

The intended scientific objective of the project is to create a synthetic elaboration of architecture and urban planning in German Silesia during the Third Reich period (1933–1945). The research area is Silesia – both Lower Silesia and Upper Silesia provinces belonging to the German Reich in that period, as well as the Polish Silesian Voivodeship incorporated into the Reich in 1939 as a result of World War II. The project will be problem-focused and based on the critical analysis of implemented and unrealized architectural and urban design works. The main research hypothesis assumes proving the connection between Silesian architectural and urbanistic ideas and the role of Silesia as a place where the idea of expansion to the east was conceptualized, and after 1939 – the place of architectural and urban experiments connected with colonization policy on the new Polish territories.

In the interwar period, a concept of historical research on the East (*Ostforschung*) was intensively developed in Breslau (Wrocław). This issue has already been quite well recognized, but there is still the question whether and to what extent Silesia was the area of developing patterns in the field of architecture and urban space, later implemented under the *Generalplan Ost*, which assumes the complete transformation and germanization of areas located east of the German Reich.

The reason for choosing such a research topic is the fact that Silesia remained outside the mainstream of research on the architecture of the Third Reich and, with few exceptions, outside the interest of Polish and German researchers. It should also be added that these researchers marginalized the role of Silesia at that time and treated it as a distant province, low in the hierarchy of the Berlin authorities. The proposed approach is to employ a different optics that will show the importance of Silesia as one of the south-easternmost region of the Reich and the reflection of that fact in planning and construction activities, as well as in colonization policy.

The matters to be studied include the architectural creation of Silesia associated with its role as a center for study of the German East and as a bastion of germanism on the south-eastern border of the Reich (including the redevelopment of its capital into a model east German metropolis), the role of architects and their Silesian urban and architectural ideas applied in planning in the east, including the export of designers and model solutions.

The project assumes carrying out queries in Polish and German collections, which will allow to verify the current state of knowledge about Silesia. The most important group of sources to study constitutes architectural designs and urban plans, as well as documents and photographs, found in many archives and institutions, private collections, including the legacy of individual architects and archives of their families.

The innovative research approach proposed in the assumed hypothesis is to demonstrate the position and importance of Silesia in the planning and construction activities as well as the colonization policy of the Third Reich. On the one hand, the effects of research will fill gaps in knowledge about the region and allow it to be systematized, while on the other hand, the original approach will allow to look at Silesian architecture in the context of the idea of expansion to the east.

The project is already embedded in an international research network on Nazi architecture based on contacts with scientists working on similar projects. Thanks to that, it will contribute to the further transfer of knowledge and a deeper understanding of the processes taking place in different parts of the German Reich in the period under consideration and it will bring new cognitive content not only to the history of Silesia and Central Europe but also to the worldwide research on the architecture and urban planning of the Third Reich.