

The Architecture of the Rzeszów Downtown from the *Flâneur* Perspective

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Abstract: The paper attempts to study architecture as an esthetic object with the use of mobile methods. I develop the concept of the *flâneur* view: an act of perception associated with a casual walk, enriched with reflections on the environment. The aim of the text is to describe the intricacies of the process: what makes the *flâneur* interested in particular architectural object, how one valorizes it, and what role the esthetics plays in the activity. This research walk was carried out by students in the Rzeszów Downtown. It included observation, taking notes, and photography. For the purpose of the paper, I analyze thirteen journals. The main finding is that students value visual and spatial harmony, and look for it in the cityscape. They are positive toward well-maintained, mostly historical buildings. Nature is also important to them. In their descriptions, they use everyday language and their type of esthetic reception can be named non-professional.

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Introduction

Architecture, although classified as art, is rarely studied from the point of view of art sociology. The contribution to the field is less extensive compared to research in visual arts, music, theater, or dance. As a research topic, it is more often undertaken by other disciplines of the humanities and social sciences (Wejbert-Wąsiewicz, Porczyński, Rozalska, 2021). Even the relative autonomy of the sub-discipline is debatable. There is an ongoing discussion between supporters of the idea that architecture is a research topic of urban sociology and authors considering it as an independent discipline (Łukasiuk, 2011). Still, esthetics plays a minor role in it. I consider this fact an interesting field for sociological exploration. In comparison to other forms of art, architecture is a more complex phenomenon. It engages more senses than painting or music and enables more possible ways of interaction. While it shares visuality, historicity, or symbolism with other forms of visual arts, its materiality and functionality should be also considered. Because of this complexity, a catalog of possible components and approaches to the sociology of architecture would exceed the limits of this paper. For this reason, I limit my approach to the intersection of art sociology and mobile methodology. The former would allow the focus on the esthetic components of architecture and the reception of it, while the latter would provide a specific way of dealing with data collection as well as the material components of urban space.

In this paper, the problem of reconstructing the phenomenon of *flâneur gaze* is introduced. I would like to answer the question about what makes young people walking through the historical center of Rzeszów interested in particular architectural objects, why these buildings attract their attention, how they valorize them, and what role esthetics plays in the process. The fact that I use the lens of art sociology is motivated by the low interest of architecture within the field as well as the fact that the topic is too broad to be fully covered by the article. Therefore, from all possible aspects of the built environment (materiality, historicity, symbolism, functionality), I pay the most attention to its esthetics.

The complexity of architecture

There is a discussion concerning the status of the sociology of architecture. Some authors define it as a component of urban sociology, but recent developments show that it emerges as an independent field. Mateusz Włodarek (2021) argues that the statement by Robert E. Park that the city needs to be studied as a state of mind, which is fundamental for urban sociology, weakens the ability of the sub-discipline to analyze architecture. This approach is limited to psychological and relational phenomena and ignores materiality, which is an important aspect of architecture. Therefore, he advocates for the separation of architectural sociology from urban studies. Switching from the research of interactions to buildings and including the material aspects of reality allows for the development of the sociology of architecture as an independent sub-discipline. Such a perspective is attributed to, among others,

Silke Steets (2016) and Paul Jones (2016; 2020), yet it is even more emphasized by approaches rooted in the actor-network theory (Latour, 2005; Latour, Yaneva, 2018).

Changes in urban and architectural sociology are driven by the so-called spatial turn, which puts stress on materiality in studies of human collectives. As Martina Löw and Silke Steets argue:

[...] thinking in terms of spaces sharpens one's awareness that the world is conceivable only as both socially and materially differentiated. (Löw, Steets, 2014: 213)

Materiality not only shapes the environment inhabited by a community (Krajewski, 2013; Kurczewska, 2015), but also enriches the study of its past (Jordanova, 1989; Baxandall, 1991). The 'reception' of the building as a practice is different from listening to music or watching a theater performance. As a 'heavy' medium (Fischer, 2009), it imposes itself on the user. It can be experienced visually, tactilely, and olfactorily. Frontages influence the way pedestrians move or navigate the city. Streets in city centers are often 'flanked' from both sides by buildings, and frontages without windows or doors can induce a tunnel-like experience. Architecture also affects perception: high objects block the view. A detailed examination of the building would provide a written list of its properties, including size, structure, facture, or composition. Therefore, its materiality can also be 'translated' into a textual form, allowing a researcher to write field notes that contain his/her experiences with the architectonic object. The visual component of the building can also be viewed as beautiful, ugly, or indifferent. It can be viewed as functional or not. It can 'speak' about its users and inhabitants. Studies of a 19th-century tenement houses show the relationship between the organization of their structure and social stratification. The owner's family and other wealthy tenants inhabited the representative wing, adjacent to the street, with a decorated facade, while servants and members of the lower class lived in far less prestigious and comfortable annexes located deep inside the closed courtyard (Łupienko, 2013; Kilanowski, 2017).

Materiality divides space, influencing interactions (Giddens, 1984; Goffman, 2000). Yet, not only tangible barriers – walls or fences – but also symbolic ones, connected with the sacralization of particular spaces, organize spatial practices (Jałowiecki, 2010: 31). Both types of divisions can prevent unauthorized access. This also leads to the discussion of the differentiation of spaces into public and private spheres.

The historical aspect of architecture is strongly connected to social, material, symbolic, functional, and esthetic components. Both the cultural landscape and the societal systems of values are based in some way on previous periods (Bartkowski, 2003; Kurczewski, 2007). Archeological, architectural, or industrial monuments are identified by Kazimierz Dobrowolski (1967: 17) as material elements of the historical base [Pol. *podłoże historyczne*] that influence today's societies. Rzeszów's cultural landscape merges components from eight centuries. Łukasiuk (2011: 104) uses here the term 'palimpsest' for a better description of the phenomenon. The current status of the city is the result of the ongoing influence of various actors. Some of the historic buildings, which had performed important functions

in the past, were intentionally or unintentionally demolished; some of them remained and continue to perform the same role while the function of the others changed. Today's *flâneur* strolls beside a baroque church, an eclectic bank, or a modern shopping center that is incorporated in the same frontage.

Although architecture is historically understood as one of the arts, none of the approaches presented above applies to the perspective of the sociology of art. Buildings are treated as memory carriers (Halbwachs, 1980; Szpociński, 2014), indicators of social structure (Jones, 2016), and templates for collective behavior (Amin, 2008). They are structures raised by humans, but at the same time, they structure social life (Gieryn, 2002). They allow the reconstruction of historical balances of power and systems of values, and allow the study of interactions between people or more complex relationships between groupings and buildings, yet rarely do they include the esthetic qualities of architectural objects. However, as Kevin Lynch (1960) argues, looking at cities can be a source of pleasure, and several studies explore the problem of urban esthetics (Rewers, 2005; Zieliński, 2007; Dziubiński, 2014; Kotarski, 2017).

Flânerie from the perspective of art sociology

According to Stanisław Ossowski, the art sociologist studies functions of social life in arts. This allows us to isolate three different fields of study: artwork (1) as a product of social life; (2) as an object of emotional reactions, shaped under the influence of social milieu; and (3) as a center of social relations (Ossowski, 1966: 366). This corresponds to the basic assumptions of symbolic interactionism. When Herbert Blumer (2007: 5) defines the nature of his theory, he recalls the notion of objects and the meanings connected to them. While these meanings are often derived from the process of socialization, they can be renegotiated to suit particular needs. Objects might demonstrate material, social, and symbolic features. Thus, the study of interactions does not necessarily prevent us from excluding the substantial component of the building. The application of symbolic interactionism to architectural sociology can be summed up in one sentence: a building is a central object around which social practices and interactions are undertaken. A social world emerges (cf. Fine, 2004; Becker, 2008; Kacperczyk, 2016), where architects, city planners, and inhabitants, interact with the object, influence it, modify it, or valorize it in various ways. Different interpretations of the building – either its shape, structure, locations, function or esthetics – make it a boundary object (Star, Griesemer, 1989) and produce arenas (Strauss, 1978).

This art sociology approach to architectural sociology applies the *flâneur* perspective. Such kind of person (and activity) is associated with the works of Walter Benjamin (2015). As a spatial practice, it is something between being a tourist, a walker, or an explorer. The *flâneur* “takes a walk, looks around, and notes experiences” (Jałowiecki, 2012: 69). John Urry (2002: 127) describes such a person as a forerunner of a 20th-century tourist. There are indeed many similarities in their core activities. They both walk, explore, and *gaze at* something that attracts their attention. Both practices are also separated from everyday experience (Urry, 2002: 9). However, the tourist has more to do with an

organized form of travel, and it is difficult to be one in one's city. The *flâneur*, on the other hand, makes his/her own decision about which direction to follow, and any narrow and shady street offers him/her a sense of discovery. There are also some resemblances between the *flâneur* gazing at building facades and a visitor in the gallery contemplating paintings, especially when it comes to the study of esthetic experience. In all of these cases, it is the question of perception that needs further discussion.

There is a common agreement in literature that perception is socially-organized (Zerubavel, 1997; Urry, 2002; Foucault, 2003). Historical or material conditions have an impact on it (Strzemiński, 1974). The social environment influences what an individual sees in the first place. What is experienced through the senses is filtered through various interpretive frameworks that are rooted in particular social backgrounds (Zerubavel, 1997: 24). They can be connected to values and needs (Bruner, 1973), socialization, and education. Professional training allows one to perceive and identify phenomena associated with a particular area of expertise. Such examples of professional gaze are provided by Michel Foucault (2003), Krzysztof Konecki (2012), and Dominika Byczkowska (2012). A viewer, with much experience in a particular sphere, can isolate and name specific figures according to his/her system of knowledge. This means that an expert with professional knowledge of architecture would see buildings differently than an ordinary person.

The *flâneurie* as the practice of gazing upon buildings and valorizing their esthetic qualities can also be located within the field of study of art reception, which has a long research tradition in sociology (Wejbert-Wąsiewicz, 2019). Although it is still about perception, it narrows the scope of the analysis to a particular phenomenon, but emphasizes its emotional and intellectual components. Research on art reception was conducted in different fields: visual arts (Matuchniak-Krasuska, 1988; Bourdieu, Darbel, 1991), literature (Sułkowski, 1972), and film (Gałuszka, 1993). As perception, it is strongly connected to the social background. Generally, two main types of reception are distinguished: professional and everyday (Biały, Ferenc, Kidoń, 2023: 19). Family and education equip an individual with knowledge and the ability to successfully interact with and decode art (Bourdieu, 1984). Members of higher classes were introduced to art as children, but for Poland, it was the school that allowed the development of skills needed to understand artworks. However, more recent studies undermine the quality of esthetic education of young Poles. From the perspective of museum staff, students do not demonstrate the skills needed to read and analyze art (Porczyński, 2016; Franckiewicz-Olczak, 2018). Symbolic culture must be put within an appropriate framework to be understood (Kłoskowska, 1981: 426). A competent reception of art (so architecture) is based on at least a rudimentary knowledge of art history (Warczok, Trembaczowski, 2011: 21). Marian Golka (2008: 171) adds that reception is not only about decoding meanings, but also about experiencing values and, as Wallis (1972) suggests, architectonic work communicates them. He also argues that the meaning of the building is clear to its constructors and users, yet with time, it can change and blur. Thus, professional knowledge gives a higher probability of listing all of those functions.

Problems with the interpretation of objects produced and used in the past by today's people are common (Krajewski, 2013). The process of musealization allows us to understand those artifacts better. Putting

them under scrutiny, analyzing their function as well as their place in the human world, and, finally, exhibiting them with instructions makes them more recognizable, yet somehow separates objects from everyday experience (Krajewski, 2013: 12). When discussing the ‘modern cult of monuments’ in the 19th century, Alois Riegl (*Alois Riegl...*, 2012) argued that ancient and historical values should be the object of protection. There is a common area between Christian relics and monuments (Tomaszewski, 2012). Assuming that the object is old and putting it under conservator protection is a modern, secular, way of sacralization. However, instead of imbuing the object with sanctity, the effect is based on a different attribute, namely antiquity. Some empirical studies support this statement, showing that historical architecture is valued higher than modern architecture. The reason behind this is that people see contemporary architecture as “gray, ugly, and not pleasing to the eye”, and, in the case of Poland, associate it with the period of communism (Michałowski, 2007: 263).

As with other forms of art, the knowledge acquired either through socialization or education would help an individual to perceive nuances in architectonic styles, making it possible to interpret the object according to rules derived from esthetics and art history. This professional perspective would make the process of deciphering the ideas and values behind particular buildings more complete. On the other hand, a nonprofessional approach to art utilizes in the first place the system of representations created and applied within everyday life, identified with the practical sphere (Brzozowska, 2008: 342).

The limitations of the *flâneur* perspective

The *flâneur* experience is to a great extent connected to the street perspective. It stresses the exteriors of building, facades, the surroundings, and visible elements, but also relates to the sphere of emotion, imagination, and symbolism. As such, it appears to be a useful technique of data collection, yet it also has certain limitations. From the perspective of the passerby, the first contact with the architectonic object is through the sense of sight. This may lead to reflection on the form, history, purpose, or esthetic experience. The *flâneur* observes and may but does not have to enter the staircase or courtyard of the building. The impression of the façade can influence the ideas and evaluation of the building as a whole. Architecture and urban planning were not only oriented toward providing a place for living, running a business, or providing services, but also toward manifesting ideas and putting people in awe, fear, and respect (Jałowicki, 2012: 40).

Also, the current organization of space is what the *flâneur* perceives, and this brings some concerns about possible reduction of data. The building gazed upon at a particular moment also has a unique history. Especially historical monuments are building blocks of national and cultural continuity (Wallis, 1975). Even the location of a previously demolished building can still bear meanings connected to it (Wódz, Gnieciak, 2011: 82). This makes us aware that many different perspectives toward the object exist. The building will be of different value to a person who encounters it for the first time, different to its inhabitants, and different to a local historian. For a tourist, a 19th-century apartment building might be as interesting as typical housing from the period. Exploring it can be a part of his/her travel,

free time, or educational experience (Urry, 2002). People travel to see famous buildings, understood as heritage, a symbol of the nation, but also to visit the land of childhood. For someone who lived in a particular neighborhood for generations, an architectonic object can be an important element of a private homeland (Ossowski, 1984). It is saturated with meanings, memories, and emotions.

Urban architecture is the case for the study of symbolization. As Anselm Strauss (2008) argues, Chicago with its urban images can be analyzed for the multitude and complexity of its city symbols. However, some buildings are also imbued with values. The style can communicate values. Gothic style can bring associations with religion (Rykwert, 2013). But also specific types of architectural objects invoke particular meanings. The museums of the 19th century were not only places to store and display artifacts, but also symbolic representations of the nation (Levitt, 2015); steel constructions were symbols of progress, while apartment buildings were indicators of the material status of their owners. Some architectonic objects change their meaning: the seat of the interwar Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education in Warsaw became a seat of the Gestapo, thus becoming a symbol of Nazi terror. After the war, it got back to performing its ministerial function, but at the same time, it is also a commemorative place. The question is about how much of all of these aspects the *flâneur* perceives. One wanders through the streets and watches the building from the outside, but can be prevented in many ways from seeing the interior. A modern walker is also constantly online, and one can learn more about the object than only by watching it. Thus, today's *flâneurie* is not only about walking and watching, but also about decisions: am I allowed to, or do I want to see more than just a façade?

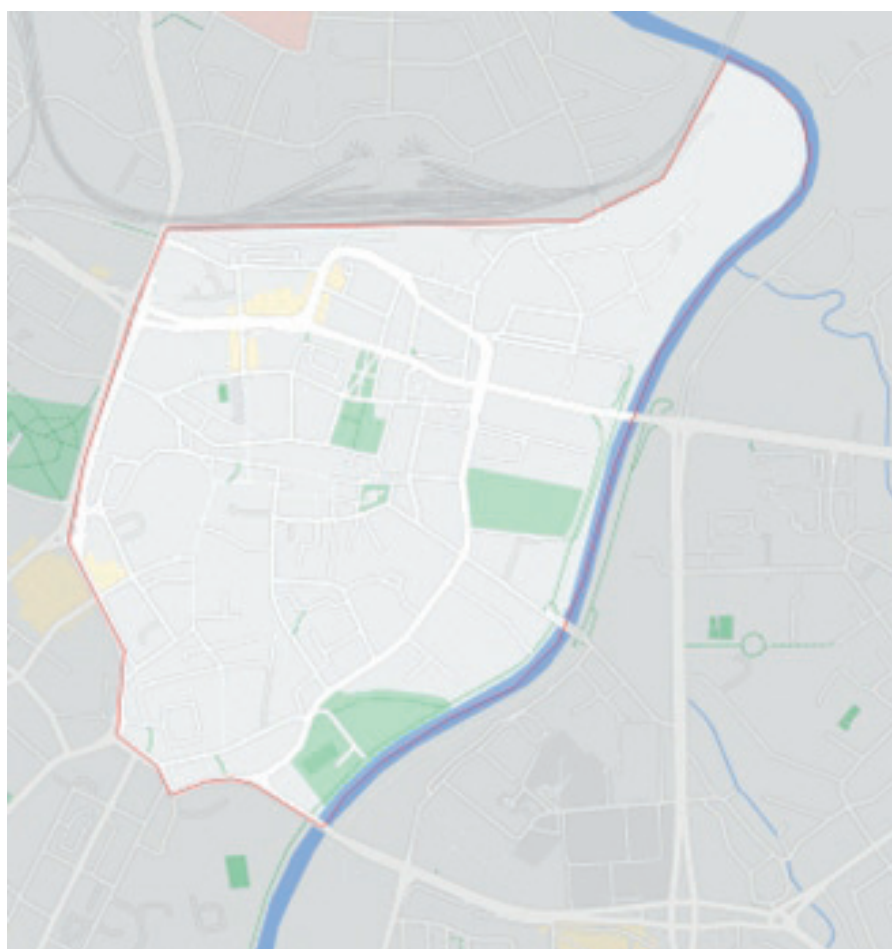
Research outline

Walking is already a recognized way to conduct social research. Projects that utilize mobile methods usually focus on the everyday lives of their participants and are carried out in their living environments. They are often related to interviewing (Evans, Jones, 2011; Jones, Evans, 2012; Nózka, Martini, 2015; Martini, 2020), but also include the use of GPS devices by the sole participants (Wiśniewski, Pol, 2021). This project brings some modifications to existing mobile methods. The study is carried out in unknown or little-known areas and without the company of the interviewer. Students were asked to explore downtown and voice-record or scribe their experience, and prepare on this basis quasi-autoethnographic notes. This approach makes it possible to compare individual perspectives. The participants were also instructed that I am interested in 'thick' descriptions that include their emotions and considerations about particular places and events. Without that, the study of esthetic reception would be hampered.

The data analyzed here is part of the larger project. The students were asked to form teams and take a three-hour walk through the downtown of Rzeszów. Out of 39 participants, thirteen three-person teams were created. Their starting points were scattered in the peripheries of the area, but their routes were not fixed. They were allowed to set their routes as long as they did not leave the area limited to the north by a railroad line, to the south by Kilar Street, to the west by Ciepliński Alley,

and to the east by the Wisłok River. Each member of a three-person team has a set of responsibilities related to data collection, but they are not all the subjects of the paper. For the purpose of the study, I focus on the contributions of researchers that I called 'interpretive' ones. They were asked to make an observation, prepare a mental map, collect photographs of selected sites, and write a quasi-autoethnographic report that should include the description of the visited places as well as the experiences, emotions, and considerations of the participants related to their walk-along.

Illustration 1. The map of the study area



Source: Author's own work, on the basis of Google Maps.

The emphasis put on the material aspect of reality inclines the use of techniques that allow the collection of material or embodied data, and this is the main cause of the application of mobile methods. Although it is possible to show pictures of architecture and ask for opinions about it, in this research I was interested in participant experiences. It was *flâneurie*, yet enriched with sociological methodology. Discovering unknown parts of Rzeszów and gazing upon buildings *in situ* is a different sort of experience than looking at album photographs. Observation, undoubtedly, is the most basic method of collecting data in such kinds of study, but the mobile approach is a way of enriching it. It gives the possibility of reaching participant experience in a more detailed and more nuanced

way (Gądecki, 2011), and allows the understanding of the meaning of place in everyday situations (Kusenbach, 2003). The mobile methodologies seem to be a natural choice for a researcher whose ontological assumptions include material aspects of social reality (Anderson, 2004).

Thus, while being observational research, it moves toward analytical autoethnography. Anna Kacperczyk (2014) describes autoethnography as (a) an introspective act of self-narrative; (b) a document created by the author during this self-narration; (c) a technique of receiving materials; (d) a research strategy that is purposeful and planned to conduct a self-observation over a longer period; (e) an innovative pattern of doing science. Although Leon Anderson (2014) discusses this approach as a way of including the researcher's perspective, emotions, insights, and reflections in more traditional participant observation, this project introduced some modifications. The data collection and analysis processes are conducted by different people. The students did a walk and observation, and summarized them in their journals, but I performed the analysis. Because of this separation of data collection and analysis processes, the study is close to a personal document method. There is also a distinction related to the duration of the study. Ethnography as a method, thus autoethnography as well, is based on long-lasting fieldwork. In this case, the period of data collection was short. Therefore, the research should be defined as an observation enriched with the author's emotions and knowledge. Due to the use of journals, it also bears some resemblance to the biographical method. The reports have something in common with journals collected by various sociologists (Krzywicki, 1933; Chałasiński, 1984; Abel, 1986), yet in this case they are not based on life stories but, rather, on a several-hour participant observations.

I rely only on autoethnographic notes, along with original photographs, to illustrate narratives. After collecting the data from students, I applied the CAQDAS software to code and construct categories and subcategories (Strauss, Corbin, 1998; Konecki, 2000; Charmaz, 2009). The collected data was of various details and quality. Common for all of the contributions was the focus on architecture, although the instruction suggested including all kinds of material that the researchers find significant. A large part was also descriptions and remarks on monuments and encountered social situations. There is no one narrative strategy; the students described their experiences in different ways. Their contributions also vary in detail. Some are laconic and only mention visited places, occasionally adding brief descriptions; some are based on 'hubs', discussing more elaborately certain places omitting transmissions between them; while others try to represent the practice of *flânerie* in detail, describing the whole walk. The form and quality of the analyzed material is the combination of the contribution of the students (based on how individual participants were dedicated to the task), chosen routes, and the time limit (the whole exercise took about three hours).

For this paper, I focus on buildings. Including other pieces of data would exceed the recommended volume of the article. Since I do not have access to information on the sociocultural background of the participants, I focus on their narratives. I do not try to interpret the differences in reports by recalling separate life stories but, rather, by using a dichotomy of everyday and professional knowledge, which is more appropriate here.

Last but not least – to avoid identification of the participants, all entries are anonymous. Every contribution has its number. Since the data was collected for different purposes, I asked the authors for permission to include their notes in this paper, ensuring that their identity would be protected.

What does the *flâneur* see?

A brief description of the Rzeszów Downtown architecture

The Rzeszów Downtown District (Osiedle Śródmieście) covers the historical part of the city. Most of the historic architecture of the city is located in the studied area. The city was founded in 1354, yet medieval architecture is scarce. It is represented by the presbytery of the 15th-century St. Adalbert and St. Stanislas church (Borowiejska-Birkenmajerowa, 1994: 180; Majewski, 1994: 407). A similar situation exists with the Renaissance objects. Traits of this style can be noticed in the organization of the part that was historically inhabited by Jews and in the Old Synagogue (Majewski, 1994: 427).

Many visible elements of the urban landscape of the district include developments from the two-and-a-half century period when Rzeszów was a private town of the noble families Ligęza and Lubomirski. Baroque architecture is represented by a 17th-century church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary along with Bernardine monastery, Piarist church and school complex (Majewski, 1994), fortifications of the Lubomirski Castle (the castle itself was dismantled and rebuilt at the beginning of the 20th century) (Czapczyńska, Janczykowski, 1994), or Lubomirski Summer Palace (Majewski, 1994). After the partitions of Poland, Rzeszów became a part of the Habsburg-controlled Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria. A new construction law was introduced. It forbade the building of wooden houses in towns and cities; only multi-story buildings were allowed near main streets, and those in poor conditions were scheduled for demolition (Malczewski, 1998: 26). Although the first half of the 19th century was the period of the degradation of the town (Malczewski, 1998), some classicist architectonic objects were founded, such as the Burgaller's Palace or the Karol Prevot's Mansion.

The largest part of the historical center was built during the so-called Galician autonomy, in the second half of the 19th century and before the First World War. It includes tenement buildings, banks, hospitals, shops, schools, offices, and villas. The current design of the town hall is of this period. They make a mosaic of historical, eclectic, and secession styles (Tondos, 1997). Rzeszów's architecture of the period is inspired by projects from larger cities, mostly Kraków, and although it lacks unique impressive objects, it is rather positively evaluated by art historians (Tondos, 1997; Gutowski, Gutowski, 2001).

In the 1920s, Rzeszów experienced stagnation. The situation changed in the 1930s, when two important industrial plants were located in the city and it was considered the main city of the Central Industrial District. This resulted in rapid development. Modern, functionalist apartment buildings for technical and military personnel started to emerge. Along that line, other service buildings were founded: post offices, hotels, and a hospital on Chopin Street (Chomiczewska, 2015). During and

after the Second World War, some of the older buildings were dismantled and new ones were located in their places. Developments from the 1950s included seats in public institutions, including the Voivodeship Office, the office of the local Committee of the Communist Party, or the 'Zorza' cinema. There are also some examples of socialist modernism, such as the seat of the National Technical Organization, the Subcarpathian Philharmonic Hall, or apartment buildings located near the Victims of the Ghetto Square or Grodzisko Street. In the last three decades, some modern constructions appeared, usually hosting commercial or business institutions. Although there are parts where the historical architecture dominates, Rzeszów Downtown is architecturally rather eclectic (Chomiczewska et al., 2023).

The *flâneur* gaze

A core process

The *flâneur* gaze is an act of perception associated with a casual walk (unprepared in advance, different from a guided tour but also from simple, everyday walking concentrated on getting from point A to point B). I decided to develop it as a central category in this study, because it is strongly related to the applied method of data collection: students were walking, watching, and noting. I introduced the concept of gaze, because most descriptions are based on visual perception. While some narratives also invoke auditory, olfactory, or embodied experiences, the students usually described what they saw. The visual character is here *a priori*. The students either simply described what they saw (e.g., *another point of the journey was a church, we had very neutral feelings about it* [Team 2]) or named their act of perception in various ways (*observe, see, watch, perceive, admire*), and then they provided the narrative of perceived phenomena often enriched with recollection of emotions and thoughts associated with the process (*Heading out to the Chopin street we saw newly constructed buildings* [Team 11]).

Some narratives make it possible to tell whether their authors perceived a particular object while passing by or whether they spent some time exploring it. The reports give the impression of a city walk, naming the process exactly as such. They used phrases such as: *Then we went to...* [Team 11], *Approaching the...* [Team 10], *later we wandered around a bit...* [Team 7], *We entered the market square.* [Team 9]. However, the experience also included periods of sitting and resting: *Taking advantage of the moment, we took a break* [Team 1]. *The three of us moved to the bench where we were watching people* [Team 2].

Every instance of perception described in the journals provides a set of information that varies in length and detail. In the case of architecture, it allows the reconstruction of a) the observer's perspective and dynamics of a scene; b) reasons that lead to the selection of the object; c) the immersion in the process; and d) esthetic valorization.

Switching perspectives

An important part of the *flâneur* gaze is switching between different perspectives. Photographic metaphors are useful for describing how observers deal with space, material, sound, or olfactory experiences. The fact that the use of the camera is strongly connected to the tourist experience (Urry, 2002: 127), which has much in common with *flâneurie*, confirms this belief. Trying to capture the chaos of the surrounding reality, the students switched their perception from a close-up to a wide-shot perspective similar to a camera lens. I understand these perspectives as certain points in a continuum. It is more a typology than a classification, since in some situations it is difficult to draw a line between the frames. Switching between them, the *flâneurs* focused on either a detail or on a broader context depending on what they found interesting in a particular situation. Since the main topic is architecture, the basis for distinction of various perspectives is the relation of buildings to other objects within the frame. The examples are as follows:

1) The lack of architecture

It is difficult to say that there is no architecture in the studied area. It is the city center, so even if the participants were wandering through 'Bulwary' – the green part of the district located on the Wisłok River – the architecture was within their sight. The possible cause of this ignorance is the lack of interest in particular forms of architecture, and the presence of architecture is rather *a priori*. The students simply did not mention it until something attracted their attention:

Then we headed out toward the passage leading to Jagiellońska street. Nothing attracted my attention on that street, so I don't have a picture of any object. After leaving Jagiellońska Street, we found ourselves on 3 Maja Street where a school is located that brings back good memories, as most of my family attended there. The school has also an interesting history, it is one of the oldest schools in Poland. [...] [Team 12]

The first part of the citation focuses on the walk from Lisa-Kuli Street to 3 Maja Street. The students walked along Jagiellońska Street, where some institutions are located, including police and social services offices, as well as shops and pubs. The architecture of the street is mostly from the beginning of the 20th century and the interwar period. What is interesting is that in this contribution the author clearly states that she is not interested in anything on that street. She mentions the presence of some objects but gives no details. This fragment is very unique, since the rest of the authors never recall the lack of interest in the surrounding architecture so ostentatiously. They just mentioned the walk-through and then focused on something that attracted their attention:

Then we wandered a little, I don't remember the road well, all these places seem to be so close to each other, I know, however, that the next point that attracted my attention was an old cemetery near the church. [...] [Team 7]

The narratives usually give some details about mobile characteristics of the study, noting the transmissions between places of interest, but students focus on objects that have some meaning for them. One can guess that the team passed many buildings during the stroll, but none was found interesting until they reached the Holy Trinity Church and the old cemetery.

2) Architectonic background

This perspective involves mentioning the presence of architecture but without going into details. The approach is applied by students in locations composed of modern, interwar, or Galician buildings, mostly tenement houses and blocks of flats.

Then we moved in the direction of the Market Square and I noticed a large amount of colorful flowers in pots [located] by the road, which provided an interesting contrast to the fully concrete buildings of this part of the town. [Team 1]

The observer is not interested in the surrounding architecture. He notes it overwhelms the team, that it is concrete, but switches his awareness to the flowers, sole pieces of nature in the area. However, the attitude toward plants and buildings is not expressed directly. It can be concluded that it is positive toward flowers and negative in the case of architecture. This is a constantly recurring topic, which is more broadly discussed in section 6.2.6.

3) Wide shot

The buildings here are located within a broader context that includes many other objects. They can be as important as other elements or provide a background for material things, people, or activities.

The group began its research walk at the railroad station. The first thing that attracted my attention was chaos, yet it was not induced by a large number of people [...] but the fact that there is a reconstruction going on around the station. The street is closed, there are holes dug up everywhere, and instead of a sidewalk, stones and sand are scattered around. A path intended for pedestrians sometimes reminds one of a labyrinth (one doesn't know completely where one can pass). It was difficult for me to imagine how a visitor could move there with suitcases. In addition to that, there is loud noise from jackhammers, excavators, and loud workers. Chaos and noise are the terms that best describe the beginning of the route. [Team 5]

In this kind of representation, the building is a marker that is used to construct a setting. It helps to locate the area in the space, often being an excuse for a broader description of a scene. The cited, detailed fragment is interesting, because it refers not only to the sense of sight but also to hearing, the organization of space, and embodied data. The narrator uses her imagination and empathy to try to look at all the obstacles from the perspective of a traveler with a wheeled suitcase.

4) Full-shot

The building is the 'protagonist'. The narrative focuses on it.

The weather wasn't too good, since the strong wind was blowing. On 3 Maja Street, we saw a cult 'Zorza' movie theater that already exists for more than 60 years and is to be closed because it is on the verge of financial collapse. It is the first cinema founded in Rzeszów, so it has a large sentimental value for its founders. [Team 4]

While 3 Maja Street is full of interesting historically and esthetically important buildings, the student focuses on the movie theater. In this narrative, the observer is not interested in the architectonic aspects of the building that hosts the institution, but, rather, in its historical significance for the Rzeszów community. There is only brief information about the context (weather and location) and the discussion immediately switches to the object.

5) Close-up

The author focuses on an element of the building: an information board on a façade, a piece of graffiti, a pub located in the object, or a figurine on a display. In all such reports, students relate to non-architectonic elements; thus, architecture is usually 'transparent' or as in the case of some 'wide shots' it is only an excuse for a detailed description of the selected object:

Another street we were on was Jacenty Gałęzowski Street. On this street, I saw a store where a Japanese cat figurine was displayed. I decided to choose this picture because I think it has a cool meaning. In Japanese culture, it is recognized as a symbol of luck and prosperity. What's interesting, depending on the color of the figurine, a different kind of luck is attracted. In this case, a gold Maneki-neko, according to this belief, brings wealth to his owner. [Team 12]

The architectonic object is not discussed here. The observer gives some hints on the location (the name of the street and that it was seen on the shop's display), but quickly 'zooms' to the element that was found attractive. The question is whether the building was not interesting or maybe the choice was influenced by different factors. It may have something to do with the fact that the frontage was made in the Galician style. The problem is explored in more detail further.

Focusing on

I have discussed so far the frames that allow us to contextualize particular instances of the *flâneur* gaze. They help to understand the importance of the architectonic object for the narrator: is it the main topic of the entry or does it only provide some background? However, other features attract the viewer's attention even more. They are the following:

- 1) esthetics;
- 2) curiosity;
- 3) the fact that the building houses an institution;

- 4) historical value;
- 5) associations with the individual past;
- 6) the state of preservation;
- 7) the building is a landmark;
- 8) atmosphere;
- 9) uniqueness;
- 10) funny connotations;
- 11) association with current issues;
- 12) individual interests.

The act of concentration on a selected element along with ignoring others within sight is called focusing (Zerubavel, 1997: 35). Using once again a photographic metaphor, the best illustration of this practice would be the 'bokeh' effect, where the figure is sharpened while the rest of the picture is blurred. Focusing means a mental disengagement of the object from its surroundings. As with the process of perception in general, what is considered relevant or irrelevant in the act of focusing results from habitus. The key question is which buildings are ignored and what aspects of social background make an architectonic object to be noted or ignored in the act of perception. Is it a strategy of ignorance or a lack of interest? *Flâneurs* are roaming through the Rzeszów downtown, which is a built-up area. Buildings stretch along the streets and are always within sight. Surprisingly, the students often excluded them from their narratives.

The inclusion or exclusion of objects from the report is based on two simple strategies of differentiation: between **old and new** as well as between **distinctive and indistinctive**. The study of individual journals shows that the saturation of the space with certain architectural styles does not make them more 'visible' for the participants. The center of the city is mostly filled with the Galician period and modern interwar architecture, but they are rarely invoked in the notes. Most reports include at least one example of prepartition architecture. Only the New Synagogue is not mentioned (the Old Synagogue, however, is). The closer we get to the present day, the more omissions are made. In the case of the 19th-century buildings, the students paid attention to the secession style, but not to renaissance revival or baroque revival. Recalling modern architecture, they discuss socialist realism, socialist modernism, and more recent buildings, while almost completely ignoring the interwar modernism, which significantly contributes to the architectural landscape of the Rzeszów Downtown.

Describing particular Galician period sites, the students recall the Old Cemetery, the Wanda Siemaszkowa Theater, the Town Hall, the University of Rzeszów's Law Institute building, Radio Rzeszów, and Secession Villas. When they discuss modern architecture, they point to the socialist realism of the Voivodeship Office and the 'Zorza' cinema, socialist modernist Subcarpathian Philharmonic Hall, interwar Regional Cultural Center building (WDK), the Social Security Institution (ZUS), or the Hotel Bristol Rzeszów. Except for the villas, they are all examples of infrastructure performing particular, easy-to-describe functions. Considering this, they may be easily included in the larger set of buildings containing also older objects such as baroque palaces, churches, and

monasteries. These are **distinctive** buildings. They are attended in a focused manner. Moreover, they are often landmarks, towering over the surrounding buildings (the Bernardine monastery, the ZUS building) or separated from the surroundings with vast space (the Town Hall, the Castle, the Summer Palace). This also makes it possible to designate the class of objects that are mostly ignored (that are **indistinctive**) in the narratives: tenement houses (called '*kamienice*' sing. '*kamienica*' in Polish). Most of them were built at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, but there are also several interwar, socialist modernist, and modern apartment buildings. They were almost completely excluded from the reports. They were moved to the peripheral vision, blurred into the background.

These types of structure usually have business space on the ground floor, while above the first floor, living apartments are located. Although a careful analysis would show that there are differences in their façades, the students paid little attention to them and did not bother comparing them and describing their unique features. Tenement houses create a background for more distinguishable public buildings. It is easy to tell a baroque church from a gothic one, but distinguishing a baroque revival *kamienica* from a renaissance revival one or an interwar functionalist tenement house from socialist modern blocks of flats requires expert knowledge. Paradoxically, villas that played a similar function as apartment buildings (they were built for living) were gazed upon and analyzed. However, the Rzeszów villas (as will be demonstrated further) can be easily distinguished from the surroundings. Therefore, it is not a question of style, but, rather, of function, and the saturation of space with buildings makes them 'transparent'. A passerby would see a colorful background and some interesting objects emerging from it, on which he/she would focus. One of the contributions shed some light on the process of selecting the objects.

III Maja Street is full of well-maintained, old, colorful buildings. [It is] covered with new paving, which gives the street an elegant atmosphere. We passed the iconic 'U Myszki' ice cream parlor, the 'Zorza' cinema, [High School no 1], a nightclub and several restaurants that were still almost empty. There were few people on the street at this time and it was rather quiet around. We walked through the market square, where several restaurants were just setting up their tables outside. On that day, for the first time I noticed a frog in a well in the Market Square, which had probably been there for a long time. There, we also met several other teams on a research walk. Researcher number one paid more attention to the 'Zorza' cinema, the parish church, and the town hall. For me, these elements seemed to be only part of the street; in fact, they were irrelevant to me as separate elements. [Team 5]

Although the objects are distant from each other, for the author, they blend into the background. It is surprising, since the church and the Town Hall are separated from other buildings and are characterized by a unique architecture, while the cinema is a socialist modernist object adjacent to secession and renaissance revival tenement houses. The reporting person paid attention to the general atmosphere of the street, but moving to the description of the buildings passed by, she focused on their functional aspect, which in this case (and in many other reports) is more important than the

esthetics of the buildings. Although she mentioned the overall attractiveness and colors of the facades, her esthetic analysis ended there.

It should be noted that the frameworks 'old–new' and 'distinguishable–indistinguishable' can be connected. The Lubomirski Summer Palace is an 'old' and also 'distinctive' object, while modern apartment blocks are rather 'new' and 'indistinctive'. Some objects, such as the Castle, the Bernadine Monastery, or the Town Hall, may be treated as landmarks. They are unique and distinguishable in their settings, surrounded by less monumental architecture, and separated from them with some open space, thus becoming more visible. This may play a role in the process of valorization, but as the recent citation shows, it is not always the case.

Immersion in the process

So far, the discussion has shown that the perception of the participants is provoked by different phenomena, but also that the authors vary in terms of attention to detail. All reports vary in length and scrupulosity. It is difficult, however, to say whether this difference results from an individual approach to the process of data collection (e.g., it was hasty and inattentive) or from the lack of diligence in writing the reports (some descriptions are sketchy and lacking details). However, this kind of narrative strengthens the feeling of walking through the city. The process of the *flâneur* gaze is active. Since the students were asked to walk, watch, and make notes, they were trying to find something worth mentioning. On the one hand, it is about awareness and perceptivity, but on the other, the task was writing notes, and this is a far more engaging and time-consuming activity than the observation itself. To push the discussion forward, the comparison of notes about the Rzeszów castle should be made. It allows us to draw some conclusions about the students' immersion in the process.

We followed [in the direction] of the Lubomirski Palace where a district court is located. [Team 4]

The next characteristic building was the Lubomirski Castle, it was a large, nice building that stood significantly from the landscape with its structure and location. [Team 6]

Then we went straight in the direction of the Lubomirski Castle through the park, the castle did not impress me, surrounded by a large wall, seems to be a distant and inaccessible place, I've never been there, but also I'm not particularly attracted to it. [Team 7]

Going further we passed by the Lubomirski Castle, a quite massive building, impressive looking, some respect can be felt. [Team 9]

Illustration 2. Lubomirski Castle



Source: Team 9, Researcher 2.

The students tried to describe the castle using their everyday language. Starting with the note from Team 4, the statement is laconic. It is limited to the act of the classification of an object to a particular type and function. The student's reading of architecture has more to do with methodologies of everyday life (Garfinkel, 2007) – only brief associations are used if they are sufficient to organize the experience of the city. Two statements: 'the Lubomirski castle' and 'a court house' seem to be enough to capture all the needed information. From the perspective of the constructed theory, this addresses the functions and historicity of the building. Their statements do not discuss esthetic aspects such as architectonic style and only partially provide some historical context pointing to the castle as a seat of the noble family.

The next three contributions are more complex and add some esthetic experience. The authors described the features of the castle (*large building; distant and inaccessible; massive, impressive*), evaluated its artistic qualities (*nice; did not impress me*), and tried to define its relationship with the building (*I'm not particularly attracted to it; some respect can be felt*). Team 6 also tried to set up the castle in the space and treated it as a landmark. It is possible then to note differences in framing: wide shot in the case of the second report and full shot in the case of the others.

The comparison of narratives shows unique approaches and sensitivities in describing the same object. An obvious difference can be seen between the first note and the remaining ones. The first one is focused on simple facts, while the others show some awareness and emotions connected to this act of perception. The narratives are expressed in vernacular and lack professional terminology, but demonstrate esthetic

experience and a certain degree of immersion in the practice of *flâneurie* at the particular site. One can also note the differences in emotions invoked by the castle during the act of perception. They can be positive (Team 6 and 9) or negative (Team 7). This allows us to state that an architectonic object can be a boundary object (Star, Griesemer, 1989) and can generate discursive practices.

Laconic descriptions also raise the question whether the participant was not interested in a particular object or whether different factors played a role here. The students had limited time to walk, but were not instructed which route to take or how much time they should spend observing a single spot. I see a kind of economy in their work. In this case, it is a search for balance between the richness of the data, the number of cases, and the time limit. Immersion in the case of the *flâneur* gaze corresponds to the meticulousness in observing the object and, more or less directly, the amount of time the walker spends on the practice. The basic assumption is that the more saturated and more detailed the report, the more time it took to prepare it. Observation takes time, but transferring observations and thoughts to written form is even more challenging. The difference between the details noticed during fieldwork and those written in the report should be the object of further study.

The study of an architectonic object goes beyond the sole act of watching. It may engage different senses, but it may also include learning about its current and historical functions, as well as people and events related to it. Easy access to the Internet helps to quickly get the needed information. The popularization of mobile phones blurred the border between the physical and virtual worlds. Being online is currently an element of everyday experience (Filiciak et al., 2010). It would seem that such a situation encourages the use of easily accessible knowledge to explore interesting sites. Collected data shows, however, that young people prefer to use their everyday, accessible, ad-hoc knowledge, instead of looking for more detailed information on the Internet. This does not mean that they do not try to learn something more specific about objects, but most of such attempts are based on already possessed information or text that is in their sight (e.g., historical markers). Their **perception and analysis are both superficial**. The information on the plaque is enough to satisfy their curiosity.

During this walk, *flâneurs* could explore new places and visit familiar ones. Although most of the project participants were not born in Rzeszów, they had some knowledge of its downtown. Here is the shortest way from the bus or train station to the university's main campus. The Market Square (especially the well) is a popular meeting place for people planning a bar visit (many of Rzeszów's pubs are located in the Downtown). This provides an additional perspective on the process of collecting data and writing notes. It shows the importance of not only individual cultural capital, but also of life trajectories, past events, and everyday practices. Some situations from their more or less recent past are treated as a reference.

Another spot – perhaps a little less important from a historical perspective – but for us, the young people, it is a very important place, namely Dara Kebab. This place is known to everyone. The place itself is already iconic; we don't know a student who has not appeared there at least once after a party. [Team 2]

Illustration 3. An 'iconic' kebab bar

Source: Team 2, Researcher 2.

Contrary to the picture whose framing is something between wide and full shot, the description has more of a close-up perspective. In the narrative, the author completely ignored the architecture and esthetic qualities of the building (although it is a well-maintained historic 19th-century apartment building) and focused on the kebab bar. He also considered it important to add the information that the establishment is a focal point of the life of Rzeszów's students. The description gives a hint that it is an element of the habitus of the local students. This example shows that immersion, as a component of the *flâneur* gaze, goes beyond the simple classification of objects discussed in the example of Team 4 note on the castle. It applies various factors to the interpretation of the objects. The narrator stresses the fact that the building can be interpreted from various perspectives, namely: historical, individual, and collective, but also as an institution. This object is not important as a piece of architecture, but because of the bar that it hosts; it is the kebab establishment that connects with the sphere of emotions and biography. It invokes positive memories and links to different spheres of an individual's life. While this is a deeper than sketchy description of the castle, it still utilizes only part of possible references. The more detailed the description, the more spheres of life it relates to, the deeper the immersion.

Immersion is a dimension of the *flâneur* gaze. Perceiving objects starts a more complex process that encompasses observation, analysis, contextualization, and finding connections with various spheres of life. It can vary in intensity and should be considered as a continuum: from the superficial interaction to deep immersion in the process. A simple notion of the object during a walk is the perspective of the passerby. A student approaches an object, looks at it, notices some elements, and moves on. It is enough to remember a few details of a structure, but it is too little to provide a comprehensive description. It is close to the everyday approach when one focuses on getting from point A to B and treats buildings as markers that help to navigate. Although the situation of the project encouraged a more in-depth approach, the participants usually sparingly spoke. The *flâneur* gaze begins when a walker starts contemplating what he/she sees and utilizes additional senses, emotions, knowledge, and recollections from the past. It also includes a sense of discovery. Some rapporteurs were fascinated by newly encountered sites and went beyond simple descriptions of perceived objects. Their descriptions put emphasis on context. While focusing, they included emotions and added additional objects, people, and information on the surroundings to the frame. This kind of approach appears in the descriptions of 3 Maja Street, the Market Square, and the Ignacy Tokarczuk roundabout, but the most bright example is Aleja pod Kasztanami:

In addition, walking around the Lubomirski Castle we found ourselves in the place I was probably for the first time, and it was a one-and-only place. So, I was the most interested in this area because it was the only one completely new for me. There were several old buildings; on one of the plaques I read that one of the buildings was built in 1899. Looking at the buildings in some way, one can move into the past and [see] what Rzeszów once looked like. For me, it is a place full of charm and very climatic, and I regret having discovered it so late. What in my opinion makes this street or alley (I don't know), even more beautiful is the fact that there is plenty of greenery in this place, so this time of year it looks beautiful. [Team 3]

Then we went to the Lubomirski Castle, a very unique and old house. What was interesting was that all of the researchers in this team took a picture of the same building. I paid attention to the appearance of these buildings – to the magnificent architecture, to the flowers that bloom in the gardens, to the fact that they are very well cared for, to the fact that they are only such buildings in Rzeszów [...]

In my opinion, it is one of the most climatic areas in Rzeszów. The street is cobbled with characteristic Rzeszów cobblestone, there are very old and beautiful chestnut trees and wonderfully fragrant, blooming trees that provide shade. [...] [Team 5]

The authors move between wide-shot and full-shot. The first description treats the alley as a whole, while the second focuses on the building, eventually switching the attention to the surroundings. There are references to historical value, uniqueness, esthetics, preservation state, emotions, and nature. The experience of the villas is more complex and rich in comparison to other discussed objects. The author also discusses the atmosphere of the place. Łukasiuk (2018) analyzes this phenomenon in the context of architecture and defines it as an influence of both sensual and emotional

factors. Although it is connected with other aspects of architecture, including esthetics, it transcends them. It is significantly connected to the place and has a lot to do with its design. Records recall buildings and express admiration for their appearance, but focus on emotions. They do not include the use of knowledge of art history and art terminology during the valorization of architecture. It is still an everyday approach, yet the description is deepened. It draws on the narrator's feelings and her ability to discern details in the design of the object and its surroundings. The authors compare the street and objects with other buildings seen during the *flânerie*, and find it unique. They define it as 'one and only'. What is interesting in this particular example is that it is the only situation where a participant applied historical imagination and tried to visualize how Rzeszów had looked like in the past.

Illustration 4. The Secession Villas (Pod Kasztanami Alley) and the northern bastion of the castle from the perspective of the villas



Source: Team 3, Team 5.

Thick descriptions appear when the students were interested in particular objects. They focused more on buildings that are somehow attractive to them, even if they lack expert knowledge about them. In such cases, they tried to elaborate using their everyday vocabulary. This makes some reports uneven – cases interesting for authors are more extensively described, while less interesting ones are more sketchy. This relates somehow to the previously described concept of research economy – having limited-time, the observers make decisions concerning the amount of details they want to include in their narratives.

Esthetic valorization

Flâneurs pay attention to different buildings for various reasons, but only some of those motives are esthetic. In such cases, they are connected to the shape, proportions, the organization of components (composition), colors, decorative elements, or the material used. This esthetic experience transforms

a simple walk into a *flâneurie*. An observer not only walks by and looks at, but also involves in interaction with the object. The *flâneur* is immersed in the process. Immersion as a component of *flâneur* gaze is related to several factors that affect the attention of the social actor. The act of perception is initiated when a walker spots something that he/she finds attractive (or on the contrary) and puts some effort into *gazing upon it*. Certain processes can take place during this activity. The *flâneur* can *valorize* the object itself, but he/she can also *compare* them to indicate which one he/she is more fond of. The other features may come into play during this process, but it is not necessary. If so, the narrative may include the memories of the narrator, the specification of the function of the building, or the recollection of its past, but they are not enough to name the experience the esthetic one.

The notion of esthetics in the discussed cases covers a spectrum of reactions. They are either positive, neutral, or negative; however, the students used the word *esthetic* to address their positive attitude toward an object. Also, the use of different phrases indicates a gradation of the intensity of perceived features. I collected them and created three semantic fields to show different ways of expressing the esthetic value of a perceived building. Starting with positive ones, the architectonic object can be: *interesting, very pretty, beautiful, magnificent, neat, one and only, elegant, very well looking, fitting, worth attention, standing out, eye-catching, pleasant to the eye, one of the nicest, nice, the nicest, esthetic, interesting, climatic*.

The neutral designations are as follows: *not impressive, not evoking any particular emotion*.

To recall negative attitudes toward the building esthetics, the students wrote: *uninviting, ugly, the ugliest, lacking esthetics, unesthetic, not fit, horrible, hideous, takes the charm away, not captivating, ruins the look, causes anxiety*.

It is difficult to accurately answer which building characteristic would be unanimously accepted as positive, but I make an attempt to construct two ideal types that can be used to support this analysis and help to better understand the students. Some elements seem to co-occur more often and create a more consistent image. The first (positive) type is a well-maintained historical building surrounded by nature. The Lubomirski Summer Palace is a good example.

After leaving the street, we found ourselves at the Lubomirski summer palace. The family was already mentioned by us because its main architect was the author of 'The View of Rzeszów', which caught the attention of all the researchers in our group at the beginning of the walk. I really like the building, I think its style is very artistic and, most importantly, there is nothing exaggerated or pomp in it. The garden is well maintained and has an interesting exhibition. In my opinion, it is one of the prettiest elements of the Rzeszów architecture. [Team 11]

Here, five elements should be considered. Firstly, the narrator discussed questions of building type or function (palace). Second, its historicity was considered (connection to the Lubomirski family, the fact that it was painted on an 18th-century map). Third, it is located in the garden (nature) that is,

fourth, well-maintained, and fifth, there is an approach to discuss its architectural form. The palace made an impression on the student, since this esthetic analysis is more complex if compared to other groups or other cases included in this journal. Although the object was generally valued positively, also by other groups, it rarely inspired the participants to write longer and more detailed entries. In other logbooks, it was simply described as *a mansion* [Team 1] or as *an elegant and old building that was a seat of the medical chamber of the Rzeszów district* [Team 6].

Illustration 5. The Lubomirski Summer Palace



Source: Team 11.

Although the author put some effort into the discussion, the description remained at a general level. There is only a summary of the style, without an attempt to name it or describe the architectural components of the palace. Still, it is more complex than many other entries, which are limited to noting whether the building is old or new, attractive or not. Of course, the issue of maintenance addresses the garden, not the palace, so it somehow weakens the argument, but the lack of criticism concerning the state of preservation allows us to assume that it was considered acceptable. Other historical buildings, such as the Bernardine Monastery or Secession Villas, are close to this type. Their historicity, esthetic qualities, uniqueness, and green environment were noted as key points of their attractiveness.

In contrast to the discussion above, a negative type of architecture would be a modern building in a poor state without access to nature. While no object meets all the criteria, two cases are close to it.

We passed the ZUS building, which in my opinion was the ugliest I saw during the walk. Even the foliage around it did not make it better. [Team 5]

Illustration 6. ZUS building (in the background)



Source: Team 5.

The Social Insurance Institution building was raised in the 1990s. It stands out from the rest of the developments at the crossroads of Piłsudski and Głowacki streets as the tallest object. It is also surrounded by historic, 19th century former military barracks and tenement houses. The entry describing the building is short and simple, addresses its function and esthetic features, closing them in one simple statement: *the ugliest*. The student did not recall certain esthetic elements (shape, composition, and detail). It seems that the object as a whole does not have any feature that would improve the student's attitude toward it.

A similar situation occurred in the case of the skyscrapers located in the southern part of the area:

We finished the walk through the Boulevards near the construction site of (another) skyscraper. At the moment they look horrible, as if someone has put two concrete cubes there. Everything around it is made of concrete, there is not a single spot between them where one could plant

grass after the construction is finished. It is another symptom that Rzeszów is becoming similar to large cities. [Team 5]

What causes the negative reaction is the current shape of the structure, which is still under construction, but also the lack of nature in the neighborhood. The organization of the concrete-filled space also suggests that there will not be much greenery when the construction is finished. Another team took up the topic, yet their perspective is less critical:

After moving on, in the direction of the Philharmonics, the only thing that caught our attention was the construction sites, which were noisy sometimes. Two huge skyscrapers could be seen emerging slowly, on the one hand, it looked interesting and, on the other, it raised some anxiety. [Team 9]

Illustration 7. Olszynki Skyscrapers towering over the old tenement houses



Source: Team 9.

The narrative is ambiguous; on the one hand, the appearance of the buildings on the horizon draws attention and is described as interesting, but on the other, it invokes some negative emotions. The skyscrapers emerging from behind the low tenement houses and dominating the landscape are something like a foreign body in this neighborhood. The juxtaposition of old two-story *kamienice* with massive high-rise buildings brings a feeling of confusion and spatial disorder. The comparison of the entries shows that, while their reflections vary, they focus on two constructed ideal types. Although not equally enthusiastic or critical, the students' evaluation of both types of buildings – old vs. new – demonstrates similarities. The question is why the ancient ones are found to be more esthetically-pleasing while the newer ones are not. One of the possible answers is that the features of historic buildings are more unique than those of modern ones. The students live in post-World War II settings, surrounded by contemporary architecture. They are used to it. It is more natural to them, so when encountering an older building, they are more likely to focus on it than on an ordinary, unremarkable block of flats. As some of the students point out, they *stand out* from modern architecture *with their distinguishing looks* [Team 6]. They are not just looked at; they are *admired* [Team 1]. This may be linked to the cult of antiquity discussed by Riegl. They are interesting simply because they are old. From the perspective of cognitive economy, they also need less effort to be described and less complex vocabulary to be distinguished from a socialist modernist object. It is enough to tell that they are old, which is satisfactory for the majority of reporting persons. More recent architecture is simply described as ugly.

Although the typology seems to explain most of the cases, several instances do not fit the framework. Simply put, some contributions show that the argument of the valorization of old architecture above new cannot be used as a generalization. It is not just that *the old one is beautiful while the new one is not*; the situation is more complex. Although there is a tendency toward positively describing historical buildings and negatively assessing the contemporary ones, some contributions show that an additional category needs to be introduced to cover all instances. The following entries show outlier cases: one modern building whose architecture was found attractive and one historical one that was criticized.

Then we found ourselves at the Bristol Hotel, which in my opinion is very nice and modern, but at the same time has elements that connect with Polish tradition. The combination of wooden elements with gray [façade] is probably my favorite [way of] organization of architectural [elements], so this building is one of my favorites that I saw today. [...] [Team 11]

The narrator presented here a building constructed in the 2010s and focused on its architectonic style. She put some effort into describing its façade, mentioning the materials and colors used. Still, the analysis is not very detailed. The student simply listed the features of the building and then discussed the composition of its windows, slats, canopies, or reliefs. She compared the hotel to the other architectural objects encountered on this day and rated it higher. This challenges the statement of the general unattractiveness of modern buildings. But that is not all. Beginning the second part of the note, the narrator strengthened her argument by recalling the presence of nature in the vicinity.

Also, I noticed a nice and quite large park in the hotel neighborhood, I really like it and I think there is a lack of parks like this in Rzeszów. However, in contrast to the beautiful park, there is a very ugly building nearby. It is likely that it was once a synagogue, looking at the Star of David displayed on it. I think this building worsens the mood of the area, it is very neglected and has a bad shape and mixed colors that do not fit the environment. [Team 11]

Illustration 8. Bristol Hotel



Source: Team 11.

The hotel is close to the positive type building. It is an object with a clear function with an attractive look; there is also greenery near. Since it is new, it is also well-maintained. The only difference is the lack of historicism (yet the use of elements referring to the Polish ethnography at the entrance could be treated as such). However, the esthetics of the synagogue is subject to criticism. Its historicism is not contested. The Old Synagogue, founded at the beginning of the 17th century, is compared here with a new hotel and a park. Once again, the student used her superficial approach to evaluate the artistic characteristics of the building. For him, they are more important than the fact that the object is one of the oldest in Rzeszów or that it is an indicator of the long history of the Jewish community of the city (Tobiasz, 2017). The synagogue is located where the former Jewish quarter existed. The park is on the site of a former Jewish cemetery and there are more objects that commemorate this community

here, such as plaques and monuments. The fact that the structure is poorly maintained and its (pink) color does not match the greenness of the park or the more subtle colors of the facades of the objects in the vicinity seems to be the most important part of the narrative. So, the synagogue as a historical building with clear function, located close to the park, meets almost all the criteria of the positive type. However, the narrator contested its esthetics and state of preservation. Unlike the hotel, the former prayer house is perceived as neglected. Therefore, it seems that either a combination of features that are connected to different defined types can create a dissonance, or some elements have a stronger impact on the process of valorization. Any form of corruption can affect the evaluation. Since the hotel is well-maintained, it does not show negatively associated features. There is a kind of harmony in the combination of components that make up the esthetic experience. In the case of the synagogue, elements associated with two contradictory ideal types are merging, creating a dissonance, and the cause of the criticism should be sought there.

Illustration 9. The Old Synagog



Source: Team 11.

Dissonance, the state of preservation, and foreign bodies

The entries on the new development and the synagogue discuss not only the buildings themselves, but also their relationship with other objects in the area. They are found to be unfit, standing out negatively from the environment. The narrators discussed the problem, try to verbalize it, and name it. During the process, they recalled either esthetic or emotional factors. This is mentioned directly. The issue of the ZUS building is more complicated. It is distinguished from the surrounding historical

buildings, but the author did not recall this fact. However, she compared the object with the ones she had encountered during the walk, and named it the ugliest one.

My argument is that the esthetic component of the *flâneur* view is based on a search for harmony. This quality is not of an immanent, aprioristic nature, but, as the cited literature on perception and art reception shows, it is social. Although the data possessed is not sufficient to link all instances of esthetic experience with the social background of the participants, it is possible to reconstruct some factors that are involved in the process. Simply put, the objective is to tell when the *flâneur* is convinced that everything is 'in its place' to find the encounter with architecture pleasing.

In the case of the skyscrapers and the synagog, not everything was in place. The features of the objects were mixed, causing uncertainty in the narrators. The example of skyscrapers shows that the juxtaposition of modern and historical architecture creates a tension that is defined as *anxiety*. The green area of Olszynki was cut to make a place for the construction site. This does not go hand in hand with the value system of the students. As the journals show, nature is very important to the participants, and they reacted positively to the green spots they encountered during the walk. This is not surprising, as young people – specifically young people from EU countries – demonstrate a high level of environmental awareness (Cynk, 2017). The status of the old synagogue denies the belief that a cultural monument should be well-maintained and protected. Thus, another dissonance emerges.

The idea that the lack of harmony, chaos, or dissonance has an impact on the esthetic evaluation of the object is supported by other contributions. The issue of spatial chaos was mentioned in an entry depicting the construction site in the Station Square. The reporting person invoked noise, disorder, and a feeling of anxiety. However, there are also narratives discussing the problem of negligence or the lack of harmony in building facades.

However, as in every city, some streets do not look good, and so it is in this case, heading from III Maja Street toward the 'Pasaż' mall, there is also such a street. There is a lot of graffiti on the walls and the odors that we could smell when we passed there were also not very welcoming.
[Team 3]

Mostly dilapidated, old buildings, a huge number of signboards, each of a different color, with a different font. It was a shame that the city center was neglected so much. [Team 5]

The comments on signboards, commercial posters, or billboards are usually kept in a negative tone. According to the students, the design and organization of such signs are chaotic and spoil the esthetics of the building. They are **foreign bodies** in the entire composition. The statement is limited to advertising boards. The research material does not contain any case of criticism toward historical markers.

Illustration 10. Graffiti



Source: Team 3.

Illustration 11. Modern and historical buildings on Piłsudski Street



Source: Team 5.

The question of whether these claims concern the informational objects themselves or the fact of their placement on the historical tenement house needs more elaboration. Following the argument of the search for harmony, it can be shown that the students addressed either poorly-designed advertisements or their juxtaposition with the façade. The collected data is not helpful here, yet the comparison with comments on graffiti allows us to better understand the topic. Wall paintings, depending on their placement, may be contested or accepted. Posters or drawings on historical walls are criticized:

While walking, I noticed graffiti, if you can call it that, because I would rather call it the destruction of property because, in my opinion, it was not esthetic in any way and only spoils the image of the city. There was also a poster in this place, which was probably supposed to encourage participation in the away match between Resovia and OKS Odra; it doesn't seem to me to be the right place to put such posters, especially since there are places specially designed for it. [Team 3]

On the other hand, paint markings on the Monument of Gratitude to the Red Army are described more neutrally:

[Entering from] the market square we came across a park in which another Red Army monument is located, it is interesting that it is stained with a paint that looks like an intended act. Looking at what is happening in the world, I think someone spilled [it] in the act of demonstration to show the objection to the special operation of Russia. [Team 10]

Illustration 12. The Monument of Gratitude to the Red Army



Source: Team 11.

The attitude toward the Red Army and, generally, Russia is negative in Poland, so the destruction of the monument is rationalized here. However, it shows that monuments can be valorized differently depending on their provenience. Those rooted in the local history are generally accepted, while those connected to the difficult past become boundary objects.

However, the topic of wall paintings covers a broader spectrum of phenomena that can be crudely divided into legal and illegal ones. While graffiti is usually painted in violation of the law, murals are created on request and with permission of the local government. They are positively evaluated and cause more sympathetic behavior; therefore, the concept of foreign bodies has no application here:

[...] We went near the Fryderyk Hotel, which made me take a picture because of the large mural of Fryderyk Chopin. [Team 1]

Illustration 13. Hotel 'Fryderyk' advertising mural



Source: Team 1.

Murals in the Old Rzeszów area can be found in several places. They are usually historically themed (e.g., Irena Sendler, Fred Zinnemann, historical bomber PZL.37 "Łoś"). In this particular case, a mural is an advertisement, so on the one hand, it should be included in the group of criticized objects, but on the other, it is legal, painted on a building that, from the narrator's perspective, it is not historical, and the image's form is more sophisticated than that of an ordinary graffiti, so it attracts his/her attention. Generally, the critique of the communicative components of urban space has a long tradition in sociology. Aleksander Wallis, already in the 1970s, noted:

The technical and artistic level of the elements of the informative layout is diverse. As a result, mediocrity is adjacent to a work of art and displays of technical perfection, with mere technical fluke. (Wallis, 1977: 277)

What is important here is that young people can perceive and discern these components of *informative layout* – which more or less correspond to architecture – and evaluate their design and quality. Compared to other aspects of valorization, they demonstrate a higher degree of awareness and esthetic sensitivity.

Conclusions

The phenomenon of the *flâneur* view does not limit itself to the architecture or esthetic elements of the cityscape. Also, this analysis shows only the perspective of Rzeszów's students. The method could be applied to a larger group and the study could include a broader spectrum of phenomena. Yet, this application of mobile methodology has proven to be useful. It allowed me to learn more about socially-driven perception acts as well as to collect, isolate, and describe a set of values that young people connect with buildings. The research outcomes also contributed to the knowledge of the reception and esthetic valorization of architecture, thus proving an added value to the field of the sociology of art.

The most important finding is that (at least in the urban space) students value harmony. They demonstrate the need for it by criticizing spatial and visual chaos, highly valorizing well-maintained, neat buildings and spaces. While they have historical architecture in high regard, they also appreciate modern objects if they are well-cared-for and do not contrast with their surroundings. Nature is also high on their list of values.

Generally, the paper confirms the statement of Zerubavel that perception is socially-determined. It does not give all the answers concerning the influence of particular sociodemographic traits on the consideration of students. It does not allow us to analyze the transmission of patterns in the families of the participants. These are shortcomings that I am aware of. Still, it allows us to draw some conclusions concerning the process of perception and the art education system in Polish elementary and high schools. The primary finding is that the ignorance of Galician and modern apartment houses and focusing on historical landmarks raises questions about the cause of this problem. It is also vital to establish whether it is only related to social background or has to do something with the 'cognitive economy'. In addition, the fact that none of the researchers used professional art history terms even once while describing the architecture of the Rzeszów Downtown prompted us to take a closer look at that issue. The reason for this might be systemic: art education is ignored in elementary schools, but architecture might also not be interesting to students. Primary school curricula include art history courses and hypothetically provide students with basic knowledge of architectonic styles. Students should be able to tell a gothic church from a baroque one, and a classicist manor from a secession villa. However, they do not use this knowledge, at least in this project they did not. They used an everyday

approach, trying to note and name some elements using stocks of knowledge they possess, focusing on the most distinctive traits. Since it applies to every report, it is difficult to locate the cause in the habitus of the authors, but one of the possible answers is also that their habitus is similar.

The method and results need further development. Naming a few possibilities, they can be compared with descriptions of non-architectonic objects: monuments, people, behavior, etc. Additionally, the invitation of professional participants may prove fruitful. A comparison of observations by art historians and architects with those by students may shed some light on the educated versus uneducated perception of architecture. The more direct motivation of participants to explore interiors could be considered. This would add more opportunities to collect material data. In addition to cognitive valor, such an approach may be beneficial to urban planning and revitalization processes.

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Cytowanie

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Architektura rzeszowskiego śródmieścia z perspektywy *flanera*

Abstrakt: W artykule autor podejmuje próbę analizy architektury jako obiektu estetycznego przy użyciu metod mobilnych. Rozwija koncepcję spojrzenia *flanera*: aktu percepcji powiązanego ze spacerem, wzbogaconego rozważaniami o otoczeniu. Celem tekstu jest opis zawłości tego procesu: co sprawia, że *flaner* interesuje się konkretnym obiektem architektonicznym, jak go ocenia i jaką rolę odgrywa w tej aktywności estetyka. Ten spacer badawczy studenci odbyli w śródmieściu Rzeszowa. Obejmował on obserwację, prowadzenie notatek i fotografowanie. Do celów artykułu autor analizuje trzynaście dzienników. Głównym odkryciem jest to, że studenci cenią harmonię wizualną oraz przestrzenną i poszukują jej w krajobrazie miejskim. Są pozytywnie nastawieni względem dobrze utrzymanych, głównie historycznych budynków. Ważna jest dla nich także natura. W swoich opisach używają języka codziennego, a ich typ recepcji estetycznej można określić jako nieprofesjonalny.

Słowa kluczowe: socjologia architektury, percepcja, recepcja sztuki, metody mobilne, *flaneria*