Urban Renewal, Entrepreneurialism and the Right to the City: a Research of the Social Actors and Their Contestation of Gentrification in Post-socialist Zagreb

By

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Submitted to

Central European University

Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary

2012

Abstract

This thesis deals with a particular urban transformation project in Zagreb and an urban social movement that contested it. The project Flower was framed by the city government and the entrepreneur as a project of urban renewal that would start regeneration of the city's center, and was contested by the Right to the city movement as a project that would lead to gentrification. I place this particular project in Zagreb in a broader context through the engagement with the existing literature of urban renewal, neoliberalism, entrepreneurialism and gentrification. I also locate the project the processes and actors that framed it and formed around it in the post-socialist space and society of Zagreb and Croatia.

Through analyzing the Right to the City movement that contested the project I present and engage with the existing literature on the Right to the City. I give an intricate analysis of the processes of urban renewal in Zagreb and the actors that are supporting as well as actors that are contesting them. I assert that the analysis of practices of urban transformation and its contestations in Zagreb can be used to engage and question the existing literature but also be used as a tool for further analysis of processes in post-socialist cities that I see comparable.

The interconnectedness of ideas and practices in what seem to be different urban material and social tissues can be analyzed with it. That entails a further development of a more intricate and elaborate middle reach explanatory framework that would have a strong footing in the awareness of the diversities of local elements, but also be open enough to grasp processes and engage with theories that analyze the processes on a broader level than that of a particular city or region.

Key Words: urban renewal, gentrification, urban entrepreneurialism, post-socialism, neoliberalism, city block, gated community, Right to the City, citizens, urban social movement, NGOs

Acknowledgements

I would like to sincerely thank my supervisors Dr. Tatiana Matejskova and Dr. Judit Bodnár who supported me and encouraged me to finish this project. I would also like to thank Dr. Vlad Naumescu for his insightful comments during the writing workshop and Dr. Eszter Timar for her patience, support and help. I am grateful to my colleagues at the Sociology and Social Anthropology department for an unforgettable year in Budapest.

This thesis would not have been possible without the people whom I interviewed; I owe my deepest gratitude to them.

I am also grateful to the numerous people with whom I discussed the case of Warsaw Street in the last two years that eventually became the topic of my thesis.

Special thanks go to my comrade Mario Pallua who was present at crucial stages of this journey, at the start and the very end of it, discussing with me the research proposal as well as the finished thesis.

I dedicate this thesis to my family who gave me support throughout, from the day I went to the first protest for Warsaw Street till the day this thesis was finished, and continue to do so.

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Introduction

This thesis deals with a specific project of entrepreneurial urban renewal in Zagreb and the social movement *Right to the City* that contested it. The project known as *Flower Passage* (Cvjetni prolaz), later *Flower* (Cvjetni) was the first such project completed in the center of Zagreb. The project was planned and realized from 2006 to 2011, but the main construction and implementation was under way from 2010 to 2011. The project was hailed by the entrepreneur who was building it and the city government that supported it as a flagship project and one that would provoke the renewal and revitalization of the city center of Zagreb.

With the project the entrepreneur wanted to renew what he and the city presented as a deteriorating city block, but in a way to demolish two buildings in the block that were protected as part of the entire Lower Town of Zagreb as a finished and historical urban unit. The buildings were to be replaced by a new building that consists of luxurious apartments with elements of a gated community and a shopping center with an underground garage for more than 800 vehicles. The size of the project and the proposed demolition demanded a change in the *Urban Master Plan of the City of Zagreb (Generalni urbanistički plan Grada Zagreba)* which was accepted by the City Assembly designating the project as one of public interest claiming that it creates new public space in the center of the city adding new value to it and benefiting all the citizens of Zagreb.

The most controversial part of the project that was also labeled as being of public interest was the construction of an access ramp to the project's underground garage. This access ramp would be built on a part of Warsaw Street adjacent to the block in question. Warsaw Street is also a pedestrian zone, which would also mean that with the changes in the

Master Plan the city government would give public space as access to the private space of the garage of the *Flower* project.

Because of these elements the project provoked an almost unseen amount of social action and mobilization of the citizens of Zagreb. The movement against it under the banner of Right to the City was started by a coalition of NGOs and citizens' initiatives, with many public figures, experts and intellectuals contributing to it. The project was identified by some researchers as an example of gentrification (Čaldarović and Šarinić 2008, Svirčić Gotovac, 2010), and by the activists and citizens as privatization of public space and loss of access to it. In 2010, at its height, the movement included a couple of thousand of Zagreb's citizens and fifty-four thousand signed the petition in 2007 against the changes in the Urban Master Plan that would make the project possible. 4000 citizens subscribed to the mailing group *Living Wall for Warsaw Street* set up by the Right to the City initiative, requesting to be informed about the project and protests that they attended.

The core of the movement was represented by a smaller group of activists, the most active being the Group 200 that met regularly, discussed and co-created the campaign and was present at protest actions and performances. While an exact number of people involved in the movement cannot be stated at this point it can be firmly asserted that at least sixty thousand people participated in the campaign in one way or another. The actors in the movement contested the notion of public space and public interest of the project that was put forward by the entrepreneur and the city government, and asserted that only the citizens can make such a claim. To make a platform for a claim that would give voice to citizens, and possibly confirm their ideas about the project the activists started to collect a petition.

In 2007 the Right to the City activists managed to collect the above mentioned fifty-four thousand strong petition against the project and made that the basis of the legitimacy for

the movement and its demands. Also during the course of the campaign they staged over forty protest actions and over ten massive protests culminating in the month long occupation of Warsaw Street in May and June 2010 where the access ramp to the underground garage of the project was to be constructed. This provoked a delay in its construction and the completion of the project but also provoked a crisis in the city government.

After this brief overview of the case I present my research questions and tie the case with the literature and discussions in academia on the question of transformation of the material and social fabric of urban space and social movements embedded in them. The first question is what kind of urban project the Flower Project is and what its function and interplay is with the urban material and social fabric of the center of Zagreb?

The second question is what kind of social movement was the Right to the City movement that contested the project in Zagreb?

To answer the first question one has to analyze its context and framing. This presupposes an analysis of the structures, ideas, actors and actions through which that particular project materialized in one central city block next to a square. Can this project of renewal in Zagreb be situated in a wider discussion of practices of urban renewal, especially that are happening in the post-socialist[1] cities of Europe and the urban, social and political fabric in which they occur and which they transform.

An important element in the actions of the city government and that of the entrepreneur was the framing of the project as one leading to the revitalization of the center of

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[1] Although some authors also use the term post-communist and communism, I decided to use the terms post-socialist and socialism. Those were the terms that these states and societies used to refer to themselves, and none of these societies ever claimed to have attained communism. The term post-communist or communist can be seen properly if it is referring to the fact that the monopoly on political power was held by communist parties. Still there was more to these societies than just the one party system and its monopoly on violence. Also, these states and societies were referred to as communist from the outside. Another possibility would be to use the term actually existing socialism, but that would lead to using the clumsy term post-actually existing socialism.

Zagreb which should be conducted further through projects of private and public-private partnerships in order to generate the entrepreneurial spirit of the city and bring it closer to a desired "European model". I emphasize the entrepreneurs as new actors that emerged with the transition from socialism, but I also point to old actors that went through a transformation during that process, including the city administration, local assemblys and mayors that in a sense started acting as entrepreneurs themselves and are encouraged to act in this way. Still, the old actors retained some elements that manifested the remnants of what these actors and institutions were during socialism. In order to give an answer to these questions I will enter the discussion with a considerable literature on the topic, mostly dedicated to actors and practices of urban renewal, to a large extent framed in the literature as urban renewal and gentrification, urban entrepreneurialism, and public private partnerships. I will show how these ideas and practices and theories about them emerged in the United States and Western Europe and how they found their way to post-socialist cities such as Zagreb.

The second question deals with the character of the Right to the City movement in Zagreb that formed as a reaction to the project and the underlying structures and processes in which it was embedded. Who were the actors that formed it, how did it emerge, what were the tactics used to confront and contest the Flower project, what did these actors see as a representation of a negative process in the material and social fabric of Zagreb and how did they articulate their demands and goals? A substantial foundation for the analysis of the social movement is the fieldwork I conducted in Zagreb in April and May 2012 where I interviewed a number of activists and citizens who participated in the Right to the City movement. I will present and discuss how this movement formed, the strategies, tactics and discourses its actors employed to gain momentum. I will present and discuss the issues the activists and citizens voiced in the protests, but also their practices like the month long occupation of Warsaw Street. I also participated in two round table events in Zagreb with actors from the Right to the

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City movement on which they shared their experience and networked with activists of similar movements from cities around Europe, like Brussels, Graz and Belgrade.

With this ethnographic account I also enter the discussion with the existing literature on the concept of Right to the City that I review in the literature review chapter which emphasizes uses and transformations of this concept and idea into various practices. I will present some the voices of the citizens and activists and their reflections on the public space, the protests, the processes of urban renewal in Zagreb, but especially the ideas and practices of the Right to the City itself. How does the Zagreb case contribute to the literature on Right to the City but also what can other similar social movements and practices potentially learn and take from it? I claim that the Right to the City movement cannot be isolated from larger struggles in contemporary Croatian society. They span issues like privatization of public space, gentrification, and the interplay of economic and political elites on the one hand and right to the city, civil disobedience, solidarity and social justice on the other.

At the end of the introduction I now provide a short road map for the thesis that follows. In Chapter One I will present the methodology used to obtain the main data. It contains the answers why I decided on using the method of qualitative interviewing, that is to conduct semi-structured interviews with certain actors I found relevant for my thesis. I present my interviewees, how and why I chose these specific actors and what kind of data I was able to obtain through the methods used. I also present the research site as well as the timeframe of the subject matter on which I obtained data. I also present my position as an activist turned researcher and the benefits as well as constraints this position entails. I also present the elements and methods that could be used for further research on this topic.

Chapter Two contains the literature review that allows me to present and engage the theories on urban renewal, gentrification and urban entrepreneurialism, as well as to

contextualize a particular project in Zagreb in a broader context. It entails an overview and engagement of the theories and processes of urban renewal and gentrification that urban theorists started to notice and analyze from the mid of the 1960s. I also emphasize the interconnectedness of these processes of urban transformations with what from the end of the 1980s came to be known as practices of urban entrepreneurialism. An important concept which I also engage in is that of neoliberalism, or neoliberalization, that some theorists project as an overall framework through which the processes of urban transformations should be understood. I engage and question these accounts.

The crucial section of chapter two is the one which provides the framework to understand urban renewal in the post-socialist context. In it, I give accounts and engage with the literature on processes of transformations in cities of Eastern and Central Europe after the end of socialism when theses societies started implementing practices similar to those in the United States and Western Europe. Still, the legacy of socialism and the practices developed under socialism add to a richer account of the transformations in the post-socialist context which I present. This differs from accounts which emphasize that implementations of new practices entail the complete abandonment of old ones. This provides the context in which I situated the case of urban renewal in Zagreb. I present and engage with that on the level of the city and its transformation. In the final section of the literate review I present and engage with the literature on the Right to the City, and point to some cases where urban social movement used the ideas of the Right to the City in their practices.

Chapter Three forms the heart of the thesis as it presents an account of the formation, practices and politics of the urban social movement that contested the practices of urban renewal in Zagreb. Through the analysis of accounts, documents and statements of actors such as the city government and the entrepreneur, I engage the ideas and practices of urban renewal

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in Zagreb as well as how they correspond or differ to the ones presented in the existing literature.

Through the presentation and analysis of interviews of various actors that participated in the movement in different ways and with different intensities I engage the questions given by the literature review and the actors themselves on urban renewal and the Right to the City. Taking all this into account, I give an intricate analysis of the processes of urban renewal in Zagreb and the actors that are supporting as well as actors that are contesting them. With the analysis I assert that the practice in Zagreb can be used to engage and question the existing literature but also be used as a tool for further analysis of processes in post-socialist cities that I see comparable.

To give two examples: in the first one I present data gained through the interviews on how the practice of a concrete Right to the City movement uses and transforms that concept, and how this can enrich the existing theory and similar practices in other cities. In the second example I compare the processes and rhetoric of urban renewal in cities such as Zagreb and Warsaw and maintain that they can be seen as similar and part of a larger picture that can be interconnected and analyzed in a more encompassing research, of which this thesis can be the basis. I also maintain that there is enough material for a possible theoretical engagement with more encompassing transformations, practices and their contestations on a higher level than just one city or one social movement.

The interconnectedness of ideas and practices in what seem to be different urban material and social tissues can be analyzed with it. That entails a further development of a more intricate and elaborate middle reach explanatory framework that would have a strong footing in the awareness of the diversities of local elements, but also be open enough to grasp processes and engage with theories that analyze the processes on a more global level.

Chapter I. Methodology

I firstly approached the actors in Zagreb who participated in this contestation of the urban renewal project as members of the Right to the City through the analysis of publications of activists, media reports and academic papers that chronicled that struggle. Still, what I was most interested in was conducting interviews with certain activists and citizens to better understand their motivations, strategies and goals. That was possible due to the access I gained as an activist and observer of some of the most visible actions of the defense of public spaces in Zagreb, especially the case of Flower Square. From January 2010 onward I participated in protest actions and later, in May and June, in the occupation on Warsaw Street.

Because of a substantial coverage of the case by media and even some research the ideas and opinions of the main actors in the case are known in Zagreb. This is also a case to a degree in Croatia, as the protests were covered in national media outlets. The investor, the mayor, local politicians and local government, experts and the leading activists of the NGOs who started the protests expressed their opinions in the media and on various panels but most of it was only known locally till the culmination of the campaign from May till July when the project and the Right to the City appeared often on headlines, even a few days in a row. Still, only a limited amount of research was done on the case, and the overwhelming majority of published academic articles on the case, which are not many, are only available in Croatian. The various actors involved were even interviewed in 2007 and 2008 by a researcher (Svirčić Gotovac, 2010), and a few articles that were published in English are available which situated the case into the broader literature on urban renewal and urban social movements (Čaldarović and Šarinić, 2008; Svirčić Gotovac, 2010; Mišetić and Ursić, 2010; Mayer, 2012)[2]. I

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2 To my knowledge the case was also the basis of Gotovac-Svirčić dissertation, *Influences of Social Actors on Processes of Gentrification and Pauperization: The Case of Zagreb*, University of Zagreb that I could not access, but I did acess the article that was based on the diseration. I also accessed one master thesis in Central

concentrate my research on events that happened in a specific timeframe and place, from January 2010 to the time when my thesis research ended in June 2012, and hope to widen the scope of that case beyond the local context of Zagreb to an even larger one.

I focused my research on the most recent developments that happened in 2010 and 2011, which were marked by the height of the protest as well as the construction of the project. But I also conducted interviews with people who voiced their opinion less publicly. There are three categories of interviewees to which I got access. Firstly, activists of the NGOs. Then secondly, active supporters but not activists of the NGOs, those involved in more than one of the smaller protests. And thirdly, a group of citizens who only came to large protests organized through the network of more than 4000 people called *Human wall for Warsaw Street*.

An also interesting group were some of the people that could be named passive supporters, the fifty thousand who signed the petition but did not go to the protests, but I did not interview these people. There were also others who voiced their opinion against the project in an opinion poll conducted in 2010. The access to these last two groups of people would not be so easily gained but it could be very rewarding for further research. A particularly interesting group of citizens who participated in the protests is the one that demanded it to have a broader agenda that would cover other issues that they see problematic in Croatia, and I did interview some of them. Some of those people also joined the antigovernment protests in Zagreb in spring 2011(Horvat and Štiks, 2012).

I spoke to a number of possible interviewees when I was in Zagreb during December 2011, and they gave me feedback that they are genuinely interested in contributing to my

European University that gives an interesting discourse analysis of the debates and positions of supporters and critics of the Project as given in important Croatian media outlets (Radman, 2011).

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research. I contacted them again and also some other people in April 2012, just before I started my research. My original plan was to have between eight and ten interviewees; I managed to have nine in the end. Also in May I went back to Zagreb and participated in two panels about public space and the urban commons in Croatia, the Region and Europe. These discussions with panelists themselves and the audience were very informative. I also included some of the ideas and statements I got from there in my thesis.

I conducted a series of interviews during April and at the beginning of May 2012, (from April 10th to May 2nd) with actors mentioned before. In total, I conducted nine semi-structured interviews which amount to around 13 hours of audio recording, together with two hours of discussion I recorded on May 15th and 16th at round tables organized during the Subversive Forum in Zagreb. The interviews were conducted in Croatian and I transcribed the parts of them that are valuable for my thesis, I believe some of the material can be used for further, even more substantial research.

From the core group of activists I managed to interview one of the core members of one of the NGOs, and one member of the NGOs that coordinates one of the NGOs programs under which activities of Right to the City were conducted. I also interviewed two activists that joined the movement as citizens and later on became activists of the NGOs. I interviewed two activists that were also involved both in the Student Movement and in the Right to the City movement that were going on simultaneously and discussed the relations of the two. I interviewed the coordinator of the cultural program that ran during the occupation of Warsaw Street and we discussed the performative aspects of the campaign and the relation of art and public protest. I also interviewed two people that were not activists but concerned citizens that regularly attended the bigger protests. With the interviews I covered a larger number of topics beginning with urban renewal processes in Zagreb, the issue of use of public space leading to the issue of protests and performance of the campaign of Right to the City. I also managed to

get some personal stories and recollections of the activists on recent urban and social changes in Zagreb and more substantially their participation in protests and campaign for Right to the City. Through the interviews we discussed the role of politics, police and media during the campaign, but also how it affected other movements in different Croatian cities that deal with public space, the commons, but also how it influenced the large anti-government protests in spring 2011.

Six interviews in Warsaw Street in Zagreb were conducted near to the location where the camp of the protesters was set up in May and June 2010. They were conducted in two establishments, a cinema and a café, where some of the activists and citizens also gathered during the occupation and protests. Two interviews with activists were conducted in facilities of one of the leading NGOs in the Right to the City movement, and one interview was conducted at the home of one of the interviewees.

I also proposed to the interviewees I interviewed in Warsaw Street that we conduct walking interviews in the shopping center of the Flower square project, but almost all of them declined, most of them saying that they never ventured inside after the protest. Even after two years have passed the majority of my interviewees hold strong feelings about that space. For them mentally it did become a space which they lost access to. Only one of my interviewees walked with me through the shopping center of the Flower project, and he said that he has no desire to shop or socialize there. On the other hand, most of my interviewees have walked with me through Flower Square and Warsaw Street, which was helpful because the interviewees were engaged with the space that was also the research site. I believe that this type of interview provided me with an additional intricate response beyond just the content of articulated thoughts.

The main methodological tool that was used in conducting the research was qualitative interviewing. In order to get a quality response that provided a satisfactory response to the research questions semi-structured interviews were used. If during a conversation a new topic that seemed relevant to me appeared, I pursued it by asking my interviewees additional questions. Informed consent of the interviewees was fundamental, and was the starting point of every interview.

There is also the issue of context because every interview is shaped by the context and is a collaborative effort of both the interviewer and interviewee. My background as activist and participant in the actions has allowed me to play an additional role, that of an insider. "An insider - a member of the group being studied – who is willing to be an informant and act as a guide and translator of cultural mores and, at time, of jargon or language" (Fontana and Prokos, 2007:45). To gather some more sources and information and additional possible interviewees I also relied on informants who were more involved from the start of the campaign or earlier than January 2010 when I joined the movement.

Some of the interviewees were my acquaintances from the protest, some even persons close to me. This has to be taken into account, but on the other hand that provided an opportunity for the interviewees to give more substantial and more personal accounts. It allowed them probably to share some information that they would not give to a researcher they just have been acquainted with. Taking this into account I agree with Benmayor who says that "As researchers with a commitment to change, we must de-center ourselves from the 'ivory tower' and constrict more participatory, democratic practices. We must keep people and politics at the center of our research" (Benmayor in Fontana and Prokos, 2007: 104). As I also wanted to avoid to engineer myself into becoming a "spokesperson for the group studied" (Fontana and Prokos, 2007: 46). The key was to find the right balance, and being

aware of these concerns from the start of my research was critical for the success of the research process. I am convinced that I did find that right balance.

The only opportunity that presented itself for engagement in participant-observation, occurred during my preliminary visit to Zagreb in December 2011. On 22nd of December I participated in a protest action on Saint Mark's Square during which various members of civil society united under the so-called *Platform 112* presented their demands to the newly formed government. Among the organization of the action were Right to the City and Green Action, who participated in crafting the demands, five of the 112 demands concerned "the protection of natural and public resources from particular interests"(Platform 112, 2011:5). In it the issues of the privatization of public space and other issues that the Right to the City and Green Action have been working on were put in to a larger perspective and context.

Chapter II. Literature Review

2.1. Urban Renewal or Gentrification

In the last 40 years researchers have used the concept of gentrification to make sense of the processes of urban renewal in the American and Western European cities. Urban renewal can be roughly identified as the material transformation of parts of the city fabric which has deteriorated or begun to lose its function, be it of residential, commercial or mixed use. It also entails that it is done in a fast and sweeping manner engulfing whole neighborhoods. It is often carried out by the city government, but the actors performing the renewal can be also private entrepreneurs. Gentrification as a concept first emerged in urban studies in the 1960s. Its meaning has more to do with transformation of the social than the material fabric of the urban space. It was coined by Ruth Glass in her article *Aspect of Change* where she describes the social changes happening in neighborhoods of London. Glass writes that as far as public planning has been beneficial on the surface level on the districts, making them more alike, the *laissez fair* forces of the real-estate market and actors have been negative. "One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle class – upper and lower" (Glass in Smith, 2002:438) that leads to the working class being pushed out. Therefore, for Glass the defining feature of the process she labeled gentrification "included the renovation of working class housings, invariably resulting in the displacement of tenants from gentrifying neighborhoods" (Hutchinson, 2010: 305).

Till this day the literature on gentrification has expanded and diversified, and gentrification became an umbrella term for urban investment and redevelopment and regeneration of city blocks, neighborhoods or entire districts. Still, there is a need for a substantial definition of gentrification, one that seems to cover a range of what theorists mean by gentrification and which shows how it differentiates from more generic terms such as

urban renewal and urban regeneration that are mostly used by city governments and other actors when referring to the intentional change of urban tissues of the city neighborhoods as said above. One substantial definition of gentrification is given by Gina Perez which defines it as

> an economic and social process whereby private capital (real estate firms, developers) and individual homeowners and renters reinvest in fiscally neglected neighborhoods through housing rehabilitation, loft conversion, and the construction of new housing stock. Unlike urban renewal, gentrification is a gradual process, occurring one building or block at a time slowly reconfiguring the neighborhood landscape of consumption and residence by displacing poor and working class residents unable to afford to live in ´revitalized´ neighborhoods with rising rents, property, taxes and new business catering to an upscale clientele.

<div align="right">(Perez in Brown-Saracino, 2004: 130)</div>

An important aspect of that definition is that Perez defines the relationship, or rather difference of gentrification and urban renewal. I will come back to this distinction when I approach more thoroughly the case of Zagreb. For now, I will present the development of the literature on gentrification, and in brief point to some of the ongoing debates about the process.

There are several theories about the causes of gentrification, mostly developed by authors studying the processes in American cities and cities in Western Europe. Among the theories two are prevailing: one dealing with the Rent Gap hypothesis theorized by Smith and the other posed by David Ley dealing with the identity and actions of the gentrifiers.

Authors such as Neil Smith (2000) maintain that the defining feature of gentrification is that it leads to a change in class relations leading to the displacement of the lower income tenants in the gentrified areas. According to Smith gentrification is not driven by a middle class gentrifiers, as Ruth Glass saw it but by capital, which after a rent gap develops in a decaying neighborhood finds opportunities for investment there (Hutchison, 2010: 307). It is the process of capital investment that leads to higher costs of living in that neighborhood

which ends with the working class relocating elsewhere (Smith, 2000). There should be additional elements added to the rent gap. An even more active and faster version of the process supposes that the working class is relocated by capital itself or with the aid of the city. This relocation can be done through buying up property of the working class and encouraging the working class to sell or offer to relocate them by giving them new apartments in other areas even before urban renewal starts.

On the other hand, David Ley (1996) focused more on the actions and the identity of the gentrifiers, their patterns of consumption and lifestyle. Ley's hypothesis is that we are seeing a formation of a new class of gentrifiers. This class is formed by the changes from industrial to post-industrial economies that are marked by the rise of advanced services such as administration, finance and similar jobs (Hutchison, 2010: 307). There are also other theories that have focused on gender and the role of women. The impact of gentrification on displacement is also contested; still there is more than substantial evidence to support this claim (see Hutchison, 2010: 309).

2.2. Neoliberalism/neoliberalization

Some authors see gentrification also as part of a bigger global context, or at least tied with a bigger process referred to as globalization or neoliberalism, contemporary social theory has been commenting on elements of this process at least since the work of David Harvey and the late 1970s. Authors such as Smith (2000), Brenner and Theodore (2002), Harvey (2005), Hackworth (2008), Atkinson and Bridge (2012) explain that the processes at hand including gentrification are brought about by the unconscientious interests of a part of the elite in nation states and various international actors such as corporations, and international financial organizations. This systemic process stems from the theories and practices of neoliberalism

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brought about by authors such as Milton Friedman and the Chicago School of Economics, that were given life thought the policies administrations of Ronald Regan and Margaret Thatcher for example. So what exactly is the neoliberalism these authors are referring to? There has been much discourse about neoliberalism in academia, civil society and politics, although only a few substantial definitions have been proposed by the theorists. One definition is given by Harvey which puts emphasis on political economic practices:

> Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defence, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if needed, the proper functioning of the market. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, healthcare, social security or environmental pollution) then they must be created by state action if necessary. But beyond that the state should not venture.

(Harvey, 2007:2)

According to authors like Harvey and Hackworth the mentioned political and economical practices can be attributed to the main ideological fathers of Neoliberalism Hayek and Freidman. These thinkers revived the ideas of a particular version of classical liberalism, that of Smith, Bentham and James Mill. The key point is that the greatest good is going to emerge from the free exchange in the market, and that the state should just protect it and should withdraw as far as possible from all other areas that were in its domain (Hackworth, 2007: 9). So the three pillars of neoliberals are the freedom of the individual, free market and noninterventionist state. Still, authors like Harvey and Hackworth, and especially Brenner and Theodore, also emphasize that the practices are the things we should concentrate on when speaking about neoliberalism, and not the theories, or in essence the divergent of the practices from the theories (Brenner and Theodore, 2002).

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On the other hand, authors critical of the approach taken by Harvey such as Stephen Collier assert that a picture that sees neoliberalism as a strategy of almost global proportions, and which lumps together diverse ideas, actors and politicians such as Pinochet, Regan, Dao Peng, or even Blair and Merkel lacks refinement to say the least. Collier approaches neoliberalism in more of an actor network theory fashion, tracing the implementation of neoliberalism into specific communities, like the small industrial town of Belaya Kalitva and Rodniki in Russia that he studied (Collier, 2011: 161-201). He shows the diverse actors and factors that amount to the transformations and processes on the ground. From this "pipes and wires perspective" emerges a richer picture of the phenomena studies that can be linked to neoliberalism but is also intertwined within its locality and history. He also emphasizes that such a neoliberalism owes more to the theories of what he calls a minor tradition of neoliberalism represented by authors such as James Buchanan and George Stiegler, and less to authors like Hayek and Friedman (Collier, 2011). The work of Brenner and Theodore (2002) is also instructive, analyzing the actuality of practices more than the theoretical and ideological framings that are at the hearth of the debate and criticism of neoliberalism.

Taking all of this into account, the question we have to answer is the following. What is the position of the cities, of urban space, in this process of neoliberalization? Through the unfolding of this process cities have become more autonomous then before from the states but also never more interconnected into the global system. According to Connolly and Steil the scale of the city accommodates two important elements, on the one hand its government can have meaningful power considering its scale (and resources), but that scale is not too large that would prevent citizens to practice democracy by participating in politics and affect government (Connolly and Steil in Marcuse et. all, 2009: 6).

As the above mentioned authors Brenner and Theodore also assert that neoliberalism itself is evolving through practices on the scale of cities, not just affecting them from above

through government policies (Brenner and Theodore, 2002: ix). Cities do not cease to be, but are remaining and becoming, "crucially important arenas for struggles in the name of social justice, radical democracy, popular empowerment and the politics of defiance" (Brenner and Theodore, 2002: x).

Examples such as the participatory budged in Porto Allegre, or the struggles to get the Brazilian and Mexican city charters adopted support this claim. We were reminded that cities are arenas of struggle in 2011, The Occupy Wall Street movement which has spread in the United States, and even more Tahrir square in Cairo, Sintagma Square in Athens and Puerta del sol Square in Madrid echo this call for democratic and popular empowerment Brenner and Theodore are describing. The question that needs to be asked is can we assert that these struggles have a common denominator or a common source. Some authors assert the claim that at least some of these movements and events can be described as a protest against neoliberal policies, as heralds of a global movement against policies of neoliberalization.

Can Sintagma Square in Athens and Puerta del Sol in Madrid and even the Right to the City movement assembled on Flower Square be seen as examples of such a global struggle? Stil,l for that neoliberalism has to be a huge denominator, in the way for example Harvey positions it, that all these movements and others not mentioned could be fit together. Such a denominator can be also the city or democracy. This does not tell us much about the movements themselves and the concrete struggles that band the urban together on that particular square. Global capitalism is far-reaching today, there is no doubt about that, and our urban spaces are changed and restructured by flows of finance and commodities faster than even before in the history of capitalism.

Still, each urban or rural space that is part of these flows has its history and locality, and if on the one hand cities are more alike, adopting similar policies and implementation

strategies we are aware that these strategies and tactics produce and unfold in various ways and interact, or crush with local conditions present. By no means should we assume that the local, the particular city, for example Zagreb was a stationary or static space through which now the new flows of capital or neoliberal policies work with no hindrances, and which were adopted after it radically opened up with "the fall" of socialism. The particular city has been molded and also molded itself through various processes which coexist, with its history, and through the actions and performances of its citizens.

As Brenner and Theodore claim "the point is not only that neoliberalism affects cities, but also that cities have become the key institutional arenas in and through which neoliberalism is itself evolving" (Brenner and Theodore, 2002: ix). On the other hand even under the constellation of neoliberalism there is place for openness, even a radical one, for a different kind of city, but first we have to see what kind of city exists under neoliberalism, what kind of city is the one in which urban entrepreneurialism is practiced.

2.3 Urban Entrepreneurialism

The remaking of the city under the influence of neoliberalism has been startling, although there is a danger of generalization. There is substantial evidence that a large number of cities, especially in North America and Europe, but more and more in places like China and other developing countries too, are following a similar set of policies that put them on a similar pattern of development. In the following sections it will be argued that this is also true for post-socialist cities of Central and Eastern Europe that through the 1990s started a transformation of their urban and social fabric. This transformation which is still ongoing through similar neoliberal policies like the one in the US and Western Europe earlier, among other existing elements, has gentrification as one that is getting more visible.

The ideas mentioned before that formed neoliberalism were a minority view after World War II, essentially a cry of prophets in the wilderness (Hobsbawm, 1996:176-177). But from the 1970s onward, with a crisis of Keynesianism and the welfare state, they became far more prominent. They were taken from books, classrooms and Nobel Prize acceptance speeches[3] by part of the political and economic elites in the US and Britain and transferred into a ideological, political and economic project. One of the first testing grounds for neoliberal practices was New York City in 1975 (Harvey, 2007: 43-48). Till the beginning of the 1990s in various places and on various levels of governance neoliberalism was adopted, practiced and accepted as the only proper mode of governance. The fact that these theories and practices were not questioned in these spheres prompts Hackworth to assert that it was seen as a naturalized way to do things, echoing Thatcher's "There is no alternative" stance (Hackworth, 2007:9). This proper way of doing things, governance through neoliberalism included three major policies and practices. The first is that any redistributive practice/policy is seen as an impediment; the second is labor flexibility because it is seen as crucial for survival in a competitive market, and the third is that the only intervention by the state is monetarism (Hackworth, 2007:10).

Still, Hackworth also warns us not to be generalizing neoliberalism. It should be also viewed as a process, and not the only one going on, as it occurs simultaneously with other processes. The more sweeping accounts on neoliberalism advocated by Harvey (2007) or Smith (2000) are useful and persuasive but also as we move from the large scene of a global system to the local small scale of such a city as Zagreb, or even to a city block in it, an approach similar to that of Collier and Brenner and Theodore asserts itself as a more viable element of a research and analytical toolkit. Only at the end can some more serious

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3 Both Hayek in 1974 and Friedman in 1976, recieved the then recently established Nobel prize in economics (Hobsbawm, 1996: 409)

assessment be given of the interconnectedness of these various spheres and scales, but also of the elements of theories a wide range of authors propose for tackling the issue of urban renewal and urban entrepreneurialism.

Harvey maintains that the radical transformations and the interconnectedness of the global and national economies, especially in the financial sector, under neoliberalization have led to the competitiveness of various cities for capital and investment and their effort to keep them in the cities. The creation of a good business climate and the attracting of capital have become the main goals of city governments, while the provisions of social services have become secondary (Harvey, 1989: 11).

Under such pressures what are then the main policies and strategies of this new entrepreneurial city? Authors such as MacLeod and others build on Harvey's three main claims about entrepreneurial cities and neoliberal governance, the public-private partnership involving public risk and private gain (MacLeod, 2002: 604). The neoliberal cry for autonomy and agency on the part of city government seems far from reality if we take this into account. Hackworth maintains that all this has led to city governments almost axiomatically accepting that they should put as much effort and resources into making their cities efficient economic and business friendly entities. These two elements and the anti-deficit stance are not up for debate for the entrepreneurial city governments of today (Hackworth, 2007: 39).

If that is so, it is even more valuable that social movements and actors appear who would question these "axioms" from outside the city governments, but also that they find ways to penetrate and convene different ideas within them. The opening of such debates is crucial and such social actors can not only influence the city government but also act as the citizens themselves that elect them. By opening spaces of debate through action they lead to

the involvement and participation of citizens to whom the city governments are eventually accountable.

The Zagreb case among a series of others shows that such social actors can influence citizens, beyond just a narrow audience of cultural or academic activists, that their ideas can lift the pages of petitions, the cramped rooms where debates are made, and become articulated in and on the level of the urban fabric, the streets, parks and squares through their enactment and practices by the citizens. Here, the work of French philosopher Henri Lefebvre is instructive, which will be dealt with more in the section on the Right to the City. Lefebvre conceptualized the city as an *oeuvre*, as a work of art created by its inhabitants, its citizens, thought their practices (Lefebvre, 1990). Next to the forms and practices of everyday life in the city, events such as protests, performances open up the urban fabric and the creativity of the citizens. It is also my intention through presenting the Zagreb case to show this creative participation of the citizens in contributing to Zagreb as an *oeuvre*.

Still, what the city governments under urban entrepreneurialism promote and open seems not to be such a participation that would produce the city as an *oeuvre*. The main vehicle through which many cities today are seen to be produced is that of the public-private partnership. What are the elements of such vehicles and who are the actors involved in the creation of transformations of cities they bring about? The public-private partnerships as a key element are very present in the realm of real-estate, but also in governance and city services.

The most sought after strategies for the neoliberal reimagining of the city are private investments in the so-called flagship projects. These are large-scale real-estate projects whose main purpose is to carry the wave of potential new investment into the city, which are seen as one of the key elements in city government policies in the last 20 years. As the competitive

conditions on the local, national and global scale change at a fast pace, city governments make great efforts to secure the competitive position of their cities by advancing such projects (Swyngedouw et al. 2002: 548-551). It is also apparent that for all the resources the cities give investors for such projects, the key elements riding the wave of investment are speculation and, in part, consumption. Still, city governments continue to advocate the realization of such projects because they see them as "a means for generating further growth and for waging a competitive struggle to attract investors" (Swyngedouw et al. 2002: 551).

2.4. The Critique of Urban Entrepreneurialism

These flagship projects are also often tied with the process of gentrification, and they contribute to the process as it was conceptualized. As mentioned above, gentrification was first identified as the middle class moving into working class neighbourhoods. As it has been stated, capital plays a large part in that process but the agency of gentrifiers may be more important. Under neoliberalization large corporate gentrifiers are the key players in the process rather than small-scale gentrifiers (Hackworth, 2007: 126). With that process under way in the cities we are witnessing formations of new urban boundaries, an "archipelago of normalized enclosures" (MacLeod, 2002: 607) of developed renewed space, mostly in the form of gated communities, in a spreading sea of urban decay and poverty outside these small "islands".

Within the projects themselves there is another change. The area that they occupy becomes privatized, the space that in a lot of instances used to be public now becomes private. The entrance to it is accessible during the time that the corporate interest decides, and private security can regulate and enforce that. It can also exclude those who are not seen as belonging there. Urban development projects and the gated communities they often include thus become

"elite playing fields on which the stake is to shape an urban future in line with the aspiration of the most powerful segment(s) among the participant" (Swyngedouw et. al 2002: 568). The Zagreb case provides what I see as a fine example of formations of such elite playing fields, but also an instance how through such a project this field for the elite is being widened, especially through the action and support of city governments. Still, as the Zagreb case is being contested, it is not conclusive that the center of Zagreb has become such a permanent playing field. I will deal more substantially with these issues in the analysis chapter.

In the flagship projects, in general there are some jobs for local residents offered but most often these jobs are different from what these people held before. The jobs are in the service sector which is far less secure and more poorly paid and with less opportunities for advancing (Hackworth 2007: 170), so additionally to the flexibility of the local population to even be considered for these new jobs, they provide also less security for a permanent income and well being for the citizens. The neoliberal reimagining of the city has radically transformed it and its citizens and is presented by political and economic elites as having no alternative. But that is far from the whole story. Citizens, initiatives but also some local governments have a different vision of the development of their cities, and are prepared to struggle for it, and it is the actions and practice of those actors that show that neoliberalization and the neoliberal city are not the only game in town. Public-private partnerships sometimes do include representatives of organized labour but that is almost never the case with neighborhood movements consisting of people most affected by such projects.

The arguments in favour of the benefits of urban entrepreneurialism and public-private partnership do not take into account that cities are not on the same level of the playing field, some cities are in a far better position than others. This means that not only their social and material fabric differs, but that also the histories and processes that produced their contemporary state have to be taken into account. In Croatia for example, the cities of Zagreb

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and Karlovac can be taken as showing such a difference of playing fields. A mere 50 kilometers apart, both shared almost equal importance, Zagreb as a center of Croatia and Karlovac as a center of the Austro-Hungarian Military Frontier. Both developed into important traffic and railway junctions and towns of industry, but after the dissolution of the Military Frontier Karlovac lost its position as a central city, and Zagreb re-established itself as the capital of unified Croatian territories. Still, especially after the transition from socialism the position of Karlovac declined even more, as it also became for four years a city on the front line of the Homeland War, and now is just branded as a city where a famous brand of beer is being produced with the city's name. Because "the widespread adoption of urban entrepreneurialism in an urban system can reinforce inequalities between cities lead all to easily to a zero sum game in which all cities feel compelled to engage in urban entrepreneurialism even if it leads to a form of inter-urban competition which becomes more destructive than constructive" (Hackworth, 2007: 286).

Urban entrepreneurialism according to Hackworth relies on two key assumptions that are questionable, to say the least. It looks at cities as firms that are on the same level of playing field and possess the same access to resources together with full information. That crude economic vision does not take into account the specificities of cities, like the ones Collier demonstrates in his account of the Russian city of Belaya Kalitva (2011: 84-107; 170-173). Hackworth points to three crucial dimensions that make the difference and that the economistic view leaves out. The first is that each city is differently embedded in the social system of production. This means that the same prescriptions and practices of urban entrepreneurialism can have radically different outcomes. The second is the geographic and historical role the city has within the political system. Its history is an important element in how well a city can respond and adapt to changing circumstances. The third difference is the

issue of political favouritism: a city may have a far better position within the national government at the expense of other cities.

Therefore, without regard for social and territorial equality, issues of competitiveness and urban growth can worsen the situation a city might be in. "No convincing evidence has been advanced to demonstrate that the increase in private sector investment in economic growth and employment has matched, alone exceeded public spending increases on entrepreneurial strategies, the result is the net transfer of societal wealth from the public to the private sector" (Burstein and Rolnick in Hackworth, 2007: 305). It could be summarized that the main difference of cities and firms is in the following: firms are responsible for making profit, and cities should be responsible for the welfare of their inhabitants.

2.5. Urban Entrepreneurialism and the Post-socialist City

The processes of urban renewal and urban entrepreneurialism, and gentrification for that matter have not been so thoroughly studied in the post-socialist context as they have been in the United States and Western Europe. Naturally, the main reason is that these processes started only later with the transition, the introduction of the market economy and private investment. Post-socialist cities might prove to be the most interesting cases to study these processes. These cities as well as societies made perhaps the most radical transformation in the last 100 years. The series of transformations in those societies, from the one party system to liberal democracy, from a centrally planned to a free market economy, and from social ownership of the means of production and wealth to radical privatization and the reassertion of private property rights was startling. Petrovic (2005), Stanilov(2007), Sykora and Bouzarovski (2012) are just a few among a growing number of academics that give insights on how to conceptualize, approach and research post-socialist cities.

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Bodnar emphasizes that privatization has become 'the leitmotiv of post-socialist urban change' (Bodnar in Stanilov, 2007: 7). Concerning that, Stanilov writes "the rate of the post-socialist urban change is striking, leading to radical transformations in the character of the Central and Eastern European cities (CEE). From high-density, mono-centric settlements, dominated by high-rise public housing and communal mode of transportation, CEE cities are being transformed into sprawling, multi-nodal metropolitan areas reaching extreme levels of privatization of housing, services, transportation, and public space" (Stanilov, 2007: 7).

The post-socialist city therefore proved to be one of the most rewarding fabrics to track these changes. It has been more than just a mirror of the overarching processes going on in transitional societies. Stanilov asserts that "the post-socialist transition period provided good evidence that urban space utilization is an active element of structuring social relations" (Stanilov, 2007: 5). Taking into account the spread of urban entrepreneurialism has reached the post-socialist cities so that their governments now seem to be compelled to compete with other cities for capturing investment that is now flowing on a global scale and that is transforming its urban tissue.

Still, the transformation of socialist cities within the socialist states and societies into their post-socialist phase has to be thoroughly analyzed. It can be said that the direction of the transformation lacked clarity, meaning that for the political elites and the citizens it was clear what they wanted to leave behind, socialism, but not what they wanted to reach. The emphasis was on the rate of transformation, especially in the first years when it was dominated by "the neoliberal economic doctrine… transplanted in the post-socialist context" (Stanilov, 2007: 22). Ideas such as shock therapy were advocated by people like Jeffrey Sachs and his Eastern European counterparts. But soon *the where and to whom* became apparent, "the main direction of urban spatial restructuring could be defined as a transfer of assets, resources, and opportunities for the public to the private realm" (Stanilov, 2007: 11). Markets posed as cures

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for crumbling socialist societies and cities in most cases have "failed to alleviate new pressure points in the urban system" (Stanilov, 2007: 13), but they also manage to create new ones. The transformation of Eastern Europe might require a new investigation concerning the current economic crisis. The 2008 crisis hit these societies hard, especially the ones that implemented most fervently and completely the neoliberal agenda: countries like Hungary and Lithuania being the leaders of transition are now the ones most vulnerable to the crisis (Dale, 2012).

Still, the picture of post-socialist transition should be additionally refined; the countries that have followed the more or less same model reached different result: for example they were radically different in the Czech Republic, Croatia or Ukraine. Stanilov sees three main factors why this is so. One is the "level of commitment to political, economic, and institutional reform", the second is "path dependency" in countries that had experimented more with the market economy and reforms like Hungary, countries who had a strong position and economic power like the Czech Republic. The third is the level of foreign investment" (Stanilov, 2007: 27). The fact is that foreign direct investment in most cases ended in the real-estate sector in the newly formed real estate market of the post-socialist countries. Some of these markets and the growth they seemed to be generating turned out to be economic bubbles that collapsed on the onset of the crisis of 2008.

In Croatia this has been felt as much of the private sector investment was in construction and partially also in some of the public sector investment through private-public partnerships. Still, a part of the sector has been informal, unregulated and illegal construction was high on the agenda during the 1990s, especially in some suburbs of Zagreb, and to a larger extent in towns on the Adriatic coast. The legal frameworks that were set up regulating them were constantly changed, overruled with new ones and reinstated. For example, between 1991 and 2006 the Law on Spatial Construction was changed ten times and the Building Law

eight times. This on the one hand encouraged informal and illegal construction, but also hindered excessive and large scale urban development projects that would substantially alter the existing urban tissues of many Croatian cities, which started to occur with the decline of informality (see Randić in Baćić et al. 2006: 120-133). With the onset of the crisis and the crash of the real-estate market, construction stopped on numerous projects leaving them half finished, even finished built blocks of flats the size of small neighborhoods remind vacant. The project Flower although started in 2007 didn't see substantial construction till 2009.

Still, the case for the lack of foreign direct investment should also be taken with some scrutiny, especially in the case of post-socialist states. As Dale (2012) shows, the flow of foreign direct investment was not redirected to post-socialist states with the onset of liberalization and deregulation in the 1990s, through which most of the elements of the old system were destroyed. The bad investment climate that is till this day blamed for the investments not coming is just one, if at all, an element to answer why investment is not flowing into post-socialist states. The other is that the system is just not investing there; most of the investment is flowing, and was always flowing into high developed economies of the center like Germany and not into the countries of the European economic periphery like Croatia.

All the elements taken above need to be re-evaluated, as the transformation did not occur in the same way in all the post-socialist cities, not even capital cities located in Central Europe and share many common elements, therefore we must account for disparities. As said, some socialist countries started experimenting early with the market, the first being Yugoslavia spearheading reforms at the end of the 1970s and beginning of 1980s but it was not until the 1990s that the substantial transition into the market economy was made as a result of a deliberate policy. Many of the countries followed neoliberal policies of

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liberalization, deregulation requested from them by stand by arrangements of the IMF to get their debt under control.

Although in the case of Croatia the debt got only bigger but we must account for the specificities mentioned above, the first of which is the impact of the Homeland War which was among other developments that had the most devastating effect on the economy and the society. The startling fact is that most of the economic reforms were undertaken precisely in that time of conflict. The legal framework for transformation and privatization of state owned enterprises and the housing stock was passed by the right wing government in 1992. This can be seen as a final break with socialism, although at the time the government had no control of a third of the country's territory occupied by Serbia and Montenegro and formed the never internationally recognized Republic of Serbian Krajina that functioned for less than four years[4]. To make such a radical transformation in a time of conflict was startling and has been the source of political debate, social contestation and even the basis of court cases. In the Croatian media and public, the terms associated with the privatization range from legalized criminal theft to war profiteering.

Authors such as Boris Buden give a different account, claiming that the transition in the sphere of property was twofold. First social property was transformed into state property and then state property was transformed into private property. The debates on the transition, ranging from the academic to the political to the legal in court cases always focus on the second move of privatization (Kovačević, Pulig and Ćurković, 2012). The first move is rarely analyzed, but a closer look at it reveals that it can be seen as a neoliberal move in Harvey's sense that "if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, healthcare, social

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4 It could be said that as citizens most of the working class were mobilized to go empty handed against the tanks of what remained of the Yugoslav Army trying to secure territorial gains for Serbia and Montenegro, while the new ruling class in formation mobilized to go empty handed against factories, the latter proved to be a far easier battle to win.

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security or environmental pollution) then they must be created by state action if necessary"
(2007: 2). But it can be asserted that elements of markets and indeed markets did exist before
the transformation. The simultaneous dissolution of the common market of Yugoslavia and
the creation of new internal markets and privatization went hand in hand and was produced
and carried through by the same governments as the dissolution of the Yugoslav market and
Yugoslavia as such. On the other hand, Slovenia had created a legal framework for
privatization as late as 1995, making the process more gradual.

Other countries such as the Czech Republic have had smoother transition but also a
more systematic implementation of these policies. So as Petrovic claims, there is a need to
take path dependency and the historical approach into account in our research of post-socialist
cities. She also asserts that researchers should "pay attention to the simultaneous existence of
three institutional patterns: those rooted in the previous socialist system, those created by the
informal sector and those designed by policies consistent with a market driven urban economy
(2005: 21).

As for urban renewal in post-socialist cities, for example Prague, Cook asserts that
"there are certain similarities between different post-socialist states regarding the
transformation of housing markets in terms of the processes of property privatization,
restitution, internalization and increased residential differentiation and inequality" (Cook,
2010: 613). Cook sees that such developments echo those in the US or Britain researched by
other authors (2010: 621). Another valuable insight that Cook brings to the discussion is that
the essence of this ongoing process is that its proclaimed goals remain the same but the ones
that are being reached or attained are substantially different. The goals that politicians and
entrepreneurs proclaimed do not seem to be the ones being reached, and Cook explains these
discrepancies as follows:

> Processes of liberalization, privatization, restitution and internationalization, traditionally seen as indicators of "transition" toward an imagined end state of neoliberal capitalist practices of urban regeneration… should not be seen as a midway or transitory point between the state socialist era and the imagined goal of 'mature', 'western' institutions and practices. Rather then, I pose that the situation presented in Prague should be seen as specifically and distinctly post-socialist, rather than subsuming understanding post-socialism into dominant universal discourses of globalization and transition.

(Cook, 2010: 625)

How much is the development of post-socialist cities specific, how much are they different to processes going on in the cities in the US and Western Europe, especially those of urban renewal and gentrification? The differences and similarities between those processes have already been studied and identified. Processes of gentrification are being identified by researchers in post-socialist cities throughout Eastern and Central Europe. The scale of such processes and projects varies but they are present. Budapest is according to Smith (2000) an example, being one of the first post-socialist cities to see gentrification on a larger scale. Other authors do not agree, Sykora (2011) gives a different picture concerning Budapest than Smith, but also gives examples from Tallin and Prague, the latter also analyzed by Cook (2011) and Temelova (2008). Warsaw (Polanska, 2010), Poznan (Miciukiewicz, 2008) and Łodz (Fleming, 2011) are identified as examples where gentrification is present in Poland, and Moscow (Badyina and Golubchikov, 2005) in Russia. Zagreb has recently been added to this picture (Čaldarović and Širinić, 2008; Svirčić Gotovac, 2010), with an emphasis on the Flower Square Project but not only that one.

A lot of these gentrification projects take the form of a gated community, like the Flower Project. Polanska demonstrates that such projects are more present in post-socialist cities than in those of Western Europe. Only one such gated community could be found in Berlin[5], being the single one in Germany. Polanska also shows that there are more gated

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[5] Berlin provides one of the most interesting examples, a hybrid city, divided for years by the Berlin Wall.

communities in Warsaw alone than in the whole of France (2010: 422). Next to Warsaw in eleven other Polish cities gated communities are being constructed, although to a lesser extent, but in the case of Wrocław and Gdynia they form the majority of new housing developments (2010: 426).

Although Zagreb and other cities in Croatia have not seen gated communities spreading on such a scale as in Poland, the case of Flower Project, Hoto Ville and even the case of the transformation of the publicly owned castle Kulmer castle into the private residence of one of Croatia's biggest entrepreneurs can be seen as examples of a trend of privatization and gating[6].

2.6. Urban Entrepreneurialism and Urban Renewal in Post-socialist Zagreb

In the article *Urban Development, Legislation, and Planning in Post-socialist Zagreb (2007)* Cavrić and Nedović-Bundić classify the urban development of Zagreb in three modernizations. The first modernization took place in the decades leading to the turn of the 20th century, the second modernization was implemented during socialism that was characterized by building massive housing estates, with the majority on the south bank of the

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[6] The case of Kulmer castle is the following: the castle belonged to the family Kulmer but they were expropriated by the socialist government after World War II and the castle became social property. It slowly deteriorated and ended up vacant. Although the family demanded restitution after the transition that was not carried out and the state contested their claim. The castle was eventually sold by the state to the Agrokor Corporation owned by entrepreneur Ivica Todorić with the condition it be renewed and transformed into a hotel. This was never carried out by Agrokor and the castle became the residence of the Todorić family.

The case provoked the Right to the City initiative to contest this transformation. In an action the Right to the City Initiative took 100 activists in two tourist busses that drove up to the residence in an effort to book rooms there, they were told that this was not possible at the time as the hotel has not received its categorization but it was in the process of obtaining it and that it will soon open to its guests. Eventually the city government of Zagreb under Mayor Milan Bandić made it possible for Todorić to make the castle officially his private house, and the residence of his family. Additionally, Todorić privatized a road leading to the property by putting up a ramp and closing of what was essentially public space and by no means his property.

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Sava river, named New Zagreb. This city is almost the size of old Zagreb but built upon the socialist remaking of the modernist ideals. Although envisioned as a functional and integrated new city for the working class it was never fully developed and thus New Zagreb became similarly to other socialist cities and no more than a large sleeping quarter for the proletariat. Also, the older inner city neighbourhoods have experienced a change as a majority of the apartments were nationalized, qualified as social property and given to the citizens.

After the fall of socialism and the breakup of Yugoslavia most cities in Croatia struggled but Zagreb continued its growth, especially because of its new central position in the now independent country, backed by the ideas of the new right-wing government headed by president Franjo Tuđman that it should be a metropolis and center for all Croats living in Croatia as well as abroad. Through the 1990s the city started its third modernization which is still ongoing but for more than a decade this process was not adequately regulated leading to a rise in illegal construction and chaotic building practices on the level of neighbourhoods. That was especially the case with new neighbourhoods arising on the periphery but also in the protected area of the park forest of Medvednica[7] on the north edge of the city. The inner city was also affected by these processes, but to a lesser extent.

In an effort to stop these trends a new *Urban Master Plan* was finally adopted and passed by the City Assembly in 2003, but it became the document of contestation. For my topic this master plan is important because it had far a more developed social dimension and conservative plan for the center of Zagreb. "The plan classified Zagreb's urban territory in three zones: a highly consolidated area (including the historical core in which a strict planning regime is applied), consolidated areas (lower density areas with elaborate street networks governed by more flexible zoning), and unconsolidated areas (lower density zones where

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[7] Afore mentioned castle Kulmer , but also many new residences and mansions of persons that can be described as the real winners of transition in Croatia are located there.

large scale redevelopment schemes are permissible) (Cavrić and Nedović-Bundić in Stanilov, 2007: 389). The project Flower was to be realized in the first zone of the high consolidated area which was only possible if the regulation of the master plane was changed.

As in other post-socialist cities, the introduction of shopping centers and their mushrooming is showing new patterns for citizens in the suburbs, far from the city center and nodes of public transport. They are seen as new meeting places and places of entertainment and culture by some, but still they question that they can replace the city center is not clear. In 2006 more than 30 such hypermarkets and centers were operating (Sić, 2007: 8), and new ones were still constructed and planned. But another trend is the development of shopping centers in the heart of the city, the city center.

The shopping centers Kaptol Center and Prebederski Gardens[8] and Importane Galleria were all built in the historical core of Zagreb, and can be seen as "examples of transitional or post-socialist gentrification which is enacted mostly by ambition of individual investors with the consent of city planners" (Svirčić Gotovac, 2010:204). New projects such as the Flower and Ban Center are implementing this logic even in the very heart of Zagreb: Ban Center in one block bordering the main Jelačić Square and Flower Project on Flower Square which are the essence and symbols of public space in the city, free of private traffic and pedestrian zones. Although the spatial possibilities of the city center make these projects function as plaza centres with underground garages, rather than traditional shopping centers with large parking lots constructed in the periphery of Zagreb. They still represent "pseudo" public spaces more similar to city squares filled with entertainment and activities which mirror that of squares, but also add components of elite residence (Sić, 2007: 9).

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[8] Prebredar Gardens which closed its doors during the writing of this thesis is an interesting example as it was built on land owned by the Catholic Church given to concession for the shopping center.

The limited spatial possibilities in the historical center of Zagreb should not be emphasized as they can still be changed. The case of Project Flower shows that the city government is ready to change regulations to allow the remaking of spatial modalities, even through demolition of the older urban tissue, in order that such projects are implemented, and present the city government's vision of the renewal of the city center.

Within the city government of Zagreb the most active and prominent position in the promotion of an entrepreneurial model of urban renewal is that of the mayor of Zagreb. Cavrić and Nedović-Bundić write that:

> His position is a special case of concentrated political power, combining the function of a politician, urban governor, and entrepreneur. On one hand, this position gives the mayor the power to break through the routines of everyday government operation to advance megaprojects, which can enhance a city's competitiveness in global capital markets. On the other hand, it gives the mayor the opportunity to spend a lot of time with ordinary citizens from his constituency, attending to their problems and needs (Cavrić and Nedović-Bundić in Stanilov, 2007: 396).

It has been asserted that the actual mayor of Zagreb, Milan Bandić has used this favorable position to bypass "routine planning procedures and to establish adequate public-private partnership acting as initiator, executor, supervisor, or critic of mega-city projects such as the city gas pipe-line, the Bundek recreational area… and many more" (Cavrić and Nedović-Bundić in Stanilov 2007:396). These assertions were also made by the Right to the City Movement, culminating in criminal charges against Bandić. They filed criminal charges to the State Attorney in 2010 regarding the Flower Square project. Still, till September 2012 the attorney's office did not open the investigation on that case. Taking all of this into account, what is then the form in which entrepreneurial urban renewal is practiced in post-socialist cities such as Zagreb?

Svirčić Gotovac claims that actions of the mayor and City Assembly in their favoring of the Flower Project through the changes in the Urban Master Plan can be seen as "an

example of a symbiosis of city and political actors. The interconnected of those who have great political power and influence with economic structures which possess capital becomes an example of an Ideal type interconnectedness of two important social structures" (Svirčić Gotovac, 2010:205). These actors together brought urban renewal of the cities center through entrepreneurial institutive to the agenda.

Apart from the deteriorated urban cores of the American cities where the entrepreneurial model was implemented on a large scale, the city center of Zagreb did deteriorate during socialism, but never to the extent as city centers in American cities. Within the neoliberal entrepreneurial frame these urban renewal projects are presented as giving new life to and revitalizing the inner city and giving new value to it. On the other hand, we can also see them as retiers of the urban core, which means that they are not bringing new value to the core but are extracting it from their surroundings. The attractiveness of these projects comes from their surroundings not the other way around.

There is also evidence that their presence is affecting the city core in a negative way. They affect public space, the environment and health. The introduction of underground garages is seen as a cure for the congestion of the city center with traffic of automobiles. But on the other hand, they are seen as bringing even more traffic into the city center, taking away space from public transport and pedestrians. Models that are presented in Zagreb and other socialist cites are already models given up by American and Western European cities decades ago because their effects were harmful to the city core and its inhabitants, and were not solving problems.

The comparative analysis of Western European cities with Zagreb concerning the issues of traffic congestion, parking infrastructure for personal traffic, bicycle lanes and pedestrian zones shows a discrepancy in this part of urban planning of a Zagreb that is

branded as European and implementing models for Western Europe, and shows that that is not the case (Ivčić, 2008).

For example, the number of parking spaces in eleven existing underground garages located centrally and accessible to the public, excluding the one on project Flower that was not built then, was 3721. Comparing the number of inhabitants per number of accessible parking places Ivčić comes to the number of one parking place for 211 inhabitants. The figures for the Western European cities that were analyzed, especially Vienna[9] which was by the supporters of new underground garages in the center set as an example, are all higher and show that Zagreb has more parking spaces available in underground garages that these cities. The number of inhabitants per one parking space in underground garages located centrally in the cities analyzed is the following: 241 in Vienna, 273 in Amsterdam and 570 in Stockholm (Ivčić, 2008: 8). The main argument is that the support of centrally located underground garages as part of revitalization of the city is contrasted with the practices of cities which rely on fast and efficient networks of public traffic and bicycle lanes instead of private motorized traffic as a way to getting people into the center.

One of the solutions is the park and ride system, introduced in cities of Western Europe in the 1970s, that allocated big parking spaces next to public transport hubs on the edges of the city centers or peripheries so that commuters could leave their personal vehicle there and use public transport to get to the center of the city. These parking spaces are usually free of charge, or their users pay a lower price for public transport. In the case of Zagreb even

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[9] Urban renewal in Vienna was constantly voiced as a model by the supporters of the project. It was said that the Flower Square project and its garage can be compared to the Haas House or the underground garage on Stephansplatz. Viennese main urbanist Thomas Madreiter in an interview clarified that there were many misconceptions about Vienna that the supporters of the Flower Square projects presented as facts. That the participation of citizens and their voices about renewal projects are taken into account there, even when if that means the change or stopping of these projects. Therefore it is curtail that not only the entrepreneur be satisfied with his project, he has to be willing and ready to change it if that matters to the citizens (Sutlić, 2010).

in 1999 such parking places were planned in the General Traffic Plan of the city to be built next to five main public transport hubs and major train stations in the city. It was estimated then that their implementation would eliminate a daily 2200 journeys by personal transport in the center of Zagreb, but by September 2012 such parking places were not built (Ivčić, 2008: 10)

Recently, there was an instance that these good practices be implemented is this case, the park and ride system, a parking lot on the south edge of Zagreb center core has been designated for this purpose, but this decision was soon revoked, making it free of charge but not relating it to the use of public transport. Still, the prices of public transport and the service given for that is made to discourage use of it in favour of personal transport, at least for people who spend limited time in the center. The price of a one way ticket in public transport is more expensive than the cheapest parking that is still located centrally, and this traffic is slower as it is, especially in the center not separate from private traffic. There are examples, like in Ilica Street which is the access line for six public tram lines, whose section form Gundulićeva to Frankopanska Street is also an access street for two public garages where cars waiting in line to access the garages block additionally reduces the speed of the trams down, even putting them to a halt.

All these elements should be taken into account when we analyze such urban renewal projects, but the core element is the one of the block itself, its transformation, and in the case of Zagreb the paradigm of urban renewal. Section 3.4. of the analysis chapter is dedicated to this important element. The section of the literature review that follows deals with the concept of the Right to the City, that became such an important tool of the movement that used, enacted and transformed it through the contestation of Project Flower that transformed the city block.

2.7. The Right to The City

The Right to the City has become one of the more prominent concepts in today's critical urban scholarship as well as in social movements. Still, according to the literature but also in the way in which it materializes in discourses and actions it remains a fluid and not well defined concept (Prucell, 2002). The numerous struggles to gain access but even more struggles for social justice in the city are put by authors like Harvey and Mitchell under the umbrella term Right to the City. The concept of Right to the City was developed originally by the French philosopher Henry Lefebvre who defined the concept as following: "the right to the city cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting right or as a return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed right to urban life" (Lefebvre, 2000: 158). David Harvey following Lefebvre asserts that the Right to the City must be conceived as more than a person's right to acquire urban resources, it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization" (Harvey, 2008: 23).

For Lefebvre the Right to the City stems from participation in the urban life of the city. Mitchell emphasizes this argument for participation as the most important that Lefebvre gives. If we accept Lefebvre's view of the city as an *oeuvre*, a creative work constructed by its citizens through their activities, then the lack of participation on their behalf in the city under conditions of neoliberalization is a serious issue" (Mitchell, 2003: 17).

The crucial part to Lefebvre's argument and an important one in the literature on Right to the City and one that I also emphasize in my thesis is that of the city which through the participation of its citizens is created as an *oeuvre*, almost a work of art. In this creation all its citizens participate. The main problem of the contemporary cities under the elements of neoliberalization and global flows capital is that citizens are alienated from it as an *oeuvre*.

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„More and more spaces of the modern city are being produced for us rather than by us" (Mitchell, 2003: 18). At the core of the Right to the City is the right to inhabit, to appropriate the city, but it is also more than that. Lefebvre tries to make a clear distinction between it and the right to private property. Lefebvre is therefore favouring the people that inhabit spaces over the people who are owners of the spaces in the city (Prucell, 2006: 1936). The right to the city in Lefebvre view is the road to radical, almost revolutionary urbanism in the spirit of the Paris Commune. But the question we have to pose to ourselves is what is to be done on the day after. When the "cry and demand" (Lefebvre, 2000: 158) has been voiced and struggle is going on and gaining some ground.

Mitchell gives some good points about the Right to the City as a radical idea put into practice in the real realm of politics. It is the cry and demand in and for public space as space of representation. "This process of taking of space – has often – indeed, I will say always – been contentious. It has ever been a struggle" (Mitchell, 2003: 231). In Mitchell's words there is more to that, "social action and struggle always operates simultaneously to influence the production of law and the production of space" (Mitchell, 2003: 29). The very spontaneity from which it arises helps it to direct itself against power. "Without spontaneity nothing happens, nothing progresses. Power therefore regards spontaneity as the enemy" (Merrifield, 2002: 87). This spontaneity is expressed according to Lefebvre in the street precisely because it is not occupied by institutions (Merrifield, 2002: 87).

As the literature also notes there is also a fear that such notions will be appropriated only to the local scale, the city, without having the bigger picture in mind. So, we have two issues here the concept can be either too broad or too narrow. Lefebvre can be also used to help because he himself was stressing the interconnected of the city and its surroundings and that the rural and the urban are really a false dichotomy. On the other hand the possible

pitfalls but also successes are presented when the Right to the City is envisioned on the global scale.

Moving away from the theories in the realm of activism we find a large number of social movements that appropriated the ideas of Right to the City for a collection of vastly different goals and projects. The use of such a concept in these struggles is welcome because it has the potentiality of bringing these various movements closer or even together in their struggle against the various inequalities and problems they address. Still, it can make us fall into the trap that we see also various processes and local conditions as the same pattern of a global schema.

In cities across the globe citizens are demanding this Right to the City. Connolly and Steil confirm that the concept echoed with many and "has animated a dynamic coalition of community organizations and other civil society groups across the U.S. calling for economic and environmental justice. Members of this Right to the City Alliance have been active nation wide fighting gentrification and calling for a right to land and housing free from pressure of real estate speculations and that can serve as cultural and political spaces to build sustainable communities" (Connolly and Steil in Marcuse et. all, 2009: 8).

Marcuse emphasizes that the Right to the City has become a "major formulation of progressive demand for social change around the word" (2009: 246). He lists the many charters and declarations signed by hundreds of groups which ended up in producing the *World Charter on the Right to the City.* Another example is the Right to the City Alliance in the US comprised of twenty groups from eight cities that adopted in Atlanta in 2007 a statement of principle what the Right to the City would entail (see Marcuse, 2009: 247).

Mayer following Čaldarović acknowledged the struggle in Zagreb and situates it a broader context. "The practices against gentrification along with New York, Paris,

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Amsterdam, Hamburg and Berlin activists and citizens through their struggles have put Zagreb on the map. As Mayer writes the Right to the City group in Zagreb which for three years prevented – with petitions, blockades, and broad support from the public – the implementation of an investor plan to develop the central Flower Square into an upscale, exclusive, traffic-rich plaza with underground parking to jumpstart gentrification of the surrounding area" (Mayer, 2011: 71-72).

After this overview of some of the theories and practices of the Right to the City it can be said that we must be aware of the danger and possibility of corruption of the concept. So, we must avoid not falling into the local trap on the one hand, and on the other hand positioning it too broadly to mean everything and accordingly nothing. Still, it can be asserted that the Right to the City as a concept, but even more as a practice, is something that has great transformative potential in our cities and beyond. But as with neoliberalism we could also be in danger to make too broad strokes to generalize these struggles.

Because of that it is important to study more thoroughly the individual cases, to assess their strategies, claims and goals and see the existing similarities but also differences in these movements. This is why I want to look more thoroughly at the case in Zagreb. How and what demands were made there under the banner of the Right to the City, and how was the concept actually used and changed through its enactment in the streets of Zagreb. The many levels on which the Right to the City movement and its various elements operated can give us some clearance on how the question and openness of the concept can be used to attain goals.

Chapter III. Analysis

3.1. The "Alliance Operation City", a Prelude to the Right to the City Movement in Zagreb

The Right to the City movement in Zagreb, whose activities culminated in 2010 with the month long occupation of Warsaw Street in the center of the city and massive protests by citizens, had its roots and original base of activists in parts of Zagreb's civil society. It started as an initiative of various more or less connected youth NGOs and organizations of independent culture, gaining ground in 2005 under the banner *Alliance Operation City*. According to James,[10] one of the leading activists of the Alliance, the Initiative was formed because the various organizations of youth and independent culture realized they had the same problems, namely the lack of space in Zagreb where programs for youth and independent culture could be organized, conducted and housed.

The Alliance started an advocacy process to make the city government start acting on the *Strategy for Youth* that it had developed and adopted but did not implement. The city government and the initiative discussed a couple of possible locations in the city for the programs. The initiative focused on unused, deteriorated industrial spaces which used to house now closed down factories in or in the vicinity of the city center. According to the law some of these spaces were protected cultural heritage sites, and therefore could not be demolished and used for real estate development, but neither the city nor the state had shown any initiative to revitalize them.

In 2005 as local elections in Zagreb were soon to be held, the Alliance Operation City decided to occupy one of those spaces to make the public and the politicians aware of these issues. Therefore they occupied the space of the former factory *Badel* and launched a ten day

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[10] I will use pseudonyms for all my interviewees.

cultural festival that attracted more than fifteen thousand visitors, including Milan Bandić the mayor of Zagreb, who voiced his support for the Alliance and the event by saying on television that "Europe is in Zagreb for these ten days ".

The Alliance also drafted a nine point *Declaration on Youth and Independent Culture*[11] and presented it to the political parties competing for the election, most of them signed the Declaration, including Bandić of the Social Democratic Party who was campaigning for a new term, and won the election in 2005. The mayor promised that he would take steps to implement the demands from the declaration into city policy and that soon *Badel* and other spaces would be given to the youth and independent culture. After a year in power none of the promises were kept and the members of the Alliance have grown impatient and started realizing that the promised spaces would not end up in the hands of the youth and independent culture but could be used for other means. These spaces could be privatized and commercialized, and even the possibility that they could be demolished and their valuable plots used for new construction was feared by the Alliance.

James said that they realized that the problem was greater and did not just concern the youth and independent culture but all citizens of Zagreb. The problem was that the city had no vision of how to use its valuable spaces, that it did not have a strategy for those spaces, which could have public use and be open to citizens. The reality of city politics was just the opposite; all issues in the city were handled particularly, meaning that they seemed to have no pattern and strategy for them except that they involved particular interests, rather than public interest. It was agreed that the Alliance would need a more radical, active and visible approach to the problems.

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[11] The nine point of the declaration are brought in its entirety in the appendix.

3.2. Putting the Right to the City on the Agenda

According to James, the tipping point for the Alliance occurred when in 2006 when they saw that mayor Bandić advertised the city's annual *Youth Salon* manifestation with large billboards containing the enlarged picture of his identity card, presenting him as a supporter of Zagreb's youth. In response, members of the Alliance met and decided to hold a protest action during one night soon after the billboards had been set up, crossing the face of the mayor with red tape on seventy of the billboards. The second stage was planned for the following day for which they prepared large stickers with the slogan *Right to the City* that they would stick on the crossed billboards. That would be followed by a press conference by representative of the Alliance about the unfulfilled promises to the youth and independent culture scene, and the use and misuse of space in the city.

The crossed billboards immediately started a media uproar. The mayor said that this might be the work of a new political party, or maybe even the city's criminal underworld threatening him. The information was soon leaked that the Alliance was behind it and journalists came into one of the meetings of the Alliance in the Mama Culture Club. Representatives of the Alliance appeared on television and presented their case this time as spokespersons[12] for the initiative. That was the occasion that the Right to the City Initiative in Zagreb was born. When asked for a comment on the initiative's press conference, the mayor only said "The patient one will be the one saved", dismissing the whole action, but soon the activists used this as a new slogan in their campaign. The ideas and concepts that were put

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[12] These representatives were Teodor Celakoski of Net Culture Club Mama and Tomislav Tomašević of Green Action. After the launch of the campaign to contest the Project Flower, they together with actress Urša Raukar were the main spokespersons for the campaign and the growing Right to the City movement and were perceived as its leaders (Milković, 2010). As the campaign intensified they were more present in the media and were portrayed in various ways the most extreme ends as leaders of a new political force in Zagreb on the one hand, or as proponents of certain, but never named political or corporate interests plotting against the mayor or the entrepreneur on the other. The latter can be called nothing less than a smearing campaign against them. A substantial analysis of the media discourse surrounding them and the Right to the City Movement in general is presented by Radman (2011).

forward by the City government and also those put forward by the Alliance were used and contested by the respective parties throughout the campaign and even after it had finished. A few adtional examples of theses practices will be analized the following sections.

To the question as to how they came up with the slogan The Right to the City, and if they knew that movements in other cities used the same slogan, James replied that they did not know about other Right to the City movements at that time, and that the slogan just sounded right to them. He said that it is apparent in retrospect that these movements were and are fighting the same processes, and therefore started to communicate and share experience with each other at a later stage. However, some other activists I interviewed, Benjamin for example, told me that the members of the Initiative were aware of these movements at the very start.

In the summer of 2006, the Right to the City Initiative found a case on which it could raise the stakes and present more clearly to the citizens of Zagreb what they saw as the issues of misuse of space in the city. The particular case involved one of the proposed spaces for the youth information center that the city proposed to the Alliance a year before. This was a building in a city block on Zagreb's Flower Square located in, by the Urban Master Plan protected, Lower Town where a member of the alliance also conducted some cultural programs in the years past. However, after the initial proposal the city soon stopped further negotiations. The activists then found out why, the city made a bid to investors to regenerate part of the same city block on Flower Square, the public was not informed of that bid, and the winning bidder's proposal for renewing the block incorporated the demolition of the same building.

A newly established company named IMMO Worldwide Zagreb won the bid in the name of the HOTO Group, a company founded by Croatian real estate entrepreneur Tomislav Horvatinčić. This was not Horvatičić's first project in the city. He had already built a small

shopping center in another city block labeled as an urban renewal project. His HOTO groups also built a business tower in 2004, now housing the offices of Croatian Telekom, part of Deutsche Telekom, and in 2005 they built the first gated community in Croatia named Hoto Ville in the town of Sveta Nedjelja near Zagreb. James explained the position of the Right to the City Initiative had on the case:

> We realized that we had a case on which we could unmask the two things we wanted: firstly, the catastrophic politics of city on urban spaces, that all important spatial resources in the city would be destroyed or sold, and secondly, that everything was done for particular interests. This could be the case on which we could get citizens' support, and it would not seem that we are fighting just for our own interests. (James, interview, April 27th 2012)

According to James there were multiple layers to the Flower Square case the Right to the City Initiative could challenge and bring to the public. First, there was the issue that the city had not allocated the space to the youth but to an entrepreneur, although the city had the priority right to the property.

Still, the buildings to be demolished used to be the property of the Serbian Orthodox Church but they were nationalized during Socialism. The Church started the process of restitution, but the City government did not see that through and gave precedence to a private entrepreneur (Svirčić Gotovac, 2010:205). The second layer was that the building to be demolished was located in the lower city block protected by the city's Master Plan. In order for the investor to build the project the Urban Master Plan of the city had to be changed to allow demolition of the building and the denivelation in the adjacent Warsaw Street. This denivelation was at the center of the third layer of the case, that concerning public space. Warsaw Street was a pedestrian zone; part of it would be destroyed to build an access ramp to a private garage for the new project. The fourth layer was the environmental issue, concerning the question whether the city center should be a pedestrian and traffic free zone, and consequently less polluted. However, members of the Right to the City Initiative knew that

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they as a newly established and little known initiative would not be able to carry the case

alone. Some of the members of the Initiative were at that time also involved in another NGO,

the environmental Green Action, which already in 1996 made a protest and petition against

the first renewal of Flower Square, and then they managed to collect seventeen thousand

signatures against it. Some of interviewees, like Amanda, also remembered that first renewal

of the square and shared their thoughts on both cases:

> Flower Square is really a flower square, not because flowers are sold there, it is
> connected to the Green Horseshoe[13], to the theater and to other squares. Each time
> the square was renewed there has been a feeling that the interests of the people who
> did that did not respect the climate of that part of town, the spirit of the city. This
> square was stripped bare like the Kvaternik Square when it was renewed for the
> first time in 1996. This sophistry that we now have ten kiosks with flowers on both
> squares is one thing, but the atmosphere there for the people living and interacting
> there is something else. On Flower Square you can now buy popcorn or sausages
> and buy expensive coffee. But the atmosphere and spirit was taken away. I have
> nothing against revitalization. That newly built structure is OK by me but the way
> it was built is what we should talk about. (Amanda, interview, May 2nd 2012)

James and others knew that Green Action had an established network of activists, the

knowhow and experience in public protest and actions that their Initiative lacked. As an

established NGO, it also functioned as a shield against possible political attacks and smearing

campaigns against the younger and less established members of the Right to the City

Initiative. Other members of the Initiative would contribute more financially and give the

campaign the performative aspect that would come from their work in independent culture.

The importance of NGOs as actors in this case cannot be understated. They have been

crucial in making public space a visible political and social issue. Croatia has a history of a

small but vibrant civil society and NGOs that started at the end of the 1980s through various

environmental, peace and feminist initiatives and organizations maturing and developing in

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[13] The Green Horseshoe is a row of seven mostly interconnected parks and green spaces in the center of Zagreb, designed by the architect Milan Lenuci at the beginning of the twentieth century in the shape of a horseshoe. The Flower Square is located between the tips of the Horseshoe.

the 1990s, especially through the anti-war movement (Kekez, 2011). But only in the 2000s has civil society started to tackle the issues of urban space, and public space in particular.

"*Travno Moj Kvart* organization was one of the first attempts in Zagreb to articulate and protect public space interest and initiate the public debate" (Božić 2007: 15). It was active from 2001 to 2005 and evolved around the issue of building a new catholic church in a public park in the Travno neighborhood built during socialism. It also formulated itself as an initiative for public space and not as some actor tried to present it as anti-church. Their main campaign slogan was "Yes to the church but not in our park!" At that time Green Action also started to more actively promote awareness of urban issues like the lack of bicycle lanes and started warning against the increase of pollution in the ever more traffic congested Zagreb. Green Action afterwards aligned with the Right to City Initiative; they jointly started more directly to tackle the problem of public space in Zagreb more generally, particularly the case of the city block and the adjacent street where the Flower Project was to be built.

3.3. The Block as a Paradigm for Urban Renewal in Zagreb

The block in question of which the Project Flower would become part of is located in the very heart of Zagreb. It is bounded by the Ilica, Gundulićeva, Varšavska and Preobraženska Streets and Preradovic Square, called Flower Square. The important element of the block is what it shares with almost all the blocks in the lower town of Zagreb, namely that it is hollow. Although parts of the block are owned by private persons or even the city, the hollow inner space of the block, the essentially large courtyards are neither a public space like the street nor a private space like the residential units in the buildings surrounding it. They could be seen as a common space, an urban common as some authors like Hardt and Negri

(2011) and activists of the Right to the City have labeled them[14]. The idea of the urban common can be connected to the idea of the use value of space against its exchange value (Lefebvre, 2000). The use of these spaces by the inhabitants of the resident units of the block, but also a wider range of citizens is positioned against the exchange value of that space if it was privatized. Through their various uses from gardens, playgrounds, parking lots to "places of encounter and organization" they can be potentially seen as barriers to the "desocialization of the commons" by real-estate and capital and the transformation of the space into exchange value (Hardt and Negri, 2011:254-259).

Therefore, the everyday negotiation and coordination of the people that live in the blocks leads to the production of the space in the courtyards and this is what makes them a common. In blocks that have opened up these courtyards they are really public spaces, but in the others they can be classified as semi public spaces, as they can only be accessed through the buildings. Stil, the inhabitants of the buildings rarely have the possibility to regulate access to the courtyards, as most of the passages through the blocks are open or have no means to be closed off. In some cases the gates leading to the courtyards are closed or locked at night.

The different regimes and structures of these spaces, as said above, are distinct from public space and private space and have been at the heart of the struggle of the Right to the City movement and the carriers of the urban renewal project in the Flower Square block. This is not an issue of the struggle and the rhetoric only, the space of the courtyard itself is of vital interest to the urban renewal project as it could be turned into a building site once the entrepreneur buys out the residential units in the building. With the change in the regulation

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[14] I owe a substantial part of this analysis of the courtyard as an urban common to the round table on Urban Commons held at the Subversive Forum on May 16th 2012 in Zagreb, especially to the presentation given there by Tomislav Tomašević of Green Action

of the city's Master Plan, the entrepreneur was able to include that space into his renewal project. That would lead to the enlargement of the project then if it would be built only on the existing structure of the block, in the place of the two existing buildings that through the changes made could be demolished.

So, in the case of the block where the Flower Project was to be realized the entrepreneur and the city government are speaking about urban renewal, regeneration, and new value added to the city. Their position and framing can be seen in the following example. The entrepreneur who did not make many public statements when the protests were at their peak in spring and summer of 2010 gave an interview to the daily *Jutarnji List* half a month after July 15th when 150 citizens were arrested and the start of the construction of the access ramp began. He restated his motives for building the project. Horvatinčić said that he wanted to leave his signature on one of Zagreb city blocks, give a gift to Zagreb. He claimed that it was not about profit because he had earned money already. He wanted to invest in Zagreb, in Croatia, adding that he could have invested somewhere abroad but he did not.

In the interview Horvatinčić also restated that he is friends with mayor Bandić, but that his city government had not made it easier to build the project as the Right to the City Initiative claimed. He said that the city government had made it harder for him; he needed to wait for five years to get all the permits and finally start construction. If there was favoritism on behalf of mayor Bandić he would have gotten the permits earlier. The final decreased size of the underground garage would have 320 parking places for citizens and 106 garages for the residents of the project. The price of the apartments of which he claimed to have already sold fifty percent would be 6000 to 8000 Euros per square meter. As for the space for commercial establishments, he said he already had eighty percent of that rented. The biggest of these spaces was to be rented to the biggest Croatian retail chain *Konzum,* part of the Agrokor Corporation, which would create a unique way of supplying their products to the residents of

the fifty-six apartments in the building. The promise was they would be able to buy things from their apartment: they would call and the staff would deliver the supplies to the door. He said he would employ 800 people in the project when it was finished, and that this alone in a time of crisis is of public interest.

Horvatinčić said that he was convinced that he was doing the right thing and because of that he the felt hurt that some of the people did not like his project. He said that he does not like "that anyone has a grudge against me. Not even in traffic where that is perfectly normal. I pay attention to every detail."[15] He claimed that he invested 33 million Euros of his own money, 19 million that he borrowed from Hoto Group, and an additional 53 million he got through credit from the Hypo Bank[16] (Panić, 2010). The connections of the mayor and the entrepreneur with the Hypo Bank have also been analized in the Austrian press (Depolo 2010.)

Past all this rhetoric it can be asserted that the processes in Zagreb are closer to what Perez would understand by gentrification rather than urban renewal. A block to block approach that is made in a slower pace, every block is approached distinctly, at different times and by different entrepreneurs, still there is a common formula to it. Through the processes a common agenda and vision of future Zagreb can be read. The Flower Square project can be identified as its paradigm; another similar project is the Ban Center in a block that borders the main Jelačić Square, which is still under construction.

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[15] Horvatinčić caused traffic accidents in which two people died and four were injured. In August 2011 he also caused and accident at sea in which he with his motorboat collided with a sailboat killing two Italian citizens on the spot (Rašovec, Šarić and Borovac, 2011). He is currently standing trial for that accident. If convicted he could receive as much as 13 years of imprisonment.

[16] One of the spokespersons of the Right to the City Initiative Teodor Celakoski said that there is proof that Horvatinčić has borrowed some money from Zagreb's criminal underworld. Horvatinčić sued Celakoski for libel but in 2012 when the process was still ongoing he withdrew the suit and paid all court expenses. Celakoski stated that this should be a sign that there is truth in what he claimed about Horvatinčić sources of investment, and that the public attorney should consider investigating Horvatinčić.

Although not many projects in the city center are being built and the renewal of blocks seems far and in-between, there is still a visible trend. That trend is to build up the blocks and fill out the courtyards in with new constructions. When we take into account the changes in the Master Plan in 2008 that seems to encourage a quicker and easier framework for entrepreneurs to change the blocks, it seems that the development of the Lower Town blocks can be seen as leading to gentrification, but also to a more substantial urban renewal which could change the whole material and social urban fabric of Zagreb's Lower Town.

There were a couple of changes to the Urban Master Plan but I will only give one example that was the most important. This change made in the Urban Master Plan in November 2007 was a small, and although it was essentially made by the City Assembly in order to give green light for the construction of the Project Flower, that change could have large consequences for Lower Town as mentioned above. Essentially, the change in one article (article 59) of the Urban Master Plan would enable the project to get approved and start. Once in effect these changes of regulation could be put on every new project of urban renewal in the lower town blocks. This is the change the City Assembly at its 29[h] session, 29th November 2007 decided to make by adopting the new Urban Master Plan:

> The article 59, more precisely paragraph two, intend seven read before the change as following
>
>> Arrangement of the courtyard so that inside the block there is possibility of reconstruction, additional construction, upgrade and change of existing building with conversion, and new construction, *only exceptionally*[17], *for building of public and social purpose*; it is possible to keep and plan multiple buildings of different utility on the same construction plot, construction of new or replacement courtyards buildings, with the complete solution for the whole construction plot; access from public-traffic space through street construction units, respectively, through vehicular passage of the street side building.
>
> After the change of in the Master Plan of 29th November 2007 it read the following

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17 my emphasis

Arrangement of the courtyard so that inside the block there is possibility of reconstruction, construction of replacement buildings, *construction of new building in the place of existing and new buildings and garages for the needs of the block*, with construction of replacement *new buildings in the place of existing and new building in the goal of recovery and affirmation of the value of the block as a whole*, the complete solution of the whole construction plot is necessary; it is possible to keep and plan *multiple buildings of various purposes* on the same construction parcel; access from public-traffic space as a rule through street building of the unit, respectively, through vehicular passage of the street side building, with the *possibility of intervention in the niveleta* of the public-traffic spaces, if there is no other way or *if there exists public interest*.

(Grad Zagreb, 2007)

When a translation from this bureaucratic language is made what actually is achieved by the changes is a new construction in the block, which means filling the courtyards and their privatization. The construction of new buildings that is possible with the changes states these can serve various purposes, ranging from business, retail, to gated residential communities. Considering that the old regulation only exceptionally allowed new construction for building for public or social purposes, this proves to be a substantial and radical change. The intervention in the *niveleta* means that accessed ramps to a block can be constructed on public space in the street, or in the case of Flower Project on a street designated as a pedestrian zone, a public space *par excellence*.

3.4. Contesting the Changes of the Urban Master Plan of Zagreb

The proposed changes in the Master Plan became a document of contestation on which the Right to the City Initiative tried to show that it does not fight against a single project but against potential bigger projects that would transform the entire center of Zagreb. The first press conference where The Right to the City Initiate and Green Action presented these issues to the public happened on December 6th 2006. This synergy proved to be fruitful, in less than two months the initiative together with the support of Green Action managed to collect fifty-five thousand signatures of the citizens against the change of the city's Urban Master Plan that

would make the urban renewal project on Flower Square a reality. The petition signed by citizens was the following and is cited here in its entirety:

The Right to the City Initiative and Green Action

Petiton**:** Stop the Devastations of Flower Square and Lower Town!

The city government and the private investor in a deal made behind the backs of the citizens, not according to procedures and against existing regulations, plan the demolition in the protected historical core and the destruction of the cultural identity of Zagreb.

In the block on Flower Square, and soon in another lower-city block, there is construction planned against public interest for content that is intended exclusively for the elite and not accessible to the majority of citizens.

The overwhelming of city blocks with retail and business content will lead to the asphyxiation by traffic of the center of Zagreb and the complete collapse of public transport.

We demand:

1. That the construction of the Hoto Group shopping, business and residential center on Flower Square be stopped;

2. That projects in Lower City blocks be planned according to the principles of careful renewal and revitalization with the clear assessment of public interest through the participation of citizens and independent experts;

3. That the construction of new public garages be stopped as it is restricted by the existing Master Plan (the space of restriction bounded by Kačićeva, Vodnika, Branimirova, Bornina, Bauerova, Vlaška, Ribnjak and Mikloušićeva Street) and

(4) The expansion of the pedestrian zone in the center of Zagreb.

(Right to the city Initiative, 2007)

In order to get a different kind of credibility, expert credibility, the Initiative formed an Urbanistic Council composed of architects, urban scholars, art historians that assisted the Initiative in the formulation of demands on the level of policy documents. This Council drafted a document of complaints addressing the Changes and Additions to the Master Plan concerned with Lower Town blocks. They showed that these changes were on the one hand tailored to accommodate the Project Flower, and on the other hand would make a frame to radically alter the urban structure of the lower town as a protected and finished part of Zagreb's urban fabric. The main complaint was that in the changes pushed by the city

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government there was not a "visible and clear basic stance on the Lower Town, because it wants to reconcile the irreconcilable regulations, those applied to protection of the historical core and the ones to new buildings in the blocks" (Urbanistic Council of Green Action, 2007).

According to the Urbanistic Council, the changes would allow new construction in sixteen Lower Town blocks which were already finished structures, and would change their physical and social fabric. Another problem was posed by the fact that with the changes in the Master Plan the access to the blocks could be made by denivelation of the existing public spaces if a vaguely defined public interest was established. The basic irreconcilability of the new regulation pointed to a conflict of the interests of entrepreneurs with the property rights and interests of existing residents. On the other hand, the regulations the Urbanistic Council proposed would in their mind prevent such conflicts, establish clear rules of the game for the entrepreneurs and would "improve social, ecological and economic conditions of protection and sanitation of the historical center of Zagreb, Lower Town" (Urbanistic Council of Green Action, 2007). These proposed regulations were represented as the public interest seen in the legitimacy of the petitions of fifty-five thousand citizens the Right to the City Initiative collected.

As the entrepreneur said and the city administration also stated numerous times, the Flower Project should be a paradigm of urban renewal for the city, even after the City Assembly had its session and in 2010 claimed that it would roll back the changes in the Master Plan that would allow such projects. On the opening day of the Project Flower when asked by journalists where the public interest of the project lay the investor restated the claims on urban renewal, "The public interest is this beautiful building, this is newly created value. One beautiful implementation, with its facade, and I believe this is the future for the renewal of Zagreb Lower Town blocks" (Hrvatska Radio Televizija, June 4th 2011).

Concerning the deterioration of the city center, there is some data on the traditional commercial premises in the center. For example, in the last fifteen years in the main street of Zagreb, Ilica, on which the Flower Square block borders, 161 commercial premises were closed. That is 18.8% of all the closed commercial premises in Ilica Street were retail businesses, followed by workshops of crafts, and catering services coming third in number (Jakovčić, 2006: 40). Still this is not the complete picture, as we have to take the total number of closed and opened premises. Among those, retail business comes in third, as most of premises closed are crafts 28.4% and catering 27.7% (Jakovčić, 2006: 40).

Jakovčić shows that in Ilica Street the still dominant commercial establishments deal in retail (Jakovčić, 2006: 46). It is worth noting that Jakovčić addresses only one component of Ilica Street and the center, the commercial, but other components are vital too. Additionally to the Flower Project there seems to be a change in the relation of the public and private cooperation in general, but not one that does favor small establishments like the one analyzed by Jakovčić but plaza like shopping centers. The construction of Project Flower with a shopping center composed of mostly retail establishments poses the question how its presence will affect the already present closure of shops in Ilica Street and in its vicinity, rising rents being the first instance. The other question is that of craft shops which are seen as traditional small establishments in the center of Zagreb, being part of its identity. Closure of such premises points to new patterns of consumption, but possibly also to a change in the inhabitants of the center of the city. Consumers that would prefer the high-end shops located in the Flower Project to the traditional shops in Ilica Street. The shoppers attracted to the few low-end premises in Project Flower would probably also avoid these craft establishments leading to their additional deterioration and closure. A more complex vision of the city center would try to encompass these premises into a marketable component of the urban and even as Jakovčić also asserts touristic image of Zagreb. That kind of vision goes beyond the generic

retail premises that can be found in cities around the globe from New York and Moscow to Budapest and Shanghai, marketed as elements of the new value added by the Flower Project to the center of Zagreb.

I agree with Svirčić Gotovac who claim that the Flower Project and similar gentrification projects in Croatia cam be seen as "specific because they entail the replacement of the existing middle and upper class in the city center with a new upper class as the wealthiest layer of society(the so called elite)" (Svirčić Gotovac, 2010:216). Still, there is a possibility that the gentrification of the blocks around Ilica Street might share the fate of similar gentrified areas in post-socialist cities, such as Polwiejska Street in Poznan, in which the area underwent renewal, that displacement of residents occurred but that new residents did not replace them (Miciukewicz, 2008: 122-126). A sign that this could be the case are two large banners still hanging in September 2012 on the walls of Project Flower stating that luxurious apartments in it are still being sold and commercial establishments up for rent. The possibility of it becoming an empty space, similar to the example in Poznan or even the of the closed down space of Prebederski Gardens in Zagreb should be also considered.

Here we get back to the core of the issue of the privatization and marketization of the space, which might lead us to seeing the project in the light of neoliberalism. If we look at what happens to the space of the courtyards when the new players, that is entrepreneurs, come in then we see the following. With the change of the Master Plan, the investor is able to turn the use value of the urban common into exchange value, into private space. He can transform it, sell it, rent it and turn it into a shopping center or private villas that he constructs above it.

The rhetoric and transformation of the space is striking. From an urban common on the ground level that functioned as a public or semi-public space and had use value it turns into private space, but still its regime of access remains similar. It becomes a passage but one

that closes at night, but it also gets additional exchange value with the construction of flats and spaces that become possible with the privatization of the space. The urban common of the courtyard for the entire block is lost in this transformation, but to a passerby coming from outside and crossing the passage during the day this is not visible. What is gained is the private space, on the one hand the shopping passage, and on the other the new inner courtyards of the new construction, which can be used by residents but cannot be accessed by anyone else because they are the entrepreneur's private property.

This transformation was communicated to citizens as crucial both by the supporters of the project and the Right to the City Initiative, which opposed it. From the start of the project the city official, the entrepreneur and the architect who designed the project stated openly that the transformation of the space within the block was the main aim. But they labeled it as a transformation from a closed space to an open space, to a public space, a new street (Globus, July 4th 2010: 56). During the first presentation of Project Flower when ask by the reporters why the new courtyard for that apartments was to the closed down and not a public the architect Boris Podrecca gave the following answer: „ if is open, then anybody can come there with his dog, then nobody gives care for it, it's not a park. I would just plead that you don't perceive these things as a capitalist luxury" (Press Conference on the Interpolation on Flower Square, January 4th 2007). On the same event he gave his vision for the future of Lower Town blocks, „This blocks are a great capital for Zagreb, fantastic capital, a few cities have this, that between green parks like Zrinjevac and Marshal Tito's Square you have twenty to twenty-five similar blocks. If Zagreb wants to be a capital city, there has to happen a reanimation, not restoration, reanimation"(Press Conference on the Interpolation on Flower Square, January 4th 2007) Present at the same event was Slavko Dakić, the head of the City's Office for Strategic planning and development as member of the jury that backed Project Flower. He agreed with Podrecca that the Lower Town blocks should be reanimate, that is renewed, but that there

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should be a block to block approach to them. When asked about the interest of the entrepreneurs and its relationship with the public interest and that city and the possibility of a conflict of interests he explained this in the following way

> "Luckily in this country private interest is a completely legitimate interest. Likely, city interests are sometimes in fact interests of a private type. My participation in the evaluations of projects taken the experience I have I don't see as any conflict of interest. If you ask me directly about a fee I might get from this I will not receive any" (Press Conference on the Interpolation on Flower Square, January 4th 2007)

That was the stance of the supporters of Project Flower. The magical block transformation formula could look like this: the now common space inside the block would become public space through the process of renewal, but by means of being privatized. As private and public exclude each other, this formula cannot be applied to the reality of the space in question, it's either private or public. There are two questions here, the question of ownership and the question of access. If it's owned by the city its public, if it's owned by the entrepreneur its private. The question of access is a little more complicated, public space is in principle accessible to all, private space is not. Regulations of these spaces are different. The third element is the common, it can have access but the ownership is not private. It cannot be regulated as such.

Still, this block transformation formula contains another crucial element emphasized by the entrepreneur and architect. And this goes hand in hand with the ideology of urban renewal and urban entrepreneurialism. The common space of the block was labeled by the city government and the entrepreneur as chaotic and dangerous, because of the lack of proper rules. It was said to be rat infested, unmanaged, or badly managed by its users, because they were not owners. The essentially gated community with the private park at the heart of Project Flower was hailed by the entrepreneur and the city as a solution and as beneficial to the city and the inhabitants because it would essentially bring order to those disordered spaces.

A similar discourse is presented by Polanska in the case of gated communities in Warsaw. There "public spaces are often described as neglected and degraded, whereas private spaces – spaces that are well managed, well taken care of and naturally prioritized by their owners" (Polanska, 2010: 429). For both neglected and degraded spaces in Warsaw and rat infested inner courtyards in Zagreb, gated communities appear to be the solution. With their privatization they would gain the management, order, and safety of the street and of other public spaces managed by the city. But there is of course a crucial difference between the police and private security guards on the one hand, and the city and the entrepreneur, on the other. These differences under neoliberalization and urban entrepreneurialism have become blurred. Still, movements such as Right to the City have shown that they can politicize and question the blurring of these boundaries by the practices of urban entrepreneurialism, and through enactment and participation of citizens, they can question the issues of public space, political responsibility and participation of citizens.

An example of such enactment was when the activists and citizens of the Right to the City movement staged two actions to tackle the block transformation formula described above. The first was a press conference in one of the lower town blocks, where it was presented as a common and an accessible space. That event happened even before the construction was to start to show what the space in the block actually is and what might be lost with its transformation and privatization.

The second action which actually showed that the transformation formula had nothing to do with reality, that it was nothing more than using a communication and persuasion strategy on the day the Project Flower opened its doors in March 2011. The activists tried to see if the space of the new passage, just a part of the new space, the one which used to be an urban common turned into public space after the transformation through privatization. From the public space of the street they approached the contested space of the passage, and

encountered a row of police officers in riot gear at the entrance. They were let through only when they announced that the protest was over, which proved that the space they were about to enter was private rather than public, thus not a space for protest and the right to assemble. They could enter the space not as protester but as shoppers, the way hundreds of people gather in a long line to inspect newly opened stores.

For the media the crucial moment of the contestation was when one of the activists took a banner from her backpack and was assaulted by security guards. But, for my argument it actually was a moment that occurred before that. As the row of police officers dispersed, the commander of the unit told the chief security guard that this situation was now under the command of security guards. This was its confirmation of the private space. Still as the security guards assaulted some of the protesters/shoppers the police moved in, but this time to assist the security guards who together with the police apprehended the shoppers turned protesters. This example shows the real content of the space after it underwent transformation. It shows that the block transformation formula was just a strategy and that the real formula of Project Flower was one from common public space into private space. Or using Lefebvre's terms, through the process of renewal, the common and public space with its use value was privatized and became private space with exchange value.

3.5. How Public Space Became a Political Issue in Zagreb

The city government supported the idea that Project Flower would be the model in which all the Lower Town blocks of Zagreb would be renewed in the future. The second element in this renewal is that the possibility was now present, and realized in the case of Project Flower, that not just only the space of city blocks but also that of streets, of public space could be privatized. Even pedestrian zones could be used and turned into access areas to

this renewed, private and ordered space. This element of the project that reached beyond the block brought its contested regimes of private and common spaces into the space of the street where boundaries were much clearer. Warsaw Street was undoubtedly a public space, and the issue that it would be privatized proved to be the crucial element of mobilization for the citizens of Zagreb by the Right to the City Initiative. In four years time, what started as a movement for a particular problem of a few youth NGOs and independent culture organizations in Zagreb would grow into a citizen's movement that would outgrow its founding organizations and case and present the issues of space and its use as contested and important on the national level.

This leads us to the question how the activists and citizens envision these spaces in their cities, especially public spaces. "Public space, a space that is permeable, meaning that it "must be open 24 hours in a day… open for all citizens of a certain city or any kind of visitors. It is also very important that different activities could be organized on public space, organized and spontaneous" (Čaldarović and Šarinić, 2008: 376). The enactment and practices, activities as Čaldarović and Šarinić state, of the citizens on Flower Square and Warsaw Street reasserted the very public character of these spaces. I argue that the concern about public space in Zagreb articulated by citizens through their participation in the Right to the City movement should be seen as a reaction to the "trend in post-socialist cities of Central and Eastern Europe [that] has been marked by a sharp decline in the provision of public space" (Stanilov, 2007: 276). It might be rewarding to see how different movements in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe address this issue. The research on the Zagreb case could be a starting point for future comparison.

Still, before comparison we also have to additionally specify the Zagreb case and the public space in question there. This concerns especially the space of Flower Square as a symbolic public space for more than a hundred years. The buildings on the square until

recently housed a cinema, a publishing house, small shops, cafes and bookstores. As stated before, the square underwent a controversial reconstruction in the 1990s which was not approved by many of the citizens. Recently, most of the establishments closed and were replaced by mobile phone company stores and banks. The cinema was replaced by the Flower Passage project, which has a coffee shop named Cinema Zagreb in "its honor". The only features that remained are the reconstructed kiosks where flowers can be bought, which is why the square got its name. The street that formed the pedestrian zone next to the square, Warsaw Street, where the most of the protests were held, and which was occupied by activists and citizens for thirty-three days in 2010 also maintained a high symbolic content. This content was the Constitutional Court of Croatia whose function is to uphold constitutional rights, including the citizens' right of free assembly, and that was temporarily located in Warsaw Street as its original building on the Upper town underwent renewal. Part of Warsaw Street was transformed into an access ramp to the private underground garage of the Project Flower and the rest actually serves as a terrace for the many cafes of Project Flower.

As the campaign intensified, in the eyes of the citizens the Project became more than an issue of access and use of public space in a particular square and street in Zagreb. For some it became a synonym for an "alliance" of private capital's economic power and politicians' political power against citizens in Croatia. The call of many of the protesting citizens to expand the focus of the protest from the specific project and even Zagreb to problems emerging from the process of transition in Croatia seems to indicate that many of the protesters were interested in broader issues than just gentrification, public space or power struggles in the city of Zagreb. I remember that many citizens I interacted with during the protests and the occupation in Warsaw Street asserted this. Some of my interviewees also said that they believed this to be the case.

Still, a more compelling case for this are the various actors throughout Croatia who reference Warsaw Street as such a symbol in protests in Split, Dubrovnik and even in a protest by farmers who wore the same badges the protesters did in Warsaw Street. An additional confirmation of this is that Warsaw Street was one of the regular stops during the 2011 anti-government protests in Zagreb and that Flower Square became the meeting point of protesters numbering up to ten thousand. Because citizens were not allowed to protest in front of government buildings and the Parliament they proceeded to take hourly walks on the streets of Zagreb, blocking traffic, and stopping in front of the headquarters of various political parties and media, banks and even homes of the representatives of the government calling for their resignation. Through the practice of the Right to the City movement in Zagreb, Warsaw Street became a symbol, and the Right to the City a demand in Croatia.

3.6. The Right to the City: from Concepts to Practices and Back

In order to grasp the concept of Right to the City as it is used in practice by the movement in Zagreb, I asked my interviewees to express what in their opinion the Right to the City was. The answers did vary but still I extrapolated from them a working definition for the Right to the City as it is used in practice by the movement in Zagreb.

The two most common answers were that the Right to the City constitutes the citizens' right to participate in and decide about issues in the city, including how space is designed. Also, my interviewees conceived it as a common right, because they always referred to it as a right of citizens. This is similar to the concept as Lefebvre and Harvey envision it, namely as a common rather than an individual right. Some of my interviewees stated that it is also a right through which the citizens themselves can propose how the city should be designed. Public space is at the center of this right because it is the space most associated as belonging

to the citizens, as all have access to it. It is also a right put against the private individual interest, in a way that concerning the issue of public space the Right of the City has precedent over private interest.

In all the definitions what is essential is the process of participation that stems from the right, so it is a positive right, as action is derived through it, either by participation or deliberation. Especially through its conceptualization and enactment as a common right it stretches the boundaries of the liberal conceptions of individual rights and that of private property rights. The questions which such a Right to the City poses stretch beyond just the study of urban social movement, and encompass issues of political theory, legal studies and philosophy beyond the reaches of this thesis. An interesting take in this direction is provided by Attoh (2011).

If we return to the case of Zagreb, a more encompassing definition of Right to the City that would be a combined definition of my interviewees is the following. *The right to the city is a right of the citizens who inhabit and constitute a given city to participate in decisions concerning their city, how space in the city is designed and realized.*

Only one of my interviewees, Benjamin, stated his dissatisfaction with the concept, claiming it is too vague, that it poses questions, and it might not be clear to the citizens, but that during the practice and its enactment the term became clearer.

Another interviewee, Jonathan, claimed in contrast that what others see as vagueness is the potential power of the concept. "It's like the question, who has the right to the city? So from the first instance you have to think about it. Who lives here, who decides, who benefits from it. I believe that this slogan hits the mark, it gives a good question. "(Jonathan, interview, April 24th)

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3.7. The Initiative Grows: Building Circles of Trust and Making Direct Action

In the next section I will try to analyze the actors which merged into what from the Right to the City Initiative became the Right to the City Movement in Zagreb. This transformation and expansion of the Initiative occurred through the enactment and the practice of activism in public spaces. The two core groups, the activists of the youth organizations and the activists of independent cultural organizations bound in solidarity by the aforementioned Declaration made up the core of the movement. They were present and enacted their ideas at various performances and street actions in the first two years of the campaign. But, two groups especially were important and central. One was the Right to the City Initiative which transformed itself from a network into an NGO when it was realized that somebody needs to permanently work on that issue, which would go beyond particular problems of the youth and independent culture. The other was Green Action, whose resources were substantially mobilized in the Flower Square case; it already had a network of activists, who were familiar with protest actions and performances through their involvement in campaigns for various environmental issues.

Still, the movement spread well beyond these actors. First, it was joined by experts, who formed the Urbanistic Council of Green Action and got involved in advocacy and policy. The second group to join the initiative was a group of students from the University of Zagreb, mostly from the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Political Science who built networks with the Right to the City initiative during the student protests in Croatia in the spring and winter of 2009. I myself was part of this group. The students were one of the most active groups as they already had some experience with protest tactics such as blockades of the Universities from the times of the student movement and in techniques of civil disobedience.

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The students gained the connections with their fellow students and activists and the knowledge about how to hold a protest and how to legitimize during the students protests. Their position was highly reinforced as they started to speak not just to students and about the problems facing students, mainly perceived as the rise of tuition fees, and other problems, but as positioning education as a common and public good under threat from the market, privatization and commercialization of education. Some of those who formed connections to the International Student Movement saw it as part of a bigger neoliberalization strategy. Connecting these ideas and issues with the issue of privatization and commercialization of common and public space in Zagreb and Croatia under urban entrepreneurialism was just a step away, a step most of these students consciously and deliberately took.

The social capital that the students accumulated during their campaign and actions allowed them to use it in the struggle for public space later on. That capital did not exist prior to the student movement, and only through it did the students from various faculties as well as from various departments and academic years managed to form new bonds, networks and connections. This capital remained even when the movement started losing its momentum. Although the students were back to the classrooms and away from the streets they still retained these connections. I argue that students who were brought together and formed a loose group during the student protests in 2009 still kept this structure, which allowed them to join and translate their practices and ideas into the Right to the City protests and occupation. Especially the sit-in tactics that led to the blockade of Warsaw Street in 2010 which lasted for thirty-three days resembled the student blockades of the faculties during the students protests a year earlier when these tactics were used for the first time in Croatia.

The most active members of these various groups formed a core group of activists called Group 200 (Grupa Dvjesto), a group that would meet regularly and discuss strategy and tactics, that would be present at actions and protests, and ready to respond quickly to the

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changing circumstances of the campaign. What this response entailed will be discussed below. This group was ready to commit acts of civil disobedience and dedicate a substantial part of their free time to the Right to the City Movement.

As the campaign intensified and the Right to the City Initiative broadened, according to the interviewees it went more and more under attack, therefore the decision was made to establish circles of trust between the growing networks of activists. From time to time new persons were invited or showed up at meetings of Group 200, and it was decided that new persons should be known to least one existing member before they could attend a meeting.

Another important issue was the substantial use of new media technologies by the initiative for the organization, networking and protests. One of the core members of the initiative was the Multimedia Institute which for more than a decade was studying new media technologies and employing them in activism. One of the main tools was the mailing list *Varsavska* on which activists shared information and discussed issues, and on which information about meetings and actions was announced. Facebook was also used as a tool; people could join the group *We won't give Warsaw Street!*, and there were also Facebook events created for every protest. One of the key tools was the internet site nedamovarsavsku.net, where people could join the so called *Living Wall for Warsaw Street*, and leave their contact information. Thereby they would be on a mailing list, and also receive regular SMS messages about impending actions or protests. By the end of the campaign that group numbered more than 4000 citizens. One of my interviewees, Luke, gave and account about the various actors that formed the Right to the City Initiative:

> From the very star of the campaign an effort was made to show how much people were against it (the project). The number of signatures, for such a specific issue, was the highest collected (in Zagreb to date the most signatures)... These actors were in most part not people who had a crucial stake in it, who live in the block. These were people who were against the idea that anyone can do what he wants regardless of the consequences... *We Won't give Warsaw Street* does not mean we are not giving this particular street, rather we won't give away something that belongs to us, something that we can decide upon. That is ours space, public space that they did not want to give away. It was not the question of

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eighteen meters of street; the question was of principle, and idea and what it symbolizes... Warsaw Street was the symbol that this city needed. (Luke, Interview, April 2012)

The prompt reaction at the start of construction was possible because the activist had the ability to monitor what happens in Warsaw Street. When suspicious activities in the street became apparent, be it a rise in the number of construction workers, security guards or police officers, an activist that would notice it on would immediately contact core members of the Group by telephone. The core members would then phone the so called 'callers', a subgroup of the Group 200 who each had around fifteen activists to call. These activists would then respond ideally in one hour. So within two hours of the start of an activity the initiative could have between fifty and 150 people in the street, causing a serious disruption of activities, be it construction or otherwise, before more activists and citizens could be alerted and summoned.

A second wave of supporters would be contacted by SMS which formed the Group 500 that could respond in a few hours, and after that the Living Wall for Warsaw Street was alerted. Within a day of the start, a substantially more massive protest could be organized and enacted to halt the construction. This process was put in motion on 17th of May 2010 when early in the morning activists saw that the construction workers with assistance from security guards and police officers set up a fence in Warsaw Street to start construction work. The police forces withdrew soon after but the security guards remained to secure the construction site. Around fifty activists were in Warsaw Street in a matter of hours and by noon managed to block three trucks from entering the construction site. In the meantime, the larger groups of supporters and the Living Wall were alerted. A press conference by the Right to the City Initiative was announced for noon the same day, and the media started reporting the story.

The key to keeping the Group 200 and its readiness to respond active was the regular meetings where the group discussed and made decisions jointly with the leadership. One of my interviewees, Leonard, observed that:

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> Some other NGOs and some people who are also active in public space thought that we have these 200 people who just wait around for us to call and that we can order them to do whatever. They didn't realize that we had these people and that these people were interested because they were participating in the decision making (on the campaign). We did not get these people by ordering them what to do but because they participated in decision making. These people can be activated again but for that a new period of communication, meetings and collective decision making is needed. (Leonard, interview, April 30th 2012).

So far I have described and analyzed some of the tactics used by the initiative which made it a stable and more enduring collective actor. The strong interconnection of the Group 200 formed the stable core of what would soon become a far more loosely based urban social movement, which is to be analyzed in the following section.

3.8. "Occupy" Warsaw Street, Right to the City Initiative Becomes an Urban Social Movement

The following account comes mostly from my own observations and reflections on the events I witnessed and participated in on May 17th 2010, as well as accounts by the media and video and photo records, with a substantial input from some of my interviewees who also participated in the event. The first day of the occupation of Warsaw Street, within hours on May 17th 2010 the space turned through the actions of the protesters, security guards and police from public space of the street into a private space of a construction site, and back into public space. The demolition by activists and citizens of a part of the security fence that surrounded the construction site turned again part of the space into public space. But during the struggle almost every inch of space was contested. When the first part of the fence fell and citizens stormed into the "private space" a protester was apprehended by the security guards and taken into custody. That only infuriated the protesters, who demolished a far larger portion of the fence, after which the security guards retreated and did not venture onto the space on which they attacked the protester just minutes earlier. One of my interviewees recollected the mood and energy that the protesters demonstrated that day:

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> I remember I was so full of adrenalin, and next to me an 80 year old granny, she can barely walk, but she is hitting the fence, she doesn't want to give the public space away. People from every generation were present there. That was not destructive energy, it was positive energy, and the fence just couldn't sustain that energy... We have toppled the fence and now we were going to sleep there. That was not planned, to stay there, we had to decide there, and it was decided by voting on the spot. That energy has also taken the organizations themselves by surprise (Right to the City Initiative and Green Action to start the occupation of the street) you just cannot go against it (Luke, Interview 24th April 2012).

I asked my interviewees how they would describe the act of demolishing the fence; a part of the media characterized it as a violent act, one that would go against the core principles of the Right to the City Initiative[18]. This core principle was the issue of a nonviolence; it was one that was not up to debate between the core group and the citizens. The NGOs and the activists made it clear that at the moment violence between the police or security guards and the protesters occurred they would end the campaign on behalf of the protesters, and each individual would be held responsible for his or her own actions. It seems that point was never crossed, although there were events and opportunities where it was reached and one was the demolition of the fence on May 17th. Still even on the day of massive arrests, 15th July 2010, after most of the core activists were arrested the citizens themselves did not resort to violence. They acted as they learned through the campaign even if they were not present in all protests. Citizens understood that nonviolent resistance was the mode of conduct in the Right to the City movement.

One of my interviewees responded to the question about the dismantling of the fence saying that that was a spontaneous act:

> The dismantling of the fence was unexpected, that happened, that was not agreed upon [in the Group 200 meeting beforehand]… the result would be the same [the project would be built] if we ended the campaign there or a year later, but it was important that that happened because people had the courage to do that. But I

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[18] for example the weekly magazine Nacional (Šimćević, 2010), and the internet news portal dalje.com (Šupe 2010), dubbed the dismantling of the fence "riot" and "war" respectively

would not call it violence because nobody was injured, and there were no confrontations between two individuals. Damage was only material, only one person was apprehended by the security guards, that was a problem. (William, interview 27th April 2012)

Another of my interviewees, Benjamin, had a far more pragmatic answer to the same question:

> I'm not for fetishization of nonviolence, it depends on circumstance, but I think it was a wise tactic, and there was no point in violence in the case of Warsaw Street... For me the trashing of the fence was legitimate. There was the story whether it was violence or nonviolence. It depends on how you define violence whether you can say it was violence, or you can say it was not. Our side (the Right to the City initiative) maintained that it was not violence, that we trashed the fence nonviolently, it was also selling something, you have to show that you did it peacefully (Benjamin, Interview, May 30th 2012).

The riot police which arrived at the scene after a while only started to take control when most of the fence had already been demolished. Soon they went to separate the protesters from the security guards and tried to position themselves between the protesters and the guards, but as they were too few in number they were unable to. So they did not manage to demarcate public and private space, as the protesters and the security guards soon intermingled. The police officers did constitute a new element as they diverted the tension between security guards and protesters and formed new tensions between themselves and the two groups. Soon the physical confrontation present at the start of the protest between security guards and protesters turned into negotiation and persuasion on both sides even with elements of chatter and laughter.

The police moved in and asked the protesters to disperse but they just stayed sitting and securing the fence. "Please! No confrontation with the police and security guards because they want that to delegitimize this protest!" said one of the leading activists through the megaphone. The crucial event happened when the protesters decided to stay on the fence: it came to a vote, and the vast majority voted to stay, including not only activists or supporters, but citizens too.

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The activists, who went into the confrontation with a press conference in mind, and maybe with an idea that if they staged a massive protest the next day the fence might be toppled in a similar way, got more than they were bargaining for. With the decision made by the ad hoc assembly to stay, to protect the gained space, organize it, and hold it changed the dynamic of the campaign, but it can be argued that it changed the actors. This according to some interviewees was the point from which onward the campaign became a citizen's movement, but that would only be if the citizens stayed and participated, the core group of activists could not occupy Warsaw Street by themselves.

So within hours something that could be described as an outburst of frustration and violence now turned into organized civil disobedience, the actors, the protesters showed that they were capable of not just actions but also of making political, direct democratic decisions. This was the "agora". One of my interviewees, Janice evoked the element of direct democracy when she spoke of that event:

> Yes we had that element of direct democracy, when we had a couple of times an assembly of citizens in Warsaw Street. For example when the fence fell we were deciding whether we should stay or leave, the citizens themselves decided that we should stay or not. There were 300 people, who voted to stay and occupy. That was an element of direct democracy.

> (Janice, interview, May 3rd 2012)

The decision to stay led to the thirty-three day long occupation of Warsaw Street, the remains of the demolished fence were used as a base for the construction of the tent where the activists and citizens could sleep or find shelter if it started to rain. From the rubble of the fences the protesters formed their camp that they designed as public space, although it actually occupied more space of the street as a camp than a construction site. An interesting addition were also the rules that the activists soon posted on the perimeter and they also formed smaller groups, usually out of members of Group 200 that were designated to uphold them. In the case of the police officers, they constantly moved between the "privatized" space

of the camp, the privatized space of the construction site and the space of the street surrounding both that was only *de facto* public as it provided the access to all. Here then we can pose the questions about the meaning and the production of a particular public space, the distinctions get blurred through the performance of the various actors on that particular space.

Even more interesting than the material dimension of the occupation was the social dimension of the occupied space. According to one of my interviewees the occupied space in Warsaw Street was the complete society on a small scale, forming what looked like a "life space" of sorts.

> There were people whom you liked and those whom you didn't like. People who started relationships there and others who broke up there, people who came there to get food, people who came there to play board games, people who came there to work, everything. It was a life space; it was far better used than before when it was just a public space in front of a bank building. The majority of people who were passing through this space came to inform themselves and they supported the movement after that. There was a minority of people who came just to provoke, who insulted the occupiers or came drunk there (William, interview 27th April 2012).

The transformation of the space through the actions of various actors became more apparent on 18th May when the protest after the demolition of the fence was to be held. The protest was to be held in Warsaw Street but the police said that they were unable to secure people's safety if the remnants of the fence were present. This meant that the camp should be cleared out. The Initiative was against it and made the compromise that the camp would stay but during the protest the street would be sealed off by the police that would temporarily set up fences. This would mean that the majority of the protesting citizens would gather on Flower Square, but within hours of the protest that was about to start at 6 PM the Initiative engaged the chain of activists. The Group 500 and the Living Wall was contacted with the instructions to arrive in Warsaw Street before it got sealed off. One of my interviewees, Catherine, remembered what transpired after that. She said that for her the climax actually triggered by police action was when the movement claimed the Street, and asserted that this

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was the moment that the movement had truly outgrown the core group of its most diligent activists:

> For me (Warsaw Street) has become our space when the police locked it up with cordons from all sides, even from a small passage through a building. Somebody heard about that, so we told the people to come earlier, at 3pm, although the protest was at 6pm. In one moment the police said that everyone who was not an organizer must leave the space, so they ghettoized it. And then a member of the people came up with the idea and said that no one else was there besides the organizers and overseers. And all the people, even those sitting in cafes that were not interested in the protest and had nothing to do with it till that day started to put on themselves signs which read "overseer", so in a way the police made a ghetto and everybody became an overseer... With this closing down of Warsaw street it became apparent to me that this was already a closed space, as it was squatted by in part by the police forces and in part by activists, and then we felt as that we were at home, that it was home, that it was an organized space (Catherine, Interview, May 1ˢᵗ 2012).

The second event I will present in more detail is the protest that occurred on 15th July 2010 when more than 150 citizens were arrested when they showed civil disobedience against the start of the construction secured by the police. The event lasted for eight hours and made the Right to the City movement the main news in Croatia for four days. According to some of the actors this event provoked a crisis of the city government but also showed the layers and matrix in which the political and economic power in Croatia is intertwined. The most pertinent example is that of an administrative court, which was for more than two years deciding on complaints of numerous citizens against the Project Flower. It ruled against the citizens on all counts hours before a major protest by the Right to the City movement was to be held against two major political parties. The ruling was first published by the media, before the citizens were informed individually about it. The activists presented this case as a serious violation of the rule of law. James gave his view of what he labeled as a crisis of the system that the Right to the City movement managed to unmask with its actions:

> We knew the system didn't function but we wanted to show that, but we easier legitimated ourselves if we critiqued particular institutions and not the system itself. We knew which systemic processes were going on in the background, and that showed itself in those days of July 2010. The system didn't function, as they designed it by the rules of liberal democracy. How is it possible that under these rules the Ministry of Interior coordinates with the High Magistrate Court(the court that deals with minor offence like disturbing the peace or traffic

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violations), that they dismissed all charges? How is it possible that the court breaks its rules and sends a communication to the media first because HDZ wanted that because that day there was the protest(against HDZ)? How is it possible that it solves all 600 cases and doesn't send the rulings to the citizens who started it but published in the media first? (James, Interview, April 27th 2012)

Another example of the reaction of the system, and its possible crisis was the measure that almost 150 citizens got after they were detained by the police on July 15th. Some of the detained citizens were not given the permission to contact their lawyers, but all of them were given a temporary measure of prohibited visiting to Warsaw Street, lasting for seven days. Usually such a measure is given by the police in the case of domestic violence, or for example violence on football stadiums, so assigned to a particular address or person. In the case of these citizens the prohibition of visiting was designated to the area of a part of the Lower Town of Zagreb, bordered by Ilica, Frankopanska, Masarykova and Preradovićeva Streets. If broken, this precursory measure and temporary measures would lead to criminal charges.

Apart from the fact that it can be seen as a serious breach of freedom of movement and right of assembly, in a more symbolic matter, and a serious one was that the building of the Constitutional Court of Croatia whose task is to uphold the freedoms granted in the Constitution was located in Warsaw Street, to which the citizens assigned this measure were prohibited to gain access. Such examples show that the crisis went beyond the city and that actions of citizens and the reaction of the authorities could serve precedents for other cases in Croatia.

On the other hand, some of my interviewees said that the movement used these examples to project the case of Warsaw Street on an even higher level of contestation. The arrests of peaceful protesters and the breaking of the procedure by the authorities gained even more media coverage and even more supporters in the street. For three days in a row a couple of thousands people marched through the streets of Zagreb, enacting more severe civil disobedience. In the following days the movement was blocking avenues, symbolically

walling off the door of Ministry of Construction, Physical Planning and Environmental Protection, and leading the protesters before City Hall, into the sphere of the law that was baring assembly in front of the Parliament and government buildings. That law was this year repealed by the new government, deeming it unconstitutional, but some provision still remained in the regulation of the space before Parliament. Similar tactics were endorsed and performed by the anti-government protests in the spring of 2011. The Right to the City Initiative and Green Action voiced their support for the protests but they did not participate as organizations in it. The direct involvement in the political arena on a level higher than the city government after the massive arrests, and the conscious investment in spreading the movement, its capital and know-how to other cities in Croatia is the subject of the following section.

3.9. Politics of the Right to the City

After the arrests on 15th July the City Assembly demanded the resignation of mayor Bandić, stopping of the construction and bringing back Warsaw Street to its original state. In the Parliament one of the representatives, Vesna Pusić of the Croatian People's Party, demanded the responsibility of the Minister of Interior Affairs Tomislav Karamarko; for too extensive use of police force against protestors. Still, the ruling majority did not even want to discuss that issue claiming that the whole issue was politicized by NGOs. One of my interviewees, Jonathan criticized this stance

> The NGOs are often in politics, this is not beyond politics. I don't like the idea when some one says that someone else is politicised. Of course he is politicised. This [The Right to the City movement] is politics, this matters to us. What? Is politics only when you vote? That is the least bit politics. It is decided from the start, this is far more politics than elections (Jonathan, Interview, April 24th).

After the analysis of the movement and the political and social implication of it we can also say that there is still no clear path of urban policy and urban development in Zagreb, concerning Lower City blocks. It is being contested, on the level of the city government there is contestation between the mayor's office and the City Assembly. At the height of the protests, when the construction of the denivelation of the Warsaw Street started and after 150 citizens were arrested the City Assembly set forth seven measures to be implemented, but none of them actually were. These were the measures:

1. De-blocking of Gunduliceva Street.

2. Resignation of mayor Milan Bandić.

3. Call to the Ministry of Construction, Spatial Planning and Environmental Protection to reevaluate its earlier opinion because there is a contradiction in the opinions of the responsible ministries (Ministry of Construction, Spatial Planning and Environmental Protection and the Ministry of Culture).

4. Request of prompt surveillance by the Ministry of Construction, Spatial Planning and Environmental Protection because the approval of the main project of building at 6 Warsaw Street has not been issued.

5. Request for the prompt halt of construction works in Warsaw Street because the Assembly maintains that there were no justifiable reasons for an urgent start of construction.

6. Request of urgent proposal of the Urban Master Plan to the Assembly for deliberation.

7. Request of the precise definition of the procedure for defining public interest.

(Index, July 20th 2010)

The mayor decided not to resign and claimed that he was executing the measures of the Assembly although the majority of its members had changed their minds about the project which was backed by the Assembly in 2007. Till September 2012 none of the decisions of the Assembly were implemented and the mayor had not started the procedure that would lead to an Assembly session on the Urban Master Plan, which would allow setting up of stricter regulations concerning the Lower Town blocks.

The only way the mayor could be stopped was if the Assembly disbanded itself, which would lead to new elections but the parties in the Assembly were not ready for that, although they were ready to demand the resignation of the mayor. Still, some Assembly members did go further than just drafting demands that were not implemented. Some of the Assembly members got themselves arrested together with the citizens and activists on July 15th.

Another indicative example of the crisis of the system was when the president of the City Assembly and his party colleague appeared in Gundulićeva Street where the arrests were going on. They were both also members of Parliament but when they tried to approach the street they were pushed and held back by police officers. Eventually they even joined the protestors in sitting down in front of police cars but they were not arrested. Arresting Assembly members seemed a high stake while arresting members of Parliament proved to be a stake to high for the police officer. Even for the systematical police officers who on that day also arrested a couple of citizens who had nothing to do with the protests and were just passing through Gundulićeva Street at the wrong time, arresting Parliament member was not an option.

The members of Parliament took heavy criticism from the protestors once they sat down amongst them: "Should you not be ashamed of yourself. Where is your stance? You caused this political damage, you are responsible for it. This is your fault. You have arrested all those people, and you are still arresting them. You are still afraid of the mayor." (t-portal.hr, July 15th 2010) said Villi Matula, one of the most prominent activists, when he faced the two politicians who tried to shift responsibility to the Mayor and to the Minister of Interior.

As the campaign prolonged and the movement widened there were more debate between the activists and the core group on how they should conduct the protests and what the

messages should be. Should the focus be on even more widening of the movement, attracting even more citizens and gaining more support, which would entail mainstreaming the forms of protests and messages? There were also other voices, more from the activists themselves, that the campaign itself should be intensified, which would involve tougher examples of civil disobedience that could potentially discourage some citizens from joining but could also have legal repercussions on the organizations. The result was a compromise, but one that was also enacted by the citizens in the protests. The line of physical violence was never crossed, apart from what police and security guards administered on some of the protesting citizens. Nonviolent resistance became the mode of conduct in all the protests of Right to the City Movement, and it has remained so in other successive protests in Croatia.

The organizations Green Action and the Right to the City did get some backlash and some of their members received fines and had court cases against them but they did capitalize on the fact that the stakes in Warsaw Street had become so high. The organizations and the core group of activists use this capital and the know-how to aid and spark other similar initiatives, and this was done consciously. As one of my interviewees, James, claimed:

> We have to maintain the struggle in opposing the privatization for public goods, keep an eye on urban policy process, influence them and stop these processes of privatization. This was a good tactic to focus on one street and on one case make apparent the systemic processes, and now have a second phase of resistance on the coast when we make this struggle a national front, and that will resist these processes. (James, Interview, April 27th 2012)

3.7 Beyond Zagreb: the Right to the City Movement as Part of the Machine of Resistance

As said, Zagreb was just one arena of struggle for the activists; they acted and even managed to build new ones and coordinate with other initiatives around different renewal and urban development projects in other Croatian cities and towns and contest these. The two

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most visible examples are the Pula Group Initiative and the Srđ is Ours Initiative; built around development projects in Pula and Dubrovnik.

A more direct influence and transfer of capital and know-how of the Right to the City Movement went to the Srđ is Ours Initiative and the movement growing around it in the city of Dubrovnik. Dubrovnik is a World Heritage site with a historical old city core left intact. Above Dubrovnik is the hill Srđ which apart from a few small villages connected by road and a fort from the Napoleonic wars is completely free of urban tissue. Srđ is public and natural space and a recreational area from which the best views of the Dubrovnik old city can be seen. This is also the only empty space on which the city of Dubrovnik could expand. Dubrovnik is Croatia's most touristic space, and is visited and admired by two million tourists throughout the year.

A few years ago when the various city governments and the national government set a goal to build golf courses throughout Croatia, the activists of various NGOs, most prominently Green Acton saw this as more a real-estate business than golf. A Law on Golf Courses passed by the Parliament designates the development of golf courses to be of national interest and even had a clause that gave the go ahead to private entrepreneurs to expropriate the owners of the land if they acquired a large enough plot for the golf course. Another dubious clause of the law was the large space of the golf course that could actually be used for construction. This fact prompted civil society organizations to see in the future golf courses a cover for what is actually real estate development and new construction of the Croatian coast. The Constitutional Court eventually repealed it. The Srđ golf project was one that started to develop after the passing of the law. Here, the added value of the golf courses to the city would be minor, and they would actually accumulate value through the presence of the historical core of Dubrovnik below it.

The project backed by capital from an entrepreneur known for his connection to international arms trade (Haaretz, 2009), entails that a vast space on the hill of Srđ through entrepreneurial investment and a public-private partnership be transformed into a large golf course. According to the activists this would transform a common space used by citizens for recreational purposes into a privately owned space with limited access. But the activists of the Srđ is Ours Initiative and the Right to the City which consciously transferred its knowledge and social capital to Dubrovnik saw another scheme in the golf course.

As said above the main goal of the project was not golf but real-estate. In the public-private partnership the city would pay and provide infrastructure for what would actually turn out to be a gated community, with no or limited public access. Because of that, Srđ is Ours Initiative started staging panels, petitions and protests which many citizens of Dubrovnik joined and supported. The local politician from the Croatian Peoples Party, Andro Vlahušić, running for the office of mayor promised a referendum on the project but when he took office he claimed it was not needed and became a fervent supporter of the project that was green lit by the City Assembly in 2012. Still, through the actions of the Srđ is Ours Initiative the project is still contested and has not started construction. The input of the Right to the City Initiative and the Zagreb case helped to build up the Dubrovnik case and strengthen the Srđ is Ours Initiative. One of my interviews, James, had a take on this

> You have to do it systemic, in that regard we capitalized Warsaw Street, which means that we consciously transferred and took the capital gained in Warsaw Street, and it's less important what happed with this concrete street, but it is important what is happening to the cities and Croatia. We consciously took the capital of Warsaw Street to Srđ; and Srđ became a topic over night because we did that. All the time we give support and are interconnected with the Pula and Šibenik case, all these are the same process (James, interview, 27th April 2012)

Another example voiced by the activists is the one in the city of Pula, where a huge urban renewal project is under way called Brijuni Riviera. It could be called a mega project for public-private partnership. The project would encompass twenty-four kilometers of coastline which would be given for concession to private entrepreneurs for a period of fifty or sixty-six years. The land in question is now owned by the local government and the state, because this enormous resource was for more than a hundred years used by the military.

The Pula group which contested this project was formed around the same time as Zagreb's Right to the City, but its core members unlike in Zagreb's case are mostly architects. The Pula Group has made their Initiative most visible and has been endorsed by now on the international level. They presented their work and the work of other initiatives in Croatia, and their vision of urban change and development at the 2012 architectural Biennale in Venice. There they presented their experiences and views to a wider, international, audience. The central piece of their pavilion is called the Machine of Resistance, which displays the initiatives and struggles contesting the transformation of urban space that sprang up in Croatia in the last few years. The Right to the City Movement and the campaign for Warsaw Street are essential building blocks for this machine of resistance. As some of my interviewees asserted, Warsaw Street became more than a local case of entrepreneurial urban renewal and the struggle it produced; it became a symbol.

On the level of Croatia another symbol of the Right to the City became an art installation of a big wooden horse unveiled in Warsaw Street by the Right to the City Initiative during a protest in February 2010. The aim was to symbolize the mayor, who sided with the investor, as a "Trojan horse" of capital in the city. On a more abstract level, the horse symbolized the alliance of economic and political power in Croatia. The various renewal projects were painted by politicians as gifts from entrepreneurs and investors that would jumpstart the renewal of Croatian cities, but the Initiative maintained that this was a gift that would bring

doom to the cities like the Trojan horse did to Troy. At the protest one of the activist, Mario Kovač, even said that logic of such renewal project could be seen as computer viruses, consisting of one file and gradually spreading through the whole urban system leading to its deterioration.

The night after the protest when the Trojan horse of capital was presented it remained in Warsaw Street which was still occupied by activists holding watch in one construction container. Early in the morning police in riot gear arrested the activists and completely destroyed the horse. Because of that, the horse gained even more prominence. The destruction of it made it a symbol in its own. The activists crafted metal badges with the picture of the horse and distributed it during successive protests. The image was taken upon by other social actors. For example, a month after the protest in Zagreb various farmers' initiatives came together and staged blockades of roads wearing the Trojan horse badges.

A year and a half later in 2011, the Mayor used the symbol of the horse, but in a manner which negated the meaning of the Trojan horse of capital. The Flower Square where the protests were held was to undergo further renewal and the mayor presented it though a sculpture he called the Flower Horse. This installation very much resembled the Trojan horse of capital but was smaller and was made of metal and decorated with flowers. The mayor said that this horse was not a Trojan horse, but a noble hard-working horse that cares about what citizens think. Next to the installation he placed a letterbox in which the citizens could give their proposals on how they want the square to be renewed. The mayor often referred to himself as a hard-working man, thus associating himself with the flower horse. The activist immediately dismissed the horse as a fraud. They called it the "flower donkey", or the "flower mule". The flower horse was burned by unknown persons several times and each time the installation was put back.

Yet another example of such a symbol of resistance was an artwork, *the Arrested* made by the artist Barbara Blasin. In the work more than seventy citizens that were arrested by the police during the protests in Warsaw and Gundulićeva Streets recited the *Hymn to Freedom* by Croatian poet Ivan Gundulić. She started the project as a reaction to the fact that a plaque with the Hymn to Freedom on the corner of Gundulićeva and Warsaw Streets was unveiled by mayor Bandić and mayor Vlahušić three months after the arrests in 2010. The artwork was presented it 2011 at the Zagreb Salon exhibition and won two awards, one even presented by the City of Zagreb itself (Blasin, 2011).

Taking all this into account I argue that Warsaw Street and the Right to the City Movement became symbols of resistance, a cog in the growing machine of resistance that started to give voice to citizens throughout Croatia. As one of my interviewee said when I asked her about the occupation of Warsaw Street:

> That story is the mirror of the society, we don't have a right to our voices and in our city, and this is the mirror. People tried through the occupation to gain that back. A lot of frustration went out of the people, brought about by the unlawful state that made them lose their voice. Warsaw Street was a trigger for other frustrations, an example that speaks for the situation in Zagreb, in Croatia, of injustice, of not having our voice. It was an excellent example of gaining that voice back (Amanda, interview, May 2nd 2012).

Conclusion and Contribution

As stated, I studied an urban social movement which contested the construction of an entrepreneurial urban renewal project in one block in the center of Zagreb. This contestation gave birth to the Croatian Right to the City movement which encompasses NGO workers, activists, experts, other civil society representatives and thousands of Zagreb's citizens. The following conclusions can be presented and made at the end of this thesis. I give the answers to the two research questions. The first question is about the character of the particular urban renewal project in Zagreb. Following the analysis presented the project can be seen as one of gentrification.

The renewed and regenerated space and what was presented by the entrepreneur and city government as new added value and public space to the center of Zagreb are in essence and content a gated community and a shopping center, both elements that cannot be classified as public space. Within the context of numerous small shops closing, it can be asserted that this new shopping passage will have a strong impact on further closure of small shops in the city. With its large underground garage it will also lead to additional traffic congestion in the city center, which brings about pollution, noise and less space for pedestrians and public traffic, on the already crammed streets leading to and from Flower Square. But most of all, the interplay of economic and political power and its ease in changing and tailoring the rules and procedures as they see fit shows that we can question the value and public interest of the project.

It should be then clearly stated that this project can be seen as an effort in turning the center of Zagreb into an urban playing field for the society's elite, but for now it seems an unsuccessful one as the elite had not moved in. Still, the privatization of space and assertion of its exchange value has led to the devaluation of the complexity and creativity of the urban

space of the block, square and street, seen as *oeuvres*. The possibility that the new inhabitants will not move into the gated community, that this materially filled out space that used to be a courtyard will be a socially empty space.

The Project Flower can indeed be seen more as a gentrification project than a project of urban renewal. Similar projects are also being built in the center of Zagreb and give support to the thesis that the Flower Project was a herald of further gentrification of the city center. These projects do share elements, like the block to block approach and the fact that all are led by big corporate actors and entrepreneurs and not small, individual gentrifiers. So, within the gentrification debate this shares elements with projects that theories of gentrification such as those given by Neil Smith analyzed.

If we designate the renewal project as one of urban entrepreneurism, especially if we should analyze it as a element of a possibly actually existing neoliberalism then the following can be said. The context of post-socialist Zagreb gives it a distinct local and contextual variation. The privatization of urban space, the changes in the legal framework, the Urban Master Plan, as well as the rhetoric of the city government and its actions are here indicative and can be classified as urban entrepreneurialism. Still, we cannot speak of an unchanged imported model of urban policy, there are other factors at play, some are even more apparent than urban entrepreneurialism and neoliberalization. Therefore, I argue that a contextual and local explanation and a path dependency of the development and the history of Zagreb as a post-socialist city should be added to the explanatory framework.

It can be stressed that the struggle and contestation on the issues and the direction of urban development of Zagreb is far from over. As the city functions on a limited budget, and as a crisis in its government was apparent and is still ongoing, it is unclear which path future policies concerning the center of the city would take. Apart from the struggles of the various political actors in the form of political parties, and the various entrepreneurs that either contest

or support the given framework set by mayor Bandić while he had the support of the City Assembly, the path of urban development of the city's center remains inconclusive but still one pointing to gentrification.

The second research question was that of the character of the movement that emerged in the street of Zagreb as a response to the urban renewal project. This core of my analysis is concerned with new actors that emerged in the political arena in connection with urban space and the governance of the city. NGOs, the initiatives, and the citizens themselves, challenged through participation and collective action the politics of the city government and its vision of the development of the center of Zagreb.

The most valuable impact of the NGOs and initiatives that framed the demands and brought to the agenda the idea of the Right to the City is that they opened up a space of possibility for performance and participation of citizens. The agendas and ideas of the NGOs and that of the individual or group of citizens can't be lumped together but they were complementary in numerous ways. Through enactment and actions in the public space the movement outgrew its initial base and creators, the youth and organizations of independent culture, although they did maintain a controlling, central and vital element in it.

Still, only when traditional methods of politics and influence on the older political actors were exhausted by the NGOs, did they through their actions together with the citizens bring about the actuality of the demand of the Right to the City in the streets of Zagreb.

Throughout the campaign some of the actors, the NGOs most prominently, consciously managed to take part in the symbolic and social capital accumulated during the campaign in Warsaw Street and transferred it to other places, where similar initiatives had already started before the Zagreb movement flourished. Dubrovnik, Pula and Šibenik are examples; Split is sill now the only example where the movement actually got their demands.

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It managed to protect the Park Forest Marijan from new construction supported by the Split mayor Željko Kerum.

Therefore I pose the following conclusions, which are by no means finite but an invitation to further research going beyond the Zagreb case, beyond a particular project, a particular city, and a particular movement. That would track processes on a higher level of action and abstraction.

The urban tissue of the post-socialist Zagreb can be still seen to be in transition although the other tissues of Croatian society seem to be over it. Projects such as Flower Project, brought about on the initiative of entrepreneurs, but supported by the city's entrepreneurial action are seen in different cities in the post-socialist context as a novelty, but one gaining ground. Also, there is a presence of the actors and frameworks and elements that have a historical background and are localized, but still have a lot in common. Crony capitalism the worst of the legacy of real socialism and capitalism are combined. The question is how much of the legacy of real socialism in the form of procedures, actors and structures are still present and relevant? So, it is not neoliberalism with impurities, but actually existing neoliberalism, a contextual offshoot hybrid, of the model which is one of practice but that of theory and ideology.

The modalities of these processes in Zagreb are striking, but still they cannot be qualified as a unique Croatian model of transition, or Croatian urban politics as some theorists and even more daily commentators try to brand it. Collier, Brenner and Theodore are here valuable resource to build upon, but the global perspective is not far. Behind the entrepreneurs there are financial institutions, or they are entrepreneurs investing globally, so far bigger players are in the picture which makes these renewal projects go beyond local political and economic power structures and makes them part of regional or even global actors and structures. Therefore, the US and the European framework of public-private partnerships,

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flagship projects of urban renewal with dubious results and consequences are present in Croatia making it a node in the network of European and global flows of capital and circulation.

The specificity of Zagreb is the reaction of the citizens to the particular project. I attempted to explain this reaction through the literature, the ethnography I did and I gave also some preliminary answers to these question in order to give and agenda for further research.

The NGOs as actors who transformed their role, as part of the neoliberal agenda, but a part that started to question this agenda. But it is more importation to put these questions on the agenda, and frame them in order to appeal to a wider audience beyond the civil scene, experts and activist.

A shared contempt and disappointment for a larger number of the citizens with elements of Croatia's transition into liberal democracy and capitalism and even with the transition as such was in the Zagreb case channelized by the civil society organizations and their activists supporters into a urban social movement.

The contribution of this research lies in highlighting the issues and complex developments in the struggle around public space in a post-socialist city like Zagreb, connecting it with the ongoing research about transformations in cities in the post-socialist countries in general. It also enriches with some new perspectives the ongoing debates on gentrification, urban development and neoliberalism which are still dominated by the studies and ideas taken from research conducted in the United States and Western Europe.

As for the study of the actors participating in the protests and forming the urban social movement Right to the City in Zagreb, their input can be valuable for studying the relationships between them and the city as an arena of struggle. I see also valuable input in how new social actors emerge and organize in a post-socialist city like Zagreb bringing on the agenda issues that were not debated and contested for twenty years or have never been taken

into account. In putting emphasis on the post-socialist city the research can be a foundation for a broader and more comparative future research about the transformations and urban development, and urban social movements in the other post-socialist cities in Europe.

The case in Zagreb shows that an issue of urban governance can be contested with a dedicated group of initiatives and a conscious strategy that this contestation can lead to openness of the space of debate and politics for the participation of citizens.

Still, going back to a more global perspective we can see Zagreb as a node of resistance against something we should be careful to call a global strategy. There are elements that are common across cities and countries and continents and that consist in the transformation of the urban material and social tissue by processes designated as neoliberalization or urban entrepreneurialism. The Right to the City Movement in Zagreb can be seen as a node of resistance to such processes. Additionally, manifestations such as the Subversive Forum, or the World Social Forum where participants and core members of the Movement were sharing their practices, histories and ideas with similar representatives of similar movements from across Europe and further are examples that the elements are coming together which might constitute a counter-power.

Can we see various Right to the City movements and similar initiative as element and a route to an urban revolution as a growing assemblage of nodes in a machine of resistance as the Pula group called it? The machine of growth, tampered by the crisis and the agenda that fuels it has come to a point of reprogramming itself, the time seems right that the negotiation and the struggle on this reprogramming can be lead more openly. Examples are the various occupy movements from Zuccotti Park in New York to the steps of St Pauls Chathedrale in Lodon, the protestors at Syntagma Square and the Indignados at Puerta del Sol. The Right to the City Alliance in the United States and the Right to the City Movement in Warsaw Street can be seen as openings in our cities that form elements of this resistance. The social centers,

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forums and the possibility of the internet manage to bring these nodes more closely together into an assemblage that could be seen as a global machine or a global network.

The essence of such a struggle in my mind is the following: the nodes are formed of people that are also as individuals part of the systemic network that these movements contest. Therefore, the people participating in such movements have a dual role as a part of the nodes of the global network of resistance and part of the systemic network itself. In these people themselves lies the power and abilities and recognition of their position in the systemic network, and maybe the "logic" of the system. Only such actors, conscious and willing to participate and perform to remake their cities, to contribute to these *oeuvres*, would have the possibility through their actions to continuously reassemble the works of art, the cities, as elements of a global society, one more just, open and humane. Some of them started in their backyard; others in their streets, in their squares. Where will they continue their action is the really stimulating question. Will it be their jobs, theirs city assemblies, their parliaments? Would this *ouvre* that they are creating have the possibility to lead to an urban revolution or perhaps to a global one is a question beyond the confinements of this thesis, but it is a question one should not be discouraged of thinking about.

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