CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

INTRODUCTION

Twinned cities: reconciliation and reconstruction in Europe after 1945 – an introduction

Christoph Laucht[1] and Tom Allbeson[2]

[1]Department of History, Heritage and Classics, Swansea University, Swansea, UK
[2]School of Journalism, Media & Culture, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK
Corresponding author: Christoph Laucht; Email: c.laucht@swansea.ac.uk

Abstract
While town twinning has played a crucial role in reconciliation and reconstruction processes in Europe after World War II, urban historians have not yet paid sufficient attention to it. This special issue thus addresses this historiographical neglect through a set of case-studies that examine the role of twinned cities in post-war reconciliation and reconstruction between former enemy nations and across the ideological fault lines of the Cold War. The framework that underpins all contributions rests on the use of 'twinned cities' as an umbrella term to denote various forms of inter-municipal links and builds on similarly broad definitions of 'reconciliation' and 'reconstruction'.

From the start of Russia's war on Ukraine, Kyiv agreed twinning arrangements with major European cities, including Hamburg, Madrid and Paris, thereby bringing its total to some 63 by January 2023. The official *Visit Ukraine Today* website explained this increase in inter-municipal links by pointing to the humanitarian mission of Kyiv's sister cities that donated urgently needed medical supplies, buses, generators and other materials to the war-torn Ukrainian capital city or sheltered Ukrainian refugees.[1] Simultaneously, many European towns and cities suspended, or even cut often long-established links with Russian municipalities in the aftermath of the Russian attack on Ukraine.[2] These examples from the ongoing Russian war on Ukraine – Europe's largest land war since the end of World War II – demonstrate how questions of town twinning and inter-municipal co-operation take on heightened significance in times of conflict and its aftermath. This special issue addresses perceptions, practices and performances of such relationships after 1945. In this

---

[1]'Sister cities of Kyiv: what does such cooperation and the essence of twinning during the war give', *Visit Ukraine Today*, 12 Jan. 2023, https://visitukraine.today/blog/1399/sister-cities-of-kyiv-what-does-such-cooperation-and-the-essence-of-twinning-during-the-war-give, accessed 4 Jul. 2023.
[2]M. Weaver, 'Friend or foe? The UK cities cutting ties with Russian twins', *Guardian*, 23 Mar. 2022, www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/mar/23/uk-cities-cutting-ties-with-russian-twins, accessed 4 Jul. 2023.

period, town twinning played an important role in decisive questions of reconciliation and reconstruction, but was also entangled in the geopolitics of the Cold War.

Twinned cities have long played crucial roles in transnational relations, operating on different scales from individuals to institutions at the sub-state and state levels.[3] Such partnerships took many different forms, including economic and social links based on shared industries (often, but not always, involving unionized labour such as mining, manufacturing or maritime businesses), generational and intergenerational connections (such as school exchange programmes with families volunteering to host visiting pupils), or cultural and sporting associations (including competitions, theatre performances, food festivals or Christmas markets). After the end of World War II, towns and cities in the former enemy nations contributed to an emerging process of reconciliation by forging ties between municipalities in Germany, Italy and their British, French and Polish counterparts. Furthermore, from the late 1940s and throughout the Cold War, cities from across the two blocs formed partnerships to further the understanding between East and West, while in organizations such as International Cities for Peace[4] or Mayors for Peace[5] city officials engaged in peace campaigning.

However, no broader co-ordinated attempt has yet been made to explore the practice, performance and perception of twinned cities in what, after Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann, can be termed a 'hinge' moment for contemporary European urban history.[6] This special issue on 'Twinned cities: reconciliation and reconstruction in Europe after 1945' will thus focus on town twinning, inter-municipal networks and their importance to post-conflict relations between communities of different nationalities as well as the ways in which these partnerships manifested themselves socially and culturally, and their position within processes of both the post-war reconstruction of devastated urban centres and the reconciliation of former enemies after 1945. It builds on and expands the existing historiography that consists of studies of the roles of mayors and municipal officials or organizations in twinning movements;[7] of particular twin cities like

---

[3]N. Kenny, 'From body and home to nation and world: the varying scales of transnational urbanism in Montreal and Brussels at the turn of the twentieth century', *Urban History*, 36 (2009), 223–42. On scale and space, see A. Björkdahl and S. Buckley-Zistel, 'Spatializing peace and conflict: an introduction', in A. Björkdahl and S. Buckley-Zistel (eds.), *Spatializing Peace and Conflict: Mapping the Production of Places, Sites and Scales of Violence* (Basingstoke, 2016), 1–22; S. Marston, 'The social production of scale', *Progress in Human Geography*, 24 (2000), 219–42.

[4]'What are cities of peace', *International Cities of Peace: A Vision for Global Community*, www.internationalcitiesofpeace.org/about/what-are-cities-of-peace/, accessed 4 Jul. 2023.

[5]'Outline', *Mayors for Peace*, www.mayorsforpeace.org/en/about-us/outline-m4p/, accessed 4 Jul. 2023.

[6]R. Bessel and D. Schumann, 'Introduction: violence, normality, and the construction of postwar Europe', in R. Bessel and D. Schumann (eds.), *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge, 2003), 1–13 (at 5). A notable exception to the general historiographical neglect of studying the practice, performance and perception of twinned cities offers this co-edited volume: C. Defrance, T. Herrmann and P. Nordblom (eds.), *Städtepartnerschaften in Europa im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 2020).

[7]P. Dogliani, 'European municipalism in the first half of the twentieth century: the socialist network', *Contemporary European History*, 11 (2002), 573–96; J. Garrard (ed.), *Heads of Local State: Mayors, Provosts and Burgomasters since 1800* (Aldershot, 2007); H. Kozińska-Witt, 'The union of Polish cities in the Second Polish Republic, 1918–1939: discourses of local government in a divided land', *Contemporary European History*, 11 (2002), 549–71; A. Vion, 'L'invention de la tradition des jumelages (1951–1956): mobilisations pour un droit', *Revue Française de Science Politique*, 53 (2003), 559–82.

Birmingham;[8] of twinning across the blocs in the Cold War;[9] or of specific sister cities in Britain and East Germany (such as Coventry and Dresden);[10] of partnerships between cities in divided Germany[11] or triangular relationships through parallel twinning arrangements between cities outside of Germany with cities and towns in East and West Germany;[12] and of state interventions in town twinning initiatives during the Cold War.[13] Notably, town twinning, as an integral part of Franco-German reconciliation after 1945, has received considerable historiographical attention.[14]

Through a set of case-studies, this special issue seeks to explore different facets and varieties of partnership between cities with particular reference to the process of reconciliation that occurred during the post-war reconstruction of cities after 1945. It

---

[8]S. Ewen, 'Transnational municipalism in a Europe of second cities: rebuilding Birmingham with municipal networks', in P.-Y. Saunier and S. Ewen (eds.), *Another Global City: Historical Explorations into the Transnational Municipal Moment, 1850–2000* (Basingstoke, 2008), 101–18.

[9]H.-W. Retterath (ed.), *Kommunale Partnerschaften zwischen West und Ost* (Freiburg, 2009).

[10]S. Berger and N. LaPorte, *Friendly Enemies: Britain and the GDR, 1949–1990* (New York, 2010), 282–9; S. Goebel, 'Commemorative cosmopolis: transnational networks of remembrance in post-war Coventry', in S. Goebel and D. Keene (eds.), *Cities into Battlefields: Metropolitan Scenarios, Experiences and Commemorations of Total War* (Aldershot, 2011), 163–83; M. Thomas, *Communing with the Enemy: Covert Operations, Christianity and Cold War Politics in Britain and the GDR* (Berne, 2005); M. Howarth, 'Coventry – Dresden, Manchester – Chemnitz, Aberdeen – Rostock: Städtepartnerschaften im Schatten des Kalten Krieges', *Deutschland Archiv*, 29 May 2015, www.bpb.de/themen/deutschlandarchiv/207012/coventry-dresden-manchester-chemnitz-aberdeen-rostock-staedtepartnerschaften-im-schatten-des-kalten-krieges/, accessed 4 Jul. 2023.

[11]G. Lisiecki, 'Deutsch-deutsche Städtepartnerschaften: Ihre historische Entwicklung und Bedeutung', Jena University Ph.D. dissertation, 1996; E. Rennebarth, *Kommunale 'innerdeutsche Außenpolitik' und das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit der DDR am Beispiel der Städtepartnerschaft Braunschweig–Magdeburg* (Braunschweig, 2017).

[12]U. Pfeil, 'Rendsburg – Vierzon – Bitterfeld: Ein Fallbeispiel deutsch-französischer Städtepartnerschaften im Kalten Krieg', *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Schleswig-Holsteinische Geschichte*, 129 (2004), 141–61. Similarly, Coventry (UK) was twinned with Kiel (FRG) and Dresden (GDR). On the triangular relationship between West German, French and Polish cities, see T. Herrmann, 'Städtepartnerschaften im trilateralen Kontext am Beispiel der Kommunalbeziehungen der Stadt Wolfsburg', in C. Defrance, N. Kißener, J. Kusber and P. Nordblom (eds.), *Deutschland – Frankreich – Polen seit 1945: Transfer und Kooperation* (Brussels, 2014), 225–46.

[13]N. Clarke, 'Town twinning in Cold-War Britain: (dis)continuities in twentieth-century municipal internationalism', *Contemporary British History*, 24 (2010), 173–91; M. Farish and D. Monteyne (eds.), *Cold War Cities*, special issue of *Urban History*, 42 (2015); U. Pfeil, 'Der Städte- und Gemeindetag der DDR als Akteur der kommunalen Beziehungen mit dem Ausland', in Defrance, Herrmann and Nordblom (eds.), *Städtepartnerschaften*, 133–46; C. Knitter, 'Ostdeutsch-französische Städtepartnerschaften und Zivilgesellschaft im Fadenkreuz der Staatssicherheit der DDR', in Defrance, Herrmann and Nordblom (eds.), *Städtepartnerschaften*, 147–60; A. Vion, 'Europe from the bottom up: town twinning in France during the Cold War', *Contemporary European History*, 11 (2002), 623–40.

[14]Key studies include C. Defrance, 'Les jumelages franco-allemands: aspect d'une cooperation transnationale', *Vingtième Siècle*, 99 (2008), 189–201; H. Simoneau, 'Les jumelages entre villes françaises et est-allemandes (1959–1975)', in C. Defrance, M. Kißener and P. Nordblom (eds.), *Wege der Verständigung zwischen Deutschen und Franzosen nach 1945: Zivilgesellschaftliche Annäherungen* (Tübingen, 2010), 255–69; L. Filipová, *Erfüllte Hoffnung: Städtepartnerschaften als Instrument der deutsch-französischen Aussöhnung, 1950–2000* (Göttingen, 2015); T. Herrmann, *Der zweite Deutsch-französische Städtepartnerschaftsboom (1985–1994): Akteure, Motive, Widerstände und Praxis* (Berlin, 2019).

builds on important research addressing cities in transnational and global relations,[15] urban foreign policy[16] and urban social history[17] and brings these historiographies into conversation with work on European reconstruction and reconciliation, including European integration.[18] The latter also includes work on the role of town twinning in promoting notions of a 'European civic spirit'.[19]

Key concepts: 'twinned cities', 'reconciliation' and 'reconstruction'

The key underlying concepts of this special issue – 'twinned cities', 'reconciliation' and 'reconstruction' – demand definitional clarity. 'Town twinning has become a flexible framework open to any ideas and activities that makes it so diverse and hard to define', Julia Grosspietsch has argued.[20] Hence, we use the notion of 'twinned cities' as a broad umbrella term to designate different types of inter-urban links across a spectrum, ranging from formal arrangements documented in treaties or diplomas to looser, more informal collaborations at the inter-communal level.[21] Moreover, the adjective 'twinned' infers a dynamic element, referring to the act of and activities around twinning.

Within the processes of twinning, urban space takes a pivotal role, being both the specific location of concrete examples of twinning activity, and the symbolic resource

---

[15]N. Clarke, 'Globalising care? Town twinning in Britain since 1945', *Geoforum*, 42 (2011), 115–25; S. Ewen and M. Hebbert, 'European cities in a networked world during the long 20th century', *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 25 (2007), 327–40; P.-Y. Saunier, 'Taking up the bet on connections: a municipal contribution', *Contemporary European History*, 11 (2002), 507–27; Saunier and Ewen (eds.), *Another Global City*; O. Gaspari, 'Cities against states? Hopes, dreams and shortcomings of the European municipal movement, 1900–1960', *Contemporary European History*, 11 (2002), 597–622; N. Kenny and R. Madgin (eds.), *Cities Beyond Borders: Comparative and Transnational Approaches to Urban History* (New York, 2016).

[16]T. Erlenbusch, *Kiels Städtepartnerschaften: Die kommunale Außenpolitik der Stadt Kiel von der frühen Nachkriegszeit bis ans Ende der Neunzigerjahre* (Kiel, 2022).

[17]M. Föllmer and M.B. Smith (eds.), *Urban Societies in Europe*, special issue of *Contemporary European History*, 24 (2015).

[18]On urban reconstruction, see W. Durth and N. Gutschow, *Träume in Trümmern: Planungen zum Wiederaufbau zerstörter Städte im Westen Deutschlands 1940–1950*, 2 vols. (Braunschweig, 1988); J.M. Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II* (New York, 1993). On the physical and economic reconstruction of Europe, see A.S. Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe 1945–51* (London, 2005). On European integration, see W. Kaiser, B. Leucht and M. Rasmussen (eds.), *The History of the European Union: Origins of a Trans- and Supranational Polity, 1950–72* (London, 2009); M.J. Dedman, *The Origins and Development of the European Union 1945–2008: A History of European Integration*, 2nd edn (London, 2010); P. Ludlow (ed.), *European Integration*, special issue of *Contemporary European History*, 25 (2016).

[19]E. Keller, *Städtepartnerschaften – den europäischen Bürgersinn stärken: Eine empirische Studie* (Gütersloh, 2018). See also A. Langenohl, 'The imagination of Europe in twin town activities: rethinking political culture in the European Union', in M. Albert *et al.* (eds.), *Transnational Political Spaces: Agents, Structures, Encounters* (Frankfurt, 2009), 212–36.

[20]J. Grosspietsch, 'More than food and folk music? Geographical perspectives on European town twinning', *Geography Compass*, 3 (2009), 1281–304 (at 1284).

[21]Timo Erlenbusch identifies six types of inter-urban links in *Kiels Städtepartnerschaften*, 14–15. In descending order from formal to informal (and loser) arrangements, these are: 'partnerships', 'friendships', 'contacts', 'sponsorships', 'project partnerships' and 'inter-communal co-operation'.

on which imagined communities of twinned towns draws upon to conceptualize and communicate twinning relationships.[22] As sociologist Andreas Langenohl (a contributor to this special issue) argues elsewhere, 'town twinning refers to the materialization of transnational relations through the local manifestation of international encounters among citizenries of towns located in different nation-states'.[23] Consequently, urban space 'embodies specific hybridizations between state and non-state sovereignty' or '*hybrid sovereignties*' (original emphasis), according to the geographer Sara Fregonese.[24] For twinned cities and towns, their '*hybrid sovereignties*' meant that they did not simply replicate the (inter)national policies of the governments of their home countries but were able to develop independent agendas, aims, objectives and motivations in their transnational paradiplomatic relationships at the sub-state level.[25] There existed, of course, limiting factors such as the East–West conflict, which forced West German towns and cities to adopt the principles of the 'Hallstein doctrine', for example. Under this diplomatic principle, the West German government claimed the right to sole representation for all of Germany and did not officially recognize the German Democratic Republic (GDR, East Germany) as a sovereign state until 1972.[26]

At the same time, as Elly Harrowell has highlighted, urban space became a 'facilitator of reconciliation'.[27] The multifaceted nature of reconciliation unfolded in twinned cities and towns after the end of World War II and within the context of the Cold War, frequently spanning the ideological fault lines of that conflict. Through reconciliation, or 'negotiating peace', municipal officials, local politicians, clergy and other citizens aimed to avoid the outbreak of another war on European soil.[28] Along these lines, the contributions to this special issue that deal with British–(West) German town twinning by Christoph Laucht, Tom Allbeson and Tosh Warwick offer an alternative lens onto what Patrick Major has also referred to as 'Britain's anti-special relationship with Germany'.[29] This is not to say though that these contributions idealize the processes of town twinning, reconciliation and reconstruction uncritically. Quite the opposite, they, like this special issue generally, build on recent

---

[22]See the recent proposals for a stronger incorporation of spatial dimensions into urban history: R. Rodger and S. Rau, 'Thinking spatially: new horizons for urban history', *Urban History*, 47 (2020), 372–83.

[23]A. Langenohl, 'The merits of reciprocity: small-town twinning in the wake of the Second World War', *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 32 (2017), 557–76 (at 557).

[24]S. Fregonese, 'Urban geopolitics 8 years on: hybrid sovereignties, the everyday, and geographies of peace', *Geography Compass*, 6 (2012), 290–303 (at 294).

[25]On 'paradiplomacy', see P. Soldatos and H.J. Michelmann, 'Subnational units: paradiplomacy in the context of European integration', *Journal of European Integration*, 15 (1992), 129–34.

[26]W.G. Gray, *Germany's New Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949–1969* (Chapel Hill, 2003); Erlenbusch, *Kiels Städtepartnerschaften*, 112–21.

[27]E. Harrowell, 'Towards a spatialised understanding of reconciliation', *Area*, 50 (2018), 240–7 (at 242–3). On the reciprocal relationship between the urban space, peace and conflict, see C. Laucht, 'Stadt, Frieden und Konflikt: Das reziproke Verhältnis von Stadt(raum)geschichte und Historischer Friedens- und Konfliktforschung', in D. Gerster, J. Hansen and S. Schregel (eds.), *Historische Friedens- und Konfliktforschung: Die Quadratur des Kreises?* (Frankfurt, 2023), 111–31.

[28]H. Nehring and H. Pharo, 'Introduction: a peaceful Europe? Negotiating peace in the twentieth century', in H. Nehring and H. Pharo (eds.), *A Peaceful Europe? Negotiating Peace in the Twentieth Century*, special issue of *Contemporary European History*, 17 (2008), 277–99.

[29]P. Major, 'Britain and Germany: a love–hate relationship?', *German History*, 26 (2008), 457–68 (at 457).

research that problematizes frictions and disputes in town twinning.[30] And, what is more, the present volume draws inspiration from critical analyses of 'European integration'[31] and 'Europeanism'.[32]

Finally, we take 'reconstruction' to be a complex process involving not simply the planning and rebuilding of war-damaged towns and cities. Reconstruction was an explicit preoccupation of politicians, religious leaders, intellectuals and journalists, town planners and architects, as well as 'ordinary' citizens in the post-war moment. The challenge of reconstruction, however, meant different things depending on the human and urban impact of the war, and the post-war political context in any given town, region or nation.[33] For instance, dealing with both the ignominy and disruption of occupation, 'reconstruction' in France implied not only 'material reconstruction and economic growth' but also 'political restoration', 'national reconciliation' and the 'reinvention of national identities'.[34] At the same time, reconstruction involved democratization processes for many Europeans, especially those living in former dictatorships such as (West) Germany and Italy.[35]

Demands for post-war reconstruction variously inferred rebuilding cities, re-engineering political cultures, restructuring economies (often towards the novel welfare state model) and re-establishing (or indeed creating) professional networks, grassroots movements and social bonds. Thus, as well as being a practical and architectural challenge, reconstruction was also a multifaceted psychological project across post-war Europe.[36] As Mark Mazower underscores, post-war reconstruction after 1945 was thus marked by a pronounced 'self-consciousness'.[37] This encompassed perceptions and emotions of the 'aftermath'[38] of World War II as well as a turn

---

[30]See the intellectually stimulating essay by M. Thießen, 'Uneinige Zwillinge: Britisches "town twinning" während des Kalten Krieges', in Defrance, Herrmann and Nordblom (eds.), *Städtepartnerschaften*, 161–81.

[31]K.K. Patel, 'Provincialising European union: co-operation and integration in Europe in a historical perspective', *Contemporary European History*, 22 (2013), 649–73 (at 651). Patel elaborates on these ideas in *Project Europe: A History*, translated by M. Dale (Cambridge, 2020).

[32]M.S. Ostrowski, 'Europeanism: a historical review', *Contemporary European History*, 32 (2023), 287–304 (at 289).

[33]Conceptually, we draw inspiration from Holger Nehring and Helge Pharo's notion of a 'peaceful Europe' as an alternative framework to study twentieth-century Europe as the epicentre of war and conflict by Mark Mazower and others. Nehring and Pharo, 'Introduction', 277–99; M. Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London, 1998).

[34]P. Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945–1965* (Cambridge, 2000), 15. Beyond France, see also G. Wagner-Kyora (ed.), *Wiederaufbau europäischer Städte/Rebuilding European Cities: Rekonstruktionen, die Moderne und die lokale Identitätspolitik seit 1945/Reconstructions, Modernity and the Local Politics of Identity Construction since 1945* (Stuttgart, 2014).

[35]M. Conway, *Western Europe's Democratic Age, 1945–1968* (Princeton, 2020).

[36]T. Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London, 2007; orig. edn 2005); S. Couperus and H. Kaal, 'Introduction: (re)constructing communities in Europe, 1918–1968', in S. Couperus and H. Kaal (eds.), *(Re)Constructing Communities in Europe 1918–1968: Senses of Belonging Below, Beyond and Within the Nation-State* (New York, 2017), 1–15.

[37]M. Mazower, 'Reconstruction: the historiographical issues', *Past & Present*, 210 (Supplement 6) (2011), in M. Mazower, J. Reinisch and D. Feldman (eds.), *Post-war Reconstruction in Europe: International Perspectives, 1945–1949* (Oxford, 2011), 17–28 (at 25).

[38]F. Biess and R.G. Moeller (eds.), *Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe* (New York, 2010).

to local communities for the purpose of post-war reconstruction.[39] Plus, many urban communities wrestled with the de-mobilization process, or 'waging peace', as Laura McEnaney calls it.[40] Within this culture of reconstruction, urban space was heavily freighted with expectations for post-conflict renewal and rebirth, becoming 'a crucial testing ground' of new ideas for and visions of post-war societies, as Moritz Föllmer and Mark B. Smith argue elsewhere.[41]

Twinned cities, reconciliation and reconstruction in Europe after 1945

Together, the contributions in this special issue address a range of important conceptual and historical questions for the period after 1945.[42] To what extent did relations between twin cities reflect larger trends in international relations? Is there something significant about urban space (its construction, use, contested meanings, etc.) in framing and performing twinning relationships? What was the role of local governments (mayors, city councillors and councils) in engaging in twinships? Did local governments have particular political ambitions in their participations in town twinning? How did the worldview of local authorities shape town twinning in an age of nation-states? Did it perhaps influence a move towards federalism?

In addition to these key issues, the articles also address crucial questions pertaining to the particular context of European reconciliation and reconstruction after 1945. In what ways did the post-war construction of European city partnerships relate to the post-war reconstruction of urban centres? How did partnerships between cities in Germany and Italy, on the one hand, and urbanities in Britain and France, on the other, shape the agendas and serve the purposes of reconciliation between former foes? What role have twin cities played in the memorialization of World War II? What bearing did the polarization during the Cold War have on the creation and operation of partnerships? How did municipal officials and civil servants organize themselves nationally and transnationally to form networks campaigning for peace and reconciliation? What were the most successful foundations (for example economic, social, cultural, educational) of twin city partnerships?

The articles follow a roughly chronological order. The English Midland city of Coventry and the northern German port city of Kiel were both subject to extensive urban destruction during the European bombing war. Christoph Laucht and Tom Allbeson examine how post-war processes of reconstruction articulated with grass-roots efforts towards reconciliation between municipal, religious and community leaders from these two urban centres, exploring town twinning between these parallel communities from 1945 to the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949. They employ the lens of 'urban internationalism' – that is, a post-war mentality advocating transnational understanding and co-operation, characterized by

---

[39]J. DeWaal, 'The turn to local communities in early post-war West Germany: the case of Hamburg, Lübeck and Bremen, 1945–1965', in Couperus and Kaal (eds.), *(Re)Constructing Communities*, 130–50.

[40]L. McEnaney, *Postwar: Waging Peace in Chicago* (Philadelphia, 2018).

[41]M. Föllmer and M.B. Smith, 'Urban societies in Europe since 1945: toward a historical approach', in Föllmer and Smith (eds.), *Urban Societies in Europe*, 475–91 (at 475–6).

[42]Here, we follow in part Stefan Couperus and Dora Vrhoci's plea for a longitudinal perspective on town twinning in 'A profitable friendship, still? Town twinning between Eastern and Western European cities before and after 1989', in E. Braat and P. Corduwener (eds.), *1989 and the West: Western Europe since the End of the Cold War* (London, 2019), 143–60.

multifaceted cultural exchange, central to which was the symbolism of the city ruined and rebuilt.

Addressing a different Anglo-German town twinning relationship, Tosh Warwick takes up the example of the 'Partnerschaft Oberhausen–Middlesbrough'. While the partnership between the northern English town and the German city located in the Ruhr (West Germany) dates back to the 1950s, Warwick prioritizes the era of post-industrialism from the 1970s onwards. He draws on local archives and press coverage (as Laucht and Allbeson do), as well as interviews and reminiscences to examine the origins, development and challenges of town twinning focused on the experience of Middlesbrough – what could be termed a 'one-town centred approach' to the historiography of town twinning. Originally forged by civic leaders and engaged citizens, the partnership left its mark on the urban fabric via multiple place names. It has proved both durable and adaptable, facilitating various festivals and civic initiatives, but also knowledge exchange regarding urban regeneration and a growing role for the contemporary cultural sector. Given the English town's location in an area that voted 'Leave' in the 2016 Brexit referendum, this case-study of the ideals and realities of town twinning across a number of generations provides valuable insights into pivotal and tumultuous decades for Britain's international networks and relationships with its European neighbours.

In turn, Christian Rau tackles the contested issue of globalization in the 1960s, focusing on town twinning initiatives playing out in the context of the GDR during the era of détente in which both sides of the Cold War sought to ease tensions. The article addresses the relationship between the Deutsche Städte- und Gemeindetag (the East German association of municipalities founded in 1955 which promoted trans-local exchange) and the United Towns Organization (UTO; a non-governmental organization founded in France in 1957 which sought to establish a global network of cities across the 'Iron Curtain'). Rau explores ambiguities immanent within a phenomenon he terms 'urban détente' – the instrumentalization of dialogue about city space, town planning and urban development to effect para-diplomatic interventions with the potential to mediate political tensions. Ultimately, the East German association was sidelined by the foreign ministry of the ruling Socialist Unity Party in the GDR, while the UTO redoubled its internationalist approach. Thus, Rau reveals, in an age of fraught foreign policy and growing international influence of non-governmental organizations, the question of the urban was not only relevant to the specificities of town twinning relationships, but also to ambiguous and contested efforts to influence the cultural Cold War.

Moving into East Germany's relationship with formerly German territories east of the Oder and Neisse rivers, Andrew Demshuk addresses town twinning initiatives established to promote contact between political leaders, worker delegations and cultural groups in the GDR and Poland. Established in 1959, the relationship between Dresden and Wrocław unwittingly exposed the contested and difficult histories of World War II less than a generation earlier. More than 600,000 Germans had been expelled or fled Breslau at the end of the war, after which – now located in Poland – the city became Wrocław. Many former residents of Breslau settled in the East German province of Saxony, including the city of Dresden. Drawing on archival and published sources, Demshuk reveals how worker exchange programmes and official events hosted by the two cities in these neighbouring socialist states inadvertently facilitated fraught cultural encounters between Wrocławian representatives and former Breslauers. For those who returned 'home' to observe Wrocław's

post-war Polish reality, the ideal of 'socialist friendship' failed to eradicate the sense of loss brought about by the forced migrations of the recent past.

Looking again at the era of détente as regards town twinning between Italy and the former Yugoslavia, Borut Klabjan considers relationships that cross both the ideological divide of the Cold War and the geographical divide of the Adriatic. He examines the multi-layered nature of town twinning practices, addressing the engagement and interaction of state, regional and municipal authorities which contributed towards productive co-operations in spite of the challenges faced. This relative success, primary sources reveal, drew in many instances on protagonists' wartime experiences, especially the shared anti-fascist struggle. Klabjan argues that the multifaceted practice was underpinned not by a straightforward political alignment between communist Italian cities and socialist Yugoslavian municipalities, but rather by more complex allegiances shaped by historical, geographic, economic and personal ties.

In the final article, Andreas Langenohl employs a sociological approach to address the 'competing logics' of town twinning in Europe since 1945. Drawing on interviews with German town twinning practitioners, he critically analyses conventional accounts that chart a path from municipal leaders' commitment to reconciliation and mutual understanding after 1945, to a more managerial logic since the 1990s wherein town twinning is viewed as a vehicle for European integration. The article explores the complexity of and investment in different drivers behind twinning relationships from the post-war to the post-Maastricht periods and interrogates the received wisdom that there is a historically linear trajectory or teleology at work such that town twinning necessarily contributes to the development of a 'European identity' via a process of socio-cultural Europeanization. While inter-municipal relationships between towns in France, Britain and Germany in the immediate post-war period were characterized by ambiguous, personal relationships between community representatives, subsequently a more corporate and strategic relationship underpinned the setting of clear shared goals in relation to topics such as tourism development and best practice for delivering municipal services. Thus, town twinning over the course of 80 years has undergone a transformation from the foundational role of personal relationships to the central significance of funding support and professional networks for exchange – a shift from the imaginary of reconciliation to that of integration accompanied by distinct approaches to and practices of town twinning.

This collection of articles thus addresses the important task of examining networks that sought to forge connections on either side of the Cold War divide and across it. Moreover, they demonstrate a thematic coherence by allowing the exploration of relations between various cities and nations at key points in the developing post-war moment. In doing so, it offers new insights that explain the importance of urban centres, communities and identities in the process of coming to terms with the aftermath of World War II and the repercussions of the Cold War, from 1945 into the era of the European Union.