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## BOOK REVIEW

### LOCURI ALE MEMORIEI. POLITICILE SIMBOLICE ALE SPAȚIULUI PUBLIC ÎNTR-UN ORAȘ MEMORIAL

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*Locuri ale memoriei. Politicile simbolice al spațiului public într-un oraș memorial. (Places of memories. The public spaces symbolic policies in a memorial city) 2022, Mihai, S. Rusu, Lucian Blaga University Publishing House, Sibiu, 63 figures, 37 tables, reference, annexes, index, 457 pages.*



The public spaces of our contemporary cities always fueled a large interest from the side of different scholars of various academic backgrounds. The concern on such an interesting topic is more welcomed in the current scientific debates when it relates to the present urban and cultural policies of cities with an outstanding cultural background with critical analysis unveiling the most important attributes of their urban and cultural identities. Against such a background, the book authored by Mihai Rusu represents a relevant volume which unveils significant aspects on the urban toponymy and on the cultural monuments of Sibiu City. After the introduction of the concept of the memorial city,

defining the main aspects of culture, identity and memory, the author pays a significant attention to the most important theoretical approaches as well as on the scientific methods on which his study relies on. Features as people attitudes, the collective memory and the local pride of the community, political values and ideological perspectives closely

associated to the investigated urban area are in-depth theorized and critically portrayed to the reads. The first part of the book is dedicated to the local urban toponymy. The street names are analyzed through the lens of the communist regime and according to the main political changes occurred after the communism breakdown. In short, the author examines the streets named after some communist politicians, after some state-socialist significances and through the lens of the anti-communist revolution from 1989. The author payed a special attention to some particular case studies on certain streets as the Boulevard of Vasile Manea, and to Nicolae Bălcescu Street. The material patrimony and the symbolic heritage are presented in relation to the German cultural background of the city, the author unveiling how streets were given their initial german names, testifying therefore for cultural authenticity of the place. The chapter presents the evolution of the street names from the initial German names to the present day, stating that nowadays the streets are named after contemporary politicians, as it is the case of a street named after the present president of Romania, Klaus Iohannis. The context of the urban toponymy is enriched with analyses on institutional toponymy. In this regard, the author presents the toponymy of cultural institutions as well as of the educational institutions. Considering these findings, the author critically examines the institutional policies on the urban toponymy from the local authorities involved in the local processes of naming the streets to the gender policies of the streets toponymy and to the neoliberal policies and the toponimastics commodification in the present days, concluding this part of the volume with interesting aspects focused on the present local and community development in close relation to the present urban toponymy of the city of Sibiu. The third part of the book addresses relevant aspects on the local urban monuments unveiling the relationships established between the cultural monuments and the collective memory policies. Two separate case studies are included here with evidences on the statue of Samuel von Brukenthal and Gușterland. The book is filled with significant artworks transposes in more than 60 figures and also with relevant tables illustrating the data accuracy upon the study is based. Furthermore, interesting annexes are added by the author as arguments of the investigated urban reality and the used reference shows that author developed a responsible scientific work to investigate the contemporary places of memory through the lens of the symbolic policies of the city's public space. This book is a capturing work dedicated to students, researchers and all interested readers on the local urban cultures of the city of Sibiu. Then, the volume is a relevant material for present and further research both in the fields of the present urban geographies as well as to other academic fields as history, cultural studies, anthropology, cultural and historical geographies etc., being an must have book when it comes about the study of public memory of the Romanian post-communist emblematic cities.