarks within Bata's system. Bata's Building Department employed some of the best modern Czech architects and engineers of their generation, such as Jan Kotěra (1871-1923), František Lydie Gahura (1891-1958), Josef Gočár (1880-1945) and Vladimir Karfík (1901-1996) (Cekota 1968, Šlapeta 1990, Novák 2008, Pokluda 2009, Horňáková 2009, Ševeček and Jemelka 2013, et al). One of their designs, the so-called Bata structural skeleton—a twenty by twenty feet module—was the result of adding modular standardized units, that at the same time were built in themselves by using reusable interchangeable parts. Five-story factory halls and other public buildings built in that modular manner reflected a fundamental belief in standardization, and the tension between individuality and collectivity that characterized Bata's internal workings. Modern functional zoning reproduced the same interrelationship between the parts and the whole, and vertical integration of functions at the city scale: monofunctional

superblocks made of Zlín an archipelago of independent programs, including factories, schools, hospitals, and sports facilities. Garden housing districts of cubical brick semi-detached houses accommodated 50 percent of Bata's employees in 1930 (Ševeček 2009), and became the embodiment of Bata's motto "*Work Collectively, Live Individually*" (Cekota 1968: 231).

23 In the national political context, Bata saw the radical methods he had applied in Zlín also legitimated, as the independent government of Czechoslovakia institutionalized American ideas of scientific management during reconstruction. Evidence of this is the fact that Masaryk Academy of Work—a Prague-based institution "*devoted to the organization of technical labor and the rational use of the activities of the population and the natural resources of the whole State*" founded by the Czechoslovak government in 1918 (Devinat 1927: 229)—convened in 1924 the first International Congress of Scientific Management. This meeting brought together American and European experts in the topic who would discuss how scientific management could become a lens for the full organization of all aspects of modern life. Among the presenters was Tomáš Baťa himself. There, he expressed in words his belief that social legitimation of modern industry would be obtained only if owners realized "*that although the establishment might be his property... its object in the first place is to be of service to the customers and the workers, in other words to be 'public'*" (Masaryk Academy of Work 1925: 64).

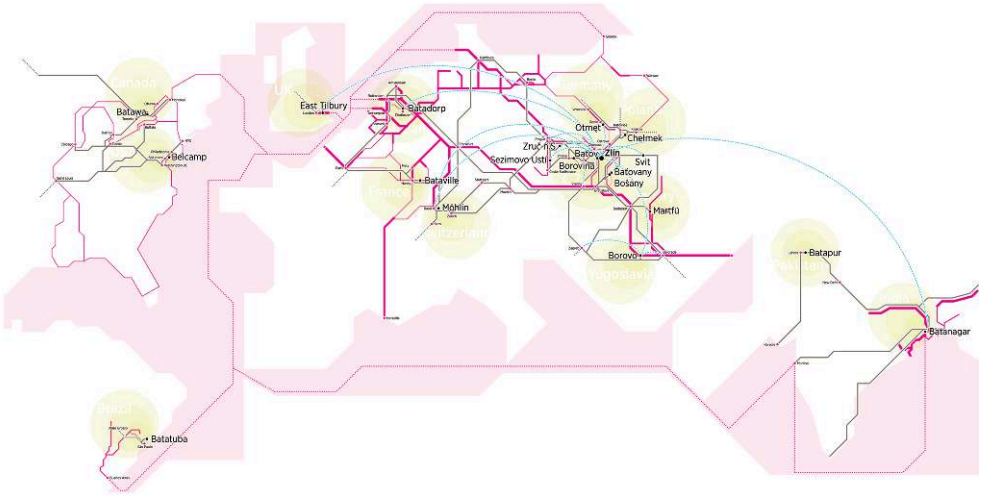
From Zlín to the World (1929-1934)

24 In the aftermath of the financial crisis of 1929, Bata's management started a strategy of growth and decentralization of production. The years 1930 and 1931 saw a worsening of the conditions in global trade: dozens of countries increased or introduced customs tariffs, imposed currency restrictions, and set import quotas for shoes. Paradoxically, Bata manage to increase its exports at first: nine out of every ten pairs of shoes exported by Czechoslovakia had been manufactured in the workshops in Zlín. The main reason was that Bata's competition in the national shoe and tanning business, dominated by small enterprises, could not withstand the crisis. Bata would purchase some of those ruined companies at low cost to their creditors (Lehár 1963; Harna 2009; Agnew 2014). With that, Bata de facto conquered the monopoly of shoe production in Czechoslovakia.

25 As the economic situation worsened, Bata shifted to what would be defined by Czech economic historian Bohumil Lehár as a strategy of international "*imperialist expansion*" (1963: 151). First, Bata began to export capital surplus, primarily in the form of goods. Subsequently, the new capital was used for the establishment of subsidiary companies abroad, and for the purchase of raw materials and equipment for Zlín. The second pillar of Bata's strategy was the founding of those foreign companies, including manufacturing complexes and trading companies. In particular, the construction of factories happened when the target market presented "*unsurmountable obstacles*" (Ibid.: 151) to imports and exports. The Czech concern coordinated their sales and purchases, supplied them with Zlín-made machinery and equipment, provided them with semi-finished products to avoid tariffs for finished goods, and used them in return to furnish workshops in Zlín with raw materials. While financial ownership moved to Switzerland, management of the ancillaries remained by and large headquartered in Zlín. Moreover, Bata opened its business to non-European countries, followed a strategy of low prices in

order to obtain a monopolistic position, and eliminated intermediaries by establishing an international network of stores.

Fig. 1. Bata Satellite Towns built in the 1930s and 1940s in relation to the transnational network of waterways, railroads, main roads, flight paths, and transoceanic lines they were connected with.



Source: author.

26 What is more, Bata's management understood that expansion beyond Zlín needed to take into account how the new production facilities would appear in the local built environments. As seen above, the company's success in its hometown was based on the intricate intertwining of management and production, with a set of urban and architectural practices that both organized industrial and social life, and operated as representational tools. Thus, for the success of the Bata system elsewhere, its reproduction had to be complete, including the design of its built environment.

27 Whereas Zlín´s transformation had been incremental, the task of designing the regulatory plans of the so-called Bata satellite cities became an opportunity for the company architects to refine Bata's urban system. Decentralization of production in new locations allowed to built cities that would be liberated from their context and past, designed to work in unison with Bata's managerial system. Further, the ambitious scale and radical urban form of these masterplans radiated an enormous optimism in the future, unstoppable growth of the company.

28 With his 1934 masterplan for Baťov (Czechoslovakia; today Otrokovice, Czech Republic), architect Gahura set the design principles of these first town plans. Their most defining element was the application of functional zoning in a non-hierarchical orthogonal grid that extended all over the building site; such grid was used to organize the planned program, creating functional programmatic islands. The factory complex was in the most prominent location, clearly at the center of the composition, with residential and recreational areas around it. Placing the social center of the living quarters in direct continuity with the factory grounds reinforced such centrality. Emanating from the factory gate, a green axis extended across the town, surrounded by public buildings and dormitories. As in Zlín, the typo-morphology of the housing blocks in the satellite regulatory plans was that of free-standing cubical, semidetached units forming a checkerboard pattern on a green field, with densities ranging from twelve—a

typical garden city density, as in Letchwork (Unwin 1912)—to twenty dwellings per acre.

29 Adapting the scheme to different site forms and conditions allowed to explore through different iterations the potential of the grid and functional zoning to become the new standard for transnational Bata urbanism. Hence, grid plans for Ottmuth, Chełmek, Borovo, Möhlin (Switzerland), East Tilbury, Best, Hellocourt, Batanagar, and Napajedla (Czechoslovakia; today Czech Republic) were developed between the years 1934 and 1935 by Gahura, Antonín Vítek (1892-1979), and Vladimir Karfík, among others. Despite their diversity, what all these masterplans share is a sense of bigness, with the urban grid reaching the edges of the available land, to the point of suggesting the indefinite growth or extension of the urban system—mirroring the expansive growth of the company in that period.

30 Blueprints of the towns circulated in specialized publications of the period, further elevating architecture and urbanism as corporate myths reinforcing Bata's modernity. A special issue of the Czechoslovak journal *Stavitel* presented them as the visions that would *"direct the future development of these communities to increase the high living standards of Bata employees*" (Setnička 1935: 20). Later, in a review for *Casabella*, Italian architect and historian Mario Labò did not hide his excitement about the modernity and artistic value of Bata's urbanism abroad. "*Propaganda feels alive*" with Bata—he stated—since the company's "*industrial power*" had an "*immediate reflection*" in the built environment of Zlín and in the "*miracle*" of reproducing smaller versions of it elsewhere (1936: 28). He applauded the fact that far from adapting passively to local conditions, the projects revealed a strong conviction for implementing Bata's urban principles even more firmly in "*virgin territory*" (Ibid.: 28) than in Zlín. In his view, the towns achieved a "*rare harmony of style*" with a composition based on the "*strong dualism*" of two types, standardized large factory halls and small housing units; in his view, the result was a "*architectural panorama of intact unity*" (Ibid.: 29).

Batanagar: Nature against Efficiency, 1934-37

31 Upholding the universal modernist urban vision giving legitimacy to its industrial plans would become a battle full of challenges and compromises at the moment of bringing the blueprints to life. In particular, the history of the construction of Batanagar, Bata's factory and town in India, is illuminating. There, the company's ideas on the role of modern architecture and urbanism to create a new industrial order, and a new worker, were in alignment with those of the governing institutions, the British Empire—As Scott noted, colonial regimes were systems where 'welfare colonialism' and authoritarian power encouraged experiments to remake native societies through social engineering (1998). As such, Batanagar offers a window to look at how the company managed the opposition between social appropriateness versus instrumentality: how sticking to the initial plans would come at the cost of conflicts with the logic of efficiency; and how the actual execution of those blueprints was decoupled from the ideals of standardized, modern building as carried out in Zlín.

32 When Bata began unfolding its strategy to decentralize its manufacturing activities and export its urban model beyond Europe, India seemed to offer perfect conditions. Some of the reasons for that were purely pragmatic from an operational perspective: first, India was a plentiful source of cotton textiles, rubber, and leather; second, there was

room in the market for competition; and third, there was a large pool of semi-skilled labor available. Yet there were some other, 'higher' purposes: it was on the interest of the British regime to welcome plans to industrialize and modernize the country to prevent anti-colonial sentiments (Baroš 1945).

33 Negotiations in 1934 with the colonial authorities of the Government of British India resulted in the finding of an appropriate site for an industrial garden town. More specifically, the Port Commissioners of Calcutta sold Bata the property called Mirpur, fifty-four hectares of land in an area named Nangi, downstream the Hooghly river, west of Kolkata. The site was on a flooding plain in one of the many meanders of the river. Although it was relatively well connected by water, rail and road to Kolkata, a priori the site was not a suitable place: half of the site was an abandoned brick field in a jungle full of snakes, and the other half was flooded during high tide. In spite of that, on October 28, 1934, the so-called Czech pioneers laid down the foundation stone of the future town of Batanagar ("Batanagar photo album 1" 1936, "Batanagar photo album 2" 1936, "Site plan" 1937, Baroš 1945).

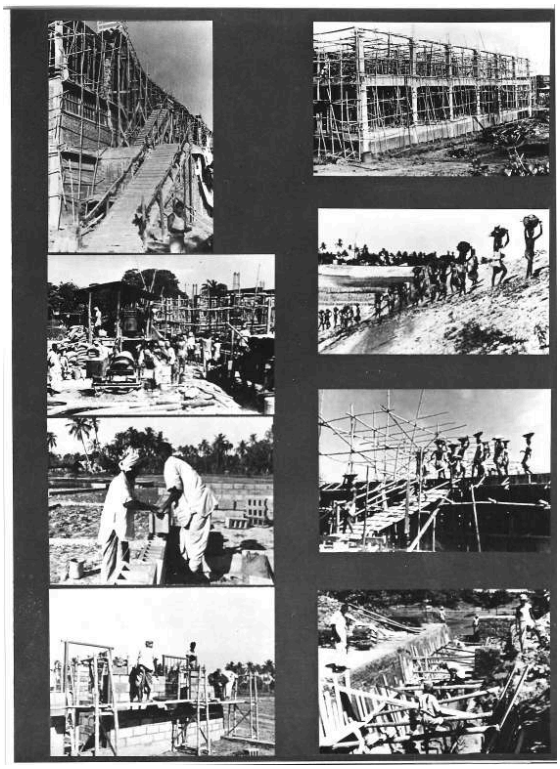
34 In the second half of 1934, Bretislav Martinec, the architect in charge of Batanagar, proposed to be pragmatic in its construction by means of phasing its development. Specifically, his phasing proposed that no construction of buildings and roads should take place during the monsoon. Departing from the gridiron plan, Martinec proposed to build in the initial two phases on dry areas, avoiding ponds, silting pits, and areas prone to flooding. However, it was unclear how the third phase would continue. As a result, the town plan looked unorganized, as the grid was not recognizable in the intermediate phases ("Phasing plan of Batanagar" 1934). Not surprisingly, the story says that Jan Antonín Baťa personally rejected his proposal: "*If there are pits on your way, ... fill them up*" (Baroš 1945: 51), he reportedly ordered, urging Martinec to impose the grid on the site, as he himself drew straight lines on the plan. He had been too realistic, and failed to capture the great modern plan envisioned for Bataganar.

35 Throughout 1935, Martinec designed and developed the systems of canalization and sewage to prepare the whole site for construction. Once a new sluice gate was built, land was finally dry and 700 workers could start leveling the land. The task was gigantic, since the difference in height between points in the site was thirty-seven feet (Baroš 1945). Additionally, water was very superficial, so deep foundations and water pumps were needed to erect the factories and first houses in the living colonies beginning late 1935:

> *Not one company, for miles around, was doing any construction work, except for the geniuses at Bata. Sinking foundations and setting concrete in the monsoon—you'd have to be insane. Or suicidal.... The flood of pumps set against the rain, the mixer pouring concrete into the foundations before the holes disappeared under water.*
>
> (Andronikova 2015: 66)

36 Historical images in the Zlín archive do corroborate the messiness and scale of the site preparation works and building construction described in Andronikova's *The Sound of the Sundial*, a novel set during the construction of Batanagar.

Fig. 2. “People who built this town [Batanagar]. Nearly 2 million man days already spent and many thousands to be added until the work will be completed. Machines were used but most of the work have [sic] been carried out as customary in the far east. Materials carried on the heads, bamboo scaffolding.”



Source: Courtesy of Paul Zitek, from a 1951 album of O. Zitek.

37 Indeed, modern construction was to a certain extent a ceremonial endeavor in Batanagar, that is, there was a decoupling between the ideal of its achievement—blueprints from Zlín—and the day-to-day construction techniques used and resulting buildings in order make the project actually possible. The local workers did landfill works by hand or with rudimentary means, and bamboo scaffoldings were used in the construction of concrete buildings (Personal correspondence with Paul Zitek 2015; “Batanagar photo album 1” 1936, “Batanagar photo album 2” 1936). The first manufacturing halls and administrative buildings did follow the standard Bata module —with columns placed at a distance of twenty feet both directions, yet these were wider, one-story constructions. The look of the houses and dormitories also differed from the ones in Zlín; these buildings, meant for introducing the local population to modern living, were with their radical design closer to Bauhaus functionalism than to the traditional Bata brick cubes in Europe.

38 Despite the efforts in engineering the site to bring it closer to the ideal of a dry and dustless environment, Batanagar was not safe from the yearly scourge of the monsoon. And so, photographs show the chaos caused by the wind and rain (“Batanagar photo album 1” 1936, “Batanagar photo album 2” 1936). Flooded factories and dwellings, scenes of havoc, brick walls pulled down, and corrugated roof sheets crumpled like paper dominated the construction site. In addition, dampness stained the white walls of the dwellings—eventually, as confirmed by senior Bata’s management in personal interviews with the author, these would need to be repainted every year.

39 In 1937, Martinec left India and the architect Oldřich Zitek took charge of supervising the construction of Batanagar. Zitek, encouraged by his superiors, proposed to build the first three-story building on the site (Baroš 1945). Built also with great difficulties during the monsoon season of 1937, its construction embodies the company's adherence, albeit sometimes ceremonially, to the institutionalized urban and architectural practices that would give legitimacy to its industrial activities in India. The grid plan, however, would proved to be less fundamental, as in 1936 Martinec had drawn a new plan which shifted to the use of diagonals and curves in the layout. The reason for this change was to be found in problems of legitimation Bata was encountering while planning its European towns.

Best, East Tilbury, and the Emergence of the 'English Plan' in 1935

40 The early planning history of Bata's industrial satellites in The Netherlands and England shows how demands to achieve local legitimation in specific nodes of Bata's system challenged and force to change certain corporate urban myths, and how these shifts then travelled across the company's transnational network. In 1930 the Bata Company was searching in The Netherlands for an appropriate site for a factory and town. After fruitless negotiations with the city of Eindhoven, North Brabant, during the years 1931 and 1932 (Bouma & van Meijel 2011), in 1933 Bata's Dutch subsidiary approached the neighboring municipality of Best, to inquiry about the possibility of purchasing 160 hectares of heather and grass land. With urgency, the town council met in August and decided to sell the land to Bata under certain circumstances, namely that the factories would employ Dutch citizens (*Het Vaderland* 1933, *Echo van Het Zuiden* 1933). With no delay, the company purchased the land for its *Bata-stad* (Bata-city).

41 Initially, all conditions seemed favorable for a smooth implementation of Bata's urban blueprints in Best. Although the existing Regional Plan for North Brabant did not contemplate any urban development on that swath of heather, industry was regarded as a compatible land use for it. On that premise, the regional planning authorities did not set any obstacle for that unanticipated development. On the contrary, they were confident that liberating Bata from dealing with complex planning regulations and negotiations would be ultimately in the benefit of a region suffering from high unemployment (Bosma 2003, Bouma & van Meijel 2011). Good news for Bata did not end there: the project was to be overseen and advised by Joël Meijer de Casseres (1902-1990), a modern planner who quickly empathized with the company's urban and social ideals after visiting Zlín in late 1933 (Bosma 2003).

42 However, as soon as planning applications began, powerful local opposition would emerge and challenge the legitimation of Bata's urban visions. More specifically, Best would become the battleground between de Casseres and engineer G. Bolsius, Provincial Housing Inspector—whose ultimate approval was needed. Whereas de Casseres sympathized with the idea of a modernist Garden City—in the Dutch tradition of H.P. Berlage or W.M. Dudok—and was a "*champion in modern planning*", Bolsius was a "*champion of Catholic forms*" (Ibid.: 72). Specifically, Bolsius favored a neotraditional approach in the design of the satellite extensions around Eindhoven, inspired by the forms of the villages in Brabant.

43 Not surprisingly, Bolsius rejected de Casseres' proposal for Best, based on blueprints elaborated in Zlín, when presented for his approval. In his explanation, he pointed at two issues. First, he believed that factory and workers' housing should be clearly and noticeably apart from each other. Second, he saw in Bata's modern spatial and social plans a threat to the spiritual health of the area, in line to the fears of socialism that other political and religious sectors in Brabant shared (van Meer 2013). The plan, with its uniform gridded pattern and functionalist zoning, symbolized, in Bolsius opinion, "*the spiritual poverty of the world*" and lacked "*a sense of community*" (as quoted in Bosma 2003: 77). Nothing in it reminded of the character of a Brabant village, and therefore the local labor would not feel comfortable in such environment, he sentenced. Shortly after the rejection, de Casseres would angrily criticize Bolsius as:

> [his] *opinion ... demonstrates such a lack of insight into economic and industrial issues....* [The project] *gives the opportunity to make a really important modern creation which will make the name of this area in the country more important than if we go back very artificially to a forms that will look like an anachronism and it will make this person object of laughter among his colleagues.*
>
> (As quoted in Ibid.: 75)

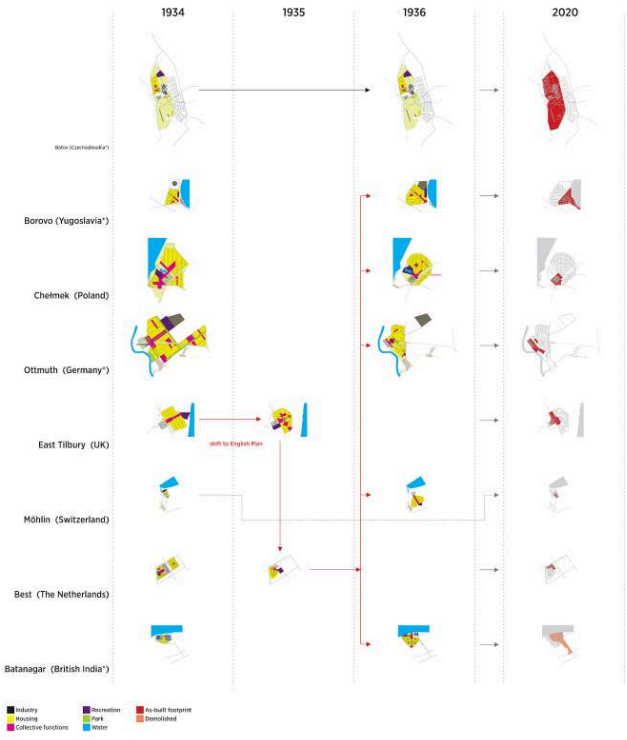
44 Bata's management discarded the plan and hired planner Cornelis van Traa to develop a new proposal. His plan, dated in April 1935, was an ill-defined compromise that set apart housing development and factory by a green area, and introduced row housing as the dominant typology. His plan would be short-lived, as the ultimate solution for Best would come from England later that year.

45 In parallel to the expansion of manufacturing operations to The Netherlands, Bata's management was also dealing with setting an industrial satellite for the British Bata Company. In October 1931 Bata had made public its intention to purchase a site by the Thames for that purpose (Smith 2008). Despite the outcry that bursted in the English shoe manufacturing towns when the news came out (Rumsey 2010), landowners responded with properties on either bank of the river. Allegedly, Reverend Bown of Tilbury persuaded Tomáš Bata to consider a site east of Tilbury for establishing his factory over the other possibilities, bringing employment to the local youth ("History" 2015). Eventually, Bata purchased the land by spring of 1932 (Smith 2008).

46 Similarly to what was happening in Best, the company was facing problems with the planning approval of its blueprints for East Tilbury. Archival research showed that, in fact, the Orsett Council had rejected Vladimír Karfík's town plan for Tilbury in 1935. Likewise Bolsius, the Council explicitly recommended the adoption of specific design principles of urban form as an alternative to the gridiron plan. Nonetheless, their suggestion was not in the direction of copying traditional urban forms, but to take Welwyn Garden City, founded in 1920, as a model. Subsequently, Bata's representatives went to visit Ebenezer Howard's new town. Their remarks in a letter from 1935 contained a positive appraisal of the regulatory plan of the English city. First, its typical street section was described with minute details, paying compliment to the presence of green strips, flowers, bike paths, and to the total absence of a "s*ingle piece of unresolved or unkempt space.*" Most importantly, they admired the way the plan was resolved without "*long, straight, orthogonal streets*", in contrast to Karfík's design. "*We recommend that our people who are responsible for regulations, adjustments and construction, go see Welwyn when they go to England*", they concluded ("Letter to Zlín" 1935).

47 The recommendation to shift toward Garden City ideas of urban form in the plans for East Tilbury would circulate and diffuse quickly across the network of Bata towns in construction, including Best. The minutes of a conference dealing with the next steps to take in Brabant reveal that by August 19, 1935, the shift towards English Garden City plans was underway. Actually, the command to the designers could not be more explicit: the regulatory plan had to change "*and adapt to the English plan,*" and introduce round corners, "*to facilitate traffic*" ("Konferrenz mit Herrn Schaepman am 19. August 1935" 1935). Additionally, a church had to be added to the program—given the difficulties encountered, getting the consent of the Catholic establishment became a priority (van Meer 2013). According to these minutes, a new plan was to be ready in mid-September 1935. The new plan, of unclear authorship, separated residential areas and factory with a green area, defined a clear social and commercial center at the factory entrance, and, most importantly, avoided monotony of the previous grid by introducing radiant streets and triangular blocks with round corners. After Best, comparable adaptations took place simultaneously in the plans for Möhlin, Borovo, Ottmuth, and Batanagar between 1935 and 1937, signaling a process of homogeneization, isomorphism, of the urban form in Bata's network of towns in construction.

Fig.3. Timeline showing the shift in urban form of the Bata Satellite towns abroad between 1934-1936—from gridiron plan to 'English' plan—as well as their as-built footprint in 2020. All plans are drawn at the same scale



Source: author, based on town plans kept in the SOkA Zlín.

48 While De Casseres showed dissatisfaction with the new plan that came from Zlín, Bata ended up prioritizing legitimation and business over urban form. In the planner's view, with the church as a prominent focal point, the plan had turned into a "*parochial*" (Bosma 2003, 77) one. By that time, however, it was too late the recovery of

the Garden City model as the model for Bata satellite tows had already become a new standard, and Bata-stad became *Batadorp* (Bata village).

Facing Imperfect Mirrors 1935-1939

49 As the planning history of Batanagar, Best, and Tilbury showed, the process of bringing the towns to fruition was in great contrast with the efficiency their plans represented. Documents and correspondence between management of the Building Department of the company, preserved in the State District Archives in Zlín, reveal that the decoupling between blueprints and reality was generalized. One example is the number of five-story standard factories, buildings embodying Bata's ideas of standardization, which had been built abroad. While 71 per cent of the initially planned aggregated industrial program abroad had been built in 1935, most of these factories—70 percent—were one-story halls built in steel, and not in the iconic five-story buildings specified in the plans (these accounted just for a 14 percent). Furthermore, as compared to the technical sophistication reached in the building process of the standard concrete skeletons in Zlín, construction techniques in the European satellite towns were more rudimentary, as it had happened in India. This is evident in pictures documenting the erection of the factories in Ottmuth and Möhlin, showing the use of wooden formwork and square columns ("Overview of the Buildings Abroad" 1935).

50 Similarly, as compared to the large residential estates drew in the regulatory plans, and the ideas of welfare they conveyed, actual housing supply in the satellite towns seemed modest. In 1935, 332 buildings of 478 expected residential buildings had been built or were under construction. Certainly, that was a noticeable effort, as, to contextualize these figures, the same year just 136 corporate dwellings had been built in Zlín (Ševeček 2009). However, considering that these numbers accounted for housing built in eight different towns, results were far behind the expectations expressed in the masterplans. Further, more than half of the housing units—65%—being constructed were buildings for four and eight families, and dormitories and boarding homes for single workers and apprentices. Just a third of the planned units were semidetached houses, being that percentage inferior to the 55 percent of semidetached houses in Zlín in 1930. Housing in the satellite towns was clearly decoupled from Bata's corporate motto "*Work Collectively, Live Individually*."

51 The reasons behind the decoupling between plans and reality were manifold, as described in the book *Industrial City* (Bat'a 2012 [1939]). Some of them were external to the project, such as organized boycotts, political interferences, several *Lex Bata* (imposing restrictions on output), and bans on construction. Yet other causes had their origin in an insufficient knowledge of the local environment, and its social and political dynamics. As a result, access to basic resources, such as drinking water (Best), infrastructure for efficient logistics and construction (Hellocourt and Möhlin), or labor (Best, Tilbury, Hellocourt), was limited.

52 Despite the setbacks, Bata's management stood firm in its belief concerning the possibility of a perfect coupling between social appropriateness, embodied in the design of a city, and its instrumentality as manufacturing center. Practical knowledge from Bata's past experiences in urbanization and manufacturing abroad, together with studies on garden city theory and other industrial towns, were codified in the series of ideal industrial town models coordinated by the architects Gočár and Robert H.

Podzemný (1904-1990) between 1937 and 1939. With experts from Bata's different departments working together on standard plans for industrial garden cities with a population ranging from 150 to 10.000 inhabitants, the ultimate result went beyond a city plan. In fact, the document provided with instructions on site selection; an inventory of the materials, machinery, tools, furniture, and people involved throughout the construction and proper functioning of the city; a catalogue of building types; and a detailed account of the organization of the manufacturing units in the factory.

Conclusions

53 Using the case of the satellite towns of the Bata Shoe Company as testing ground, this research article used sociological neoinstitutionalism as a conceptual framework through which the field of urban history can obtain new insights on the rationale guiding urban developments with a multinational corporation as their sponsor. The research showed how Bata's plans to modernize its home town Zlín to better serve the interests of the company gained legitimacy, both by the population of Zlín with their votes in an election, and, in a more general way, by a new national government promoting ideas around the rational organization of life and work. Next, the essay described how the company architects translated the *myths* on urban form and architecture used in Zlín into a series of designs, *blueprints*, for the development of industrial settlements abroad; such ideals had not just been legitimated in the Czechoslovak political sphere, but also by national and international architectural critics of the time. Then, the article discussed the development of Batanagar, and the conflict, anticipated by sociological institutionalism, between social appropriateness—persisting in those myths and pursuing the ideal blueprints, in alignment with colonial plans for modernization—and pragmatism—with the enacting of those myths being *ceremonial*, decoupled from a reality of poor technical means. Moving to the planning history of Best and East Tilbury showed how in institutional contexts in which Bata's urban myths did not serve a legitimizing purpose, the corporation abandoned its design practices and adopted others to gain external approval. Further, research showed how these new practices diffused through its multinational network, homogenizing plans according to the new ideal. Lastly, the article briefly explained how the decoupling between Bata's urban blueprints and the reality on the sites was generalized throughout all Bata towns in construction in the mid 1930s.

54 The relevance for the field of urban history of the approach proposed with this research is twofold. On the one hand, at a more particular level, the approach proposed could inform future directions on research on the transnational urban history of the Bata company, for example: how planning and design of industrial settlements was conditioned during German occupation (1938-45); or why after the war, a Canadian-based Bata slowly withdrew from its interests in city development, while the towns that remained in communist hands further developed and thrived until 1989.

55 On the other, the neoinstitutional lens offers a way to interpret current urban phenomena linked to the impact of transnational corporate activities, global production networks and commodity flows in local built environments. First, it allows interpreting the flows of planning and architecture ideas in a corporate network. Second, it explains its rationale and related processes of homogenization, and why

certain spatial solutions are deemed more appropriate than others. Third, it exposes how organizations evade questions around their legitimation while remaining efficient, by decoupling how they present themselves to the public from the reality of their operations. All in all, sociological institutionalism reveals that external legitimation seems to be one of the key forces guiding the spatial practices of corporate actors.

56 However, opening the black box of organizational decision-making, in particular within private corporations, is not an endeavor free of difficulties. Unlike Bata, not all companies have their internal workings, historical or current, kept in a publicly accessible archive. On top of that, with the dominance of paperless communications, relevant evidence might never be available for future scrutiny. Therefore, the urban researcher invested in these questions ought to broaden its usual repertoire of sources. The study of corporate and technical documents, industry agendas, zoning plans, and spatial and economic policies could complement fieldwork and interviews with entrepreneurs, suppliers, workers, and policy-makers, in order to identify the relevant actors entangled in decision-making, their values and motivations, and the institutional context where they operate. Work could be complemented by explorations into the use of methodologies like open-source intelligence (OSINT), to gather additional publicly available information.

57 Despite the challenges, and to conclude, reading in this way projects by multinational actors could have implications that may empower local communities in steering how globalization reshape urban spaces. New forms, meanings, technical solutions, or actors are adopted by these organizations to gain acceptance in the contexts where they operate. More importantly, if successful, these myths diffuse across networks and other institutions. Thus, if legitimation matters, local forces are not powerless. Strong, democratic institutions supporting political action, and civil society can potentially redefine the urban impacts of a multinational organization, as long as mechanisms to scrutinize these outcomes are put in place too. As Patsy Healey (1997) argued, institutions are not immutable; changing the rules, deciding what is legitimate and acceptable, and what is not, can make a difference.

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ABSTRACTS

Between 1929 and 1935, the Bata Shoe Company planned the construction of a series of modern industrial satellite towns in Europe, Asia, and America. By 1935, however, their development was far from advanced, and their original town plans, following a modernist grid, had been replaced with new ones, based on garden city ideas. A transnational explanation of the conditions that complicated their construction and motivated changes in their design remains as a gap in the existing literature on the Bata Shoe Company. The conceptual framework of sociological institutionalism is used to study how questions of meaning and social legitimacy influenced the design and construction of Bata's industrial towns in the 1930s. The methodology employed involved the triangulation of the study of secondary sources and research into Bata's archives, with the analysis of how the urban form of the towns changed through time. The research reveals the institutionalization of ideas on urban planning and architecture within Bata's structure, and the role of external legitimation in justifying their utilization or withdrawal. Finally, this article will posit that interdisciplinary readings on contemporary urban history can bring new insights into the transformation of the built environment by multinational organizations.

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Keywords: Transnational Urbanism; Planning History; Industrial Towns; Institutional Change; Sociological Institutionalism

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