Authors Meet Critics

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Author: Sonia Hirt

Book introduction: Iron Curtains: Gates, Suburbs and Privatization of Space in the Post-socialist City*, Studies in Urban and Social Change,* Wiley Blackwell, Oxford, 2012.

Participants

Barnum, Anthony Justin	Millington, Nate
Bird, Lawrence	Rousseau, Max
Caselli, Davide	Skodra, Julita
Coppola, Alessandro	Tanulku, Basak
Field, James	Theodosis, Lefteris
He, Huang	Turkmen, Hade
Kadi, Justin	Vianello, Michele
Lederman, Jacob	Wachsmuth, David
Lonergan, Gwyneth	Wieditz, Thorben

Moderator

Giovanni Torrisi

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Welcome everybody to our 5th "Authors meet Critics" event. Today we are going to discuss with Sonia Hirt , the introduction to her book: *Iron Curtains: Gates, Suburbs and Privatization of Space in the Post-socialist City.*

<Hirt, Sonia> OK! Great to meet you all!

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Welcome Sonia . We are not all here, yet. In the meantime, those who are already here can begin to post their questions and comments. We realize that the time of these sessions is often shorter than we believe.

<Hirt, Sonia> How much shorter?

<Torrisi, Giovanni> The time allocated is two hours but many times, it is not enough for dealing with all the questions. I think that we can begin our chat. I am looking forward to discussing an issue that was very much debated a while ago.

<Hirt, Sonia> OK. Ready to go!

<Torrisi, Giovanni> James Field with his first question:

<Field, James> I was interested if you had identified any generational aspects to the developments? For example, older generations with direct experience of the socialist regime being more inclined to privatism and more individualised, family-style gated compounds; to later generations being more open to the communality of gated communities or even returning to the city core?

<Hirt, Sonia> I think it may be the other way around. The older generations (at least those raised in the big cities) were accustomed to the socialist-era collectivist buildings. The primary actors in the new gated compounds are the nouveau riche and the professional upper middle class, who are younger people.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Thanks. James would you like to reply on that?

<Field, James> Would you say that polarisation is likely to become worse then?

<Hirt, Sonia> I think so, yes. The upper classes are moving to central neighbourhoods and the new suburbs (the new suburbs often being old villages).

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Now a new question by Julita Skodra:

<Skodra, Julita> Thank you very much for this very interesting introduction. I would like to read the whole book! What especially interests me are cultural differences that reflect in urban fabric of, for example, Berlin and Sofia. Development of urban sprawl as an ideal of nouveau riche in Sofia vs. gentrification process in central parts of Berlin. How much gentrification is happening in Sofia, and are there any signs of citizen participation, like in Berlin?

<Hirt, Sonia> It depends on what you call gentrification. Some of the old villages in Sofia are becoming suburbs, so gentrification then occurs both in the central city and in the periphery. The ring of socialist era complexes are immune from gentrification generally. I think the whole book is about cultural changes since the end of socialism--a topic which I find underrepresented in the literature.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Julita, any further comments?

<Skodra, Julita> Are there any signs of citizen participation?

<Hirt, Sonia> Sure. There is certainly far more participation than during socialism--especially in defence of some green spaces in the city. Environmental and historic preservation groups abound. Some of it is discussed

in the last chapter. But I would still say that compared to Germany, for instance, the extent of participation is lower because there has been more disillusionment.

<Skodra, Julita> Thank you.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Very good. Now a question by Jacob Lederman about "privatism":

<Lederman, Jacob> I wonder if you could say a little more about how "privatism" differs from the types of social relations that existed prior to "socialism". Are we seeing a return to the types of class-based social relations that existed years ago? What specifically marks this period as distinct from other regimes of capitalist urban planning?

<Hirt, Sonia> My favourite question. I never studied the pre-socialist period intensely so it's hard to answer, but here is one of my points. There was plenty of privatism DURING socialism: meaning that despite state discourses that everything is in the name of the common good, most people had little enthusiasm for any ideologies dedicated to the common good. In this sense, post-socialist privatism just continues a socialist-era attitude that was simply subdued. The Romanian scholar Matei has some great pieces on privatism and so does the Russian scholar Kharkordin.

As compared to other current capitalist regimes, I think privatism is much stronger in Bulgaria and other countries in the region than it is say in Germany. Again, this has to do with the massive disillusionment during both socialism and post-socialism, and maybe with the pre-socialist regimes too. One of my favourite quotes comes from the French philosopher Paul Valery: "*The great problem of the present time is that the future is not what it used to be*". Always some great future is being promised in countries like Bulgaria--whether socialism or democracy--and then it develops with many flaws, so there is a massive disbelief that any promises can be kept.

I think the important point is that privatism, which is a cultural condition, actually has spatial manifestations. People don't care about the public realm--socially speaking--and they don't care about public space too. I did not expect the link to be so direct. Another way of reformulating the main hypothesis in the book is to say that weak social capital (and this is another definition of privatism), leads to weakened spatial capital (disintegration of public spaces).

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Jacob, the floor is yours for a reply.

<Lederman, Jacob> Interesting. My work in Buenos Aires exhibits some strikingly similar features with regard to future planning and present disillusionment. Thank you!

<Hirt, Sonia> Great work to be done comparing Latin America and eastern Europe. A number of people have noticed this!

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Very good. Authors meet Critics also is useful for creating new scientific networks. Now it's Nate Millingtons:

<Millington, Nate> Hi Professor Hirt, thanks for being here with us today. Can you discuss how the people you interviewed justified or explained their walls? Do they explain them through the language of privacy / privatism or is a result of more specific anxieties (i.e. fear of crime)? Do you see the cultural condition of privatism to be something that is overarching, or is it produced through everyday relationships, events, or encounters that may not be specifically about privacy as such?

<Hirt, Sonia> I think both are true. Fear of crime is a very prominent rationale--many, many people talked about it. But there is also a strong desire to keep privacy. Some of it is very practical and mundane: for example, there are a lot of cars outside, it's noisy and dusty and people prefer to remove themselves from this part of urban living. But there is also a "defence of property" rationale, which I think may be relatively specific to post-socialist countries like Bulgaria. Previously, most people lived in the socialist-era apartments. There was no opportunity to claim private space (aside from the apartment itself), but now, I think some feel that their time to OWN space has come, and they define their spaces explicitly as separate from the "nobody's space" outside.

Thus, they frame their private territory through gating.

<Millington, Nate> Thanks - that is helpful. I imagine that this discourse of privatism operates both through broader conditions but also through the smaller scale everyday encounters. It is interesting to think about my own research site in Sao Paulo - another interesting connection between Latin America and Eastern Europe!

<Hirt, Sonia> What I would like to point out, is that the book is not about gated housing only. I see gated housing as just one spatial manifestation of the condition of privatism. In Chapter 3, I use another term--spatial secessions. People secede from the public realm (and public space) through various means. Living in a gated compound is just one mechanism. Other methods of rebellion against the public realm include: NOT seeking a building permit (hey, this is freedom, isn't?), which is widespread in the Balkans, or building very bizarre individual buildings which "declare war" on the street (that is, on their public surroundings). And, yes, I agree about the importance of everyday encounters.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Basak Tunulku with a very interesting comment coming from a research experience in Turkey:

<Tanulku, Basak> Hello, thanks for the engaging introduction of the book. I am very interested in this subject since I work on the same subject in Turkey. I finished my PhD research in Lancaster University and have been writing articles ever since. My commens is that gated communities are results of the rise of traditional ways of life, and the current idealized ways of life imitating the West. Turkey is very similar to Bulgaria in every aspect: the rise of a very individualized way of life, privatization of public resources, spaces and degenerated values encouraging a prosperous life without an easily achieved aim.

<Hirt, Sonia> Very, very true! We should mention that explicitly private gated family compounds persisted in the Ottoman period well through the 19th century. So in many ways we are looking at a restoration of an old local building tradition, and this tradition meets the "modern" (Western, that is) way of gating. So the past and the present meet.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> At a time in which EU is facing difficulties, Lefteris Theodosis asks about Bulgaria integration in the EU and its consequences:

<Theodosis, Lefteris> Hello Sonia, and thanks for the opportunity to discuss your text. Going beyond the distinction of the pre and post-socialist city, and focusing on the current situation, I was wondering whether you describe changes in the processes of construction (legislation, funding, or the involvement of local actors vs. foreign investors, etc.,) vis-à-vis gated communities, after the integration of Bulgaria in the European Union? To what extent do you think its integration facilitated the flow of capital or accelerated what you call privatism?

<Hirt, Sonia> The "modern" gated communities are often financed by foreign capital. These include communities of hundreds of units plus various other services (spas, swimming pools): the real offshoot of the Western (American) gated community. Many of their advertisements are in English. But during the 1990s, foreign capital was scarce and then we saw, I think, the proliferation of locally inspired, smaller, do-it-yourself gated compounds (e.g., a few friends or relatives decide to join forces and build a gated complex). The latter is, I think, a continuation of local building traditions. So this is what I mean by "the past meets the present". I think you could say that globalization and capital flows are contributing to this growth of privatism, but my main point is that privatism is--surprisingly for many--also a continuation of social attitudes from the socialist period. So in essence instead of eliminating privatism, socialist ideologues only strengthened it, because their ideology dedicated to the public good only brought disillusionment. Which is why I say that instead of producing what it wanted: collectivism, socialism produced its opposite: privatism. In this sense, socialism built its own Trojan horse, its own Fifth Column.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Lefteris. Any comments?

<Theodosis, Lefteris> It is interesting how the idea of commons is defined in different institutional levels and against the background of "integration". Beyond doubt there is a gap between top-down, official approaches and popular initiatives.

<Hirt, Sonia> Agreed.

<Theodosis, Lefteris> In any regime…

<Hirt, Sonia> Yes, but in socialism I think the gap was especially pronounced.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Thanks a lot. Gwyneth Lonergan:

<Lonergan, Gwyneth> Thank you for this fascinating introduction; I really want to read the whole book now..The concept of privatism is particularly interesting, and I think there are applications to Western countries, as I believe it is increasingly being taken for granted that services you have to pay for are 'better' than state-provided services. Not simply in terms of efficiency, but for example, the idea that the quality of care in a private hospital is better than in a state hospital. Can you elaborate a bit on what you see as the principle differences between privatism in a Western European context and in a post-socialist context?

<Hirt, Sonia> I think we are talking about extent, and I would argue that in post-socialist contexts privatism is stronger (precisely because of the continuous failure of public institutions), e.g., you see massive losses in public spaces in post-socialist cities (e.g., parks and greenbelts): in "Western" countries the institutions would not allow such massive losses and there would be greater citizen outcry.

<Lonergan, Gwyneth> Yes, I think my question has partly been answered by the previous questions and answer. It seems, for example, that privatism is a result of disillusionment in the soviet system in post-socialist states, whereas I think it is the result of an ideological push by neo-liberal elites in many Western countries e.g. that Margaret Thatcher specifically tried to discredit the quality of care on the NHS.

<Hirt, Sonia> And this is very interesting. I just reviewed a paper on Russia and the authors claim that neo-liberalism is MORE neo-liberal in Russia than in the Western countries; i.e., it appears in Russia in its purer form. This is because people accept the idea that everything is for sale (including the services of public employees; hence, corruption), whereas in the so-called West, neo-liberalism is softened because there the citizenry has some basic expectation of fairness and equality of opportunity. The Russian anthropologist Oleg Kharkordin argues that Russia is more "postmodern" (read neoliberal) than the societies that invented the term.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Lawrence Bird with a new question about "digital citizenship":

<Bird, Lawrence > Thanks for your book, it was a really intriguing study of the post-socialist city. What I found most interesting was your observations on how this city is characteristic of a general post-modern reworking of the relationship between public and private realms. As an architect, I'm very invested in the material setting of that dynamic "built form", but I always wonder about the implications of virtual spaces for it. It occurs to me that that there might be a specific inflection of this in post-socialist urban environments. For example, these societies were under heavy surveillance, and this is a characteristic of virtual spaces today. But more generally, after 1989 Eastern European societies had to come to terms rapidly with contemporary "Western" life, not very long before Western or global societies had to themselves start coming to terms with conditions of virtual citizenship and spaces. Does any of this give citizens of the post-socialist city a particular "take" on these conditions today -- the ambiguities of virtual/digital citizenship and their relationship to urban life and environment?

<Hirt, Sonia> To be honest, I never studied virtual spaces but I think the long tradition of socialist-era surveillance and control actually manifests itself in attitudes about material spaces. I had a few people mention to me that they like to live walled off the street because this is now a "free country' and "no more Big Brother stuff"; "I don't like to be watched!"

<Bird, Lawrence > I guess where my question is coming from is the ambiguity between public and private realms in virtual environments on the one hand and on the other the observation that some people have made that on-line fora (facebook) substitute private for public space, a condition that seems neo-liberal in some respects.

<Hirt, Sonia> On the subject of neo-liberalism. Things are complicated. There is a book by Venelin Ganev called Praying on the State. There he argues that post-socialist elites who practically "ate the state" (e.g., took all the big state factories for pennies) only pay lip service to neo-liberalism (enough to fool Western advocates of neo-liberalism), but in essence they practice privatism: they usurp formerly public resources for private use, having no interest whatsoever as to whether a neo-liberal market economy will succeed or not.

<Bird, Lawrence> Is there any intersection with your work or that of others' in the post-socialist milieu? Perhaps a more general question -- do you see a way out of this slide toward privatism?

<Hirt, Sonia> Do you have somebody specific in mind? Certainly, there is a lot of overlap with other authors: one of my favourite being Judit Bodnar.

<Bird, Lawrence> I'm afraid I'm asking as a generalist here! So, not to hijack the proceedings, but one example would be...In the recent Venice Biennale of Architecture not one but two major projects were based on a collective approach to space and the city (both the US and Canadian projects) involved dozens of teams of architects with small contributions to a larger project.

<Hirt, Sonia> Well, I think things may be changing for the better. There will be more social polarization and more gated communities in the future, probably until some saturation point is reached and post-socialist cities become as segregated as their Western cousins. But the 1990s showed that a swing to extreme privatism is painful. I mean somebody has to think of collective problems? Look at traffic in Moscow or illegal construction in Belgrade. At some point people begin to demand public interventions (including planning). In Bulgaria, the aggressive privatization of green spaces that occurred in the 1990s can probably NOT be repeated. Now, there will be significant public outcry!

<Bird, Lawrence > Thank you!

<Torrisi, Giovanni> David Wachsmuth:

<Wachsmuth, David> It seems that the suburbanization impulse you've identified in Sofia takes an even more atomized, isolating form than what we're used to in, e.g., the US. Do you see any signs of Robert Putnam's "Bowling Alone" idea at work? Declining social capital and collective efficacy? Or would such changes be overwhelmed by the enormous social/cultural upheavals involved in the collapse of communism?

<Hirt, Sonia> I think there is overlap with Bowling Alone. I reformulate my central thesis in the concluding chapter, saying that the lack of social capital has led to a depreciation of spatial capital (public spaces). But my point is that the privatism in Western societies as described by Putnam and others, is actually a very mild version as compared to what you see in post-socialist societies.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Hade Turkmen with a follow up:

<Turkmen, Hade> Professor Hirt, thanks for discussing your study with us. I wonder about the condition of opposition groups focusing on urban development issues. Following the question from Julita, could you please tell us more about the opposition against the current urban development? How do you characterise them? How do you interpret their incidence in this contested cultural-economic context (in the age of 'privatism' with your words)?

<Hirt, Sonia> Despite their control of societies, socialist regimes in the late 1980s actually allowed some opposition. Two interests groups were allowed to show dissent: environmentalists and historic preservationists, and I think this tradition carries on. In the countries that I know of, these groups mount significant challenges with varying degrees of success. But there is a generational moment too (this relates to the very first question asked today). I think the real "privatists" are the middle-aged generations. I think with regards to the so called children of democracy (those born after 1989), you see some differences. They are too well informed about Western civil society and they go and demand bike lanes, for example. So "winds of change" may be in the air.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Michele Vianello:

<Vianello, Michele> Thank you for your piece, it is very interesting. I really don't know Sofia at all, and although reading the introduction of your book made me curious about it I am not sure I have a sense of what you did. The definition of Mafia Baroque as an architectural style struck me. If you will allow me to go a bit off topic, may I ask you whether you know what is happening in Skopje, Macedonia, (not far away)? Can one in Sofia find similarities to what is happening in Skopje, where the government is actively trying to wipe off the modernist architectural heritage in order to retrieve a supposed "original culture" destroyed by socialism? Or, if not in the government, is there a similar sentiment in the public opinion? Is the architectural style of buildings disputed or debated? For the sake of exactitude, the legal name of the country where Skopje is located is Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

<Hirt, Sonia> Not as familiar with Skopje as with Sofia, but I think the Mafia Baroque style--the especially opulent single-family home styles of the nouveau riche--are quite universal among post-socialist countries (see Humphrey on the villas of the New Russians, for example). But there is a difference between Sofia and Skopje. and I think in a sense Skopje may share some things with Baltic and former Yugoslav cities. The issue is that Skopje is a capital of a country where ethno-national contestation is very much in play. In Sofia, this issue is milder. But in a number of other countries where national identity is at stake, architectural styles are very contested, especially regarding various public monuments and other public places, because they ultimately determine whose history is being told.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> A Chinese perspective from Huang He:

<He, Huang> Hi, Professor Hirt, thanks for sharing your great works! I suppose that privatism is an important concept in your book. In the state socialist era, mass was mobilized to attend public realm. At the beginning, people may have liked it, and then, when Bakhtin's carnivalesque passed away, mass retreated into their private worlds. For instance, both in East European countries and China, people prefer interior decoration in their housing. Since the post socialist transition, this involution trend becomes more clear, which has led to privatism. My question is: under which kind of situation, could people living in post socialist country, e.g. Bulgaria or China, go beyond privatism. As we know, without citizen participation, we cannot build a civil society in those countries, if those people could hide in the shelter of privatism forever or for a long period.

<Hirt, Sonia> I agree with you and this is one of the main points. The private world was a place to resist the totalitarian state. So this is why it was (and still is) perceived as something good, nearly heroic: as a resistance. Hence, its perseverance as a cultural condition. My hope is that things are changing--and I do think they are because, again, of the rather massive problems that have been accumulating over the last couple of decades.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> "Culture of privatism", a question by Justin Kadi:

<Kadi, Justin> My question concerns the interrelationship between the cultural and the political sphere, or in your case how the cultural condition of privatism is related to political discourses on privatization. To what extent do all political parties across the political spectrum pick up on the "culture of privatism"? Are there any parties that are explicitly opposing privatization or has it become something all parties subscribe to? Is privatization something that parties actively pick up on and try to mobilize around, because they understand that they can build on the "culture of privatism"? And to close the circle, how do you think that political decisions to privatize again influence the "culture of privatism"? One could assume that the dysfunctional social effects of privatization may generate some resistance?

<Hirt, Sonia> There is certainly a relationship between privatization and privatism, but as you point out they are different. The first I see as an economic-institutional process, the second as a cultural condition. Not all parties have endorsed privatization: I think there was a political consensus on the privatization of housing but not so on the privatization of green space. Ironically perhaps, you see the former communists (now the Socialist Party) speak against privatization , as do some parties that occupy the extreme right of the political spectrum. But the mainstream "neo-liberals" have been generally in favour. Let me give you an example. The guy who used to be a minister of regional development and did much to develop the largest gated community in Sofia is today... the country's President!

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Two "small" questions by Max Rousseau:

<Rousseau, Max> Hi Sonia and many thanks for this wonderful text. I just have two small questions for you. Firstly, do you think that following the publication of Jennifer Robinson's book on Ordinary Cities, one can currently observe a growing interest of international urban researchers for cities which are not global, such as what you did on Sofia?
My second question relates to the people who live in the gated communities in Sofia. In France, urban research has demonstrated that most of the new gated communities which are currently built do not target the upper class, but rather the middle-class (and most often a lower middle-class). Fear and the refusal of cosmopolitanism appear as the main drivers of the massive demand for such housing. So according to you, does fear appear as a similar driver toward privatism in Sofia, and if so, which kind of fear (I know from some Bulgarian friends that there is a growing "political" fear fuelled by a rampant corruption in the country)?

<Hirt, Sonia> Just to return to a previous comment regarding China. You are very right! Ekaterina Makarova has written about the interiorization of everyday life during socialism/post-socialism. People would take perfect care of their apartments and spend no time fixing up public spaces right in front of the apartments.

My impression is that where lower-middle classes are choosing the gated lifestyle, we are talking about individual gated homes. The large, Western-style gated communities are too expensive for the middle class. But you can see that the socialist-era apartment buildings (which house the lower-middle class) today are LOCKED. There is a half-asleep retired colonel in almost every collective entry hall supposedly guarding the place. So I guess this is privatization and interiorization too! Sure, there is a lot of corruption in Bulgari,a although I don't think people can solve the problem by being in a gated community (I mean the corrupt politicians are not going to chase them there).

Yes, I agree that there is growing interest in cities that do not occupy the top tier of the urban hierarchy. And there should be!

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Ok.. Now two long questions by Thorben Wieditz:

<Wieditz, Thorben> Hi Sonia, thank you very much for being with us here today. I was wondering what the political consequences are from your study. For example, research in the late 1960s that looked at the cultural appropriation of buildings in France (Pessac), and analyzed the social meaning of the changes dwellers introduced to otherwise standard bungalows. It was seen as an individualizing trend and as expressing some agency in changing the world around them, starting with their own living space. It spoke to alienation experienced and the desire to move beyond this state of alienation. In your case, building new walls relates equally to the past (the Ottoman empire, state socialism) as it does to the present. Given your extensive interviews, what is it that people desire? How can this popular sentiment be enrolled into a progressive politics?

<Hirt, Sonia> For me the rationale as to why we learn MORE from "global cities" rather than from "ordinary" cities was never fully articulated. I suppose in case-study method terms, the top tier cities were perceived as the threshold or paradigmatic cases that indicate the future of all cities. This never made much sense to me.

This is a very intriguing point. I think we tend to see privatism as a negative condition (I am afraid I am guilty here too), but returning to an earlier discussion: indeed, this is how people who were denied agency (during socialism) attempt to find it. So in this sense--if we take privatism as an act of seeking individuality--it could be a very productive force. Look at the architectural styles. Yes, some of the new villas are absurd; I mean you see them decorated with gilded lions and marble eagles, but hey, this is how people express themselves in space! So maybe we are too quick to pass judgment. In the last chapter, I talk about the possibility of a new kind of privatism: in which people begin thinking of the collective spaces (e.g., public green spaces in the centre of Sofia) as THEIRS, something that they should defend because it belongs to them! So in this sense privatism can act, I think, as a potent mobilizing force, especially among the younger generation.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Another question by Thorben Wieditz:

<Wieditz, Thorben> I am curious, are there conflicts developing between those social groups who can

afford to retreat into the private enclaves and those who don't have the means to do so? What about infrastructural investments? How does Sofia deal with on one side, maintaining infrastructure as an item of collective consumption and the growing trend towards privatization of space?

\<Hirt, Sonia\> Simply put: the city does not deal with this. The private enclaves are becoming popular partially because they offer the type of public infrastructure (very nice green space, very nice kindergartens, and very nice swimming pools) that the public sector does not offer. There is massive middle-class resentment against the private enclaves but thus far there has not been sufficient middle-class mobilization to put limits on the process.

\<Torrisi, Giovanni\> We have now a follow up by Julita Skodra:

\<Skodra, Julita\> Related to Thorben's question on infrastructure maintenance, in Ukraine even parts of the city that are on the UNESCO Heritage list are highly depilated due to ownership issues. The residents own the apartments but not the façade, the shell of the building, and the roof, so they invest only in their own apartments. The city has no means for maintenance, so the building in general is in danger of demolition. Are there similar cases in Sofia, related to ownership structure?

\<Hirt, Sonia\> What do you mean by ownership structure?

\<Skodra, Julita\> I mean who owns the multi-family building and who the space in the building?

\<Hirt, Sonia\> Got it now! I think in several post-socialist countries, this is the case. A very large percentage of the housing units are privately owned, but the common spaces under and around the buildings are still in municipal ownership which makes the issue of maintaining common spaces very difficult. The residents do not feel that it is their job and the municipality can't or won't invest either. So I am afraid this is a rather typical case.

\<Skodra, Julita\> Unfortunately... Thank you.

\<Torrisi, Giovanni\> We have the time for the very last question by Anthony Justin Barnum.

\<Barnum, Anthony Justin\> When talking about capitalist, socialist, and post-socialist settings, is it fair to say that post socialist development and post socialist urbanism are simply capitalist development and capitalist urbanism constructed on top of a socialist urbanism or socialist development? Is post-socialist simply capitalist layered on top of a historical socialist history?

\<Hirt, Sonia\> Potentially also layered on top of pre-socialist history of weak civil society. And potentially it is a version of capitalist (because capitalist itself is likely not in the singular).

\<Barnum, Anthony Justin\> True. I am curious about the impact of pre-socialist history because other countries without socialist history seem to have the same enclaves being created.

\<Hirt, Sonia\> This will be the subject of another study... A very important but much neglected subject..

\<Barnum, Anthony Justin\> Thank you.

\<Wieditz, Thorben\> Can we that easily distinguish between socialist and capitalist forms of urbanism? After all, capitalist principles of Taylorism were introduced into urbanism in state socialist and state capitalist countries, and left legacies in all parts of the world.

\<Barnum, Anthony Justin\> Good question.

\<Hirt, Sonia\> Excellent point. This is the great debate between Enyiedi and Andursz (who claim the socialist city is a version of the modern industrial city) versus Szelenyi and Hamilton (who claim that the socialist city is an autonomous urban model). To an extent this is grounded in an even deeper debate: was socialism a version of

Western modernity? Vaclav Havel and Zygmunt Bauman would say "yes". To this date, I do not know which side I agree with.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> This is the first time we finished exactly on time. I would like to thank Sonia Hirt for the very interesting and stimulating discussion, and I will see you all s for the next session which will take place on the 4th of April, titled: "Towards a 'Consensual' Urban Politics? Creative Planning, Urban Sustainability and Regional Development".

<Hirt, Sonia> It was great to chat with you all!!!

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Thanks again to Sonia Hirt and good day to you all!

References

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