Anticonstruction Activism

and the Production of Housing in Post-Socialist Kyiv

By

Vita Shnaider

Submitted to

Central European University

Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

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

CEU eTD Collection

Supervisors:

Judit Bodnar

Claudio Sopranzetti

Abstract

The thesis explores grassroots anticonstruction activism in three Kyiv neighbourhoods (Mykilska Slobidka, Horbachykha, and Rusanivski Sady) and their politico-economic context. Since the Ukrainian housing policy developed almost exclusive support of homeownership, private developing companies in growing Ukrainian cities in 2021 were steadily increasing the construction rates, despite the crises. Based on field observations and interviews with anticonstruction activists in the summer of 2021, the thesis explores the tension between the developer, municipality, and *hromada* (community) and reveals the complexity of the object of contestation - the *novobudova* (new construction). First, through the resentment of Mykilska Slobidka activists toward an unwanted housing infrastructure, their relation to the post-socialist built environment of *mikrorajon* is investigated. Secondly, by examining the histories of protest in Horbachykha and Rusanivski Sady against the outcomes of the construction of the Podilsko-Voskresenskyi bridge, the specificity of post-socialist relations between citizenship, private property, and community are addressed. Finally, I show that anticonstruction protests do not simply oppose a particular infrastructural object but the unjust, exclusive, and concealed planning and redevelopment process revealed by how *novobudovy* (pl.) emerged in Kyiv. Moreover, a *hromada*, produced within the civil society discourse and not related directly to the political or economic power, has to be recognised as a relatively exclusive group of people whose universalist claims reflect their own interests primarily.

CEU eTD Collection

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not be possible without the support of many people. First of all, I would like to express my gratitude for the patience and genuine care of my supervisors, Judit Bodnar and Claudio Sopranzetti. I am also deeply thankful to David Ross Ridout for his helpful editorial advice. Since the 24th of December 2022, the practical support of the whole Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, particularly of Vlad Naumescu, Annamaria Preisz, Ildiko Chikan, and Johanna Markkula, was of great relief and immense importance for my stay in Austria and my research.

Moreover, I would like to thank my friends Amir Sturm, Oleksandra Kliushnichenko, Daryna Puhach, Eslam Mohamed, Derek Basler, Dmytro Kozak, Viswesh Rammohan, Arjin Tas, Akos Nagy, Lilla Eredics, Klara Nagy, Ruslana Kozienko for their genuine interest and support at the different stages of my writing process.

Last but not least, I am thankful to all my family, especially my parents, who have cared for and supported me all the way.

CEU eTD Collection

The research supporting this thesis was partly sponsored by Central European University Foundation of Budapest (CEUBPF). The theses explained herein represent the ideas of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of CEUBPF.

Table of Contents

Chapter I. Introduction to the Field: Fitting *Novobudova* in *Mikrorajon* **4**
I.i. Post-Socialism as a Debated Concept 7
I.ii. Neoliberalism in the Post-Socialist Urban Context 10
I.iii. Housing and Anticonstruction Social Movements in CEE and FSU 12
I.iv. Research Objectives 16
Chapter II. Methodological Guidance and a Question of Ethics **19**
II.i. Clearing up the Field: The Context of the Protests in Mykilska Slobidka, Horbachykha and Rusanivski Sady 19
II.ii. Research Methods, Limitations, Positionality and the Power of Field Stories 21
Chapter III. History of the Ukrainian Cityscape and Urban Life: From the Socialist *Mikrorajon* to the Neoliberal *Novobudova* **28**
III.i. Socialist Space Production: General City Plan, *Mikrorajon* and Everyday Life 30
III.ii. Spatial Conflicts of Independent Ukraine 36
III.iii. Types and Politics of Anticonstruction Activisms in Ukraine 44
Chapter IV. Mykilska Slobidka: *Hromada* against Emptification **47**
IV.i. Counterpublics of Housing Infrastructure 48
IV.ii. Facades of the Air Castle 54
IV.iii. Violence in the Void of the Air Castle 58
Chapter V. Horbachykha and Rusanivski Sady: The Construction of Podilsko-Voskresenskyi Bridge and its Repercussions **64**
V.i. Zoning the Nature: Prologue to the Story of Dispossession 66
V.ii. Entanglements of Communal and Private Property in Kyiv's City Planning 70
V.iii. The Instrumentalisation of Class and Race: The Case of Modern *Blockbusting* in Kyiv 74
Chapter VI. Discussion **81**
References **85**

CEU eTD Collection

The construction pit in Mykilska Slobidka, "Nova Slobidka" housing complex, August 2021[1]

Chapter I. Introduction to the Field: Fitting *Novobudova* in *Mikrorajon*

Until the start of the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022, a landscape under construction was the first thing a regional commuter would see when entering Kyiv. More than that, on both sides of the highway, numerous advertisements would overwhelm the driver and her passengers, imploring them to purchase a flat in a *novobudova*[2]. For thousands of those

[1] Here and later the pictures and maps were taken and created by the author if not stated otherwise.

[2] A *novobudova* (Ukrainian) could be translated as a "new building" (more precisely in German "neubau"). It is a common way to name new residential constructions after the 2000s. I believe this term reflects the meaning of "private" (singular unit) development in contrast to the socialist practice of thinking in the framework of a district.

CEU eTD Collection

who daily come to Kyiv for work and spend hours stuck in traffic jams at the entrance and exit of the city, the possibility of finally settling in one of these high-rises might constitute a life goal. Despite and because of the destruction brought by the war, the horizon in front is still composed of construction cranes. Although the following thesis tells the story of construction from 2021, it is crucial to remember that the war has not eliminated the established contradictions of urban redevelopment and housing construction.

In contrast to the phantasy of a regional commuter, the same view on the construction cranes may seem disturbing to residents of those neighbourhoods where the future housing project is planned. The word *zabudovnyk* (developer) has become synonymous with curse and resentment, sometimes even literally transformed in colloquial language into *zlobudovnyk* (evil-builder). Over the last 20 years, many housing projects have been associated with a scam: either the land was obtained illegally, the building permit was given under suspicious circumstances, or the flat buyers were entrapped and lost their instalment payments. Ultimately, for locals, the practical consequences of the possible problem with the development project are that the construction will be delayed for decades or abandoned halfway as a *nedobud* (unfinished construction) unsuitable for dwelling. Both options leave neighbouring residents alone with the carcass of a promise. The other side of the coin - the scenario when *novobudova* is successfully finished - brings another set of troubles associated with the impetuous influx of thousands of new residents. An overloaded transport system and a drastic shortage of places in kindergartens and schools are among the first abrupt symptoms of the subsequent dysfunctions. Nevertheless, a stranger might overlook the incipience of a local conflict, the object of which is precisely an appealingly advertised recent residential estate.

CEU eTD Collection

Here and later for transliteration of names and cities from Ukrainian language I employ the official Ukrainian transliteration guide, which is appointed by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2010). However, for the translation of Ukrainian words I use the standard ISO/R 9:1968 (international system for the transliteration of Slavic Cyrillic characters) which is phonematic, in contrast to the newer ISO 9:1995 system which standardised the characters and their pronunciation for all Slavic languages.

This thesis examines the phenomenon of *antyzabudovnyj* (anticonstruction) activism. I define anticonstruction activism as the grassroots campaigning against a development project founded by a private company, a municipality, or a state. Among these activists could be groups that protect natural sites in the city or protest against neighbourhood planning changes. The objects under protest could be high-rise housing estates, hotels, shopping malls, or big infrastructure projects. Thus, anticonstruction activists and movements target diverse objects of protection and different objects of protest. However, the common thing is that in these movements, residents unite with their neighbours around a topic that influences their everyday life by bringing changes to the built environment.

The thesis looks into the question which occupied me primarily theoretically until I found its definition by Caroline Humphrey: "What was the generative import of the [Soviet] physical infrastructure, and did this (how did this) interact with the imaginative and projective inner feelings of the people?" (2005, p.40). Thus, I am interested in the contemporary meanings people assign to Soviet architecture and planning in everyday life, contrasted with the heavily politicised perception of socialist buildings in the public sphere. Indeed, socialist panel *mikrorajons* are described with disdain as "grey boxes"; however, during anticonstruction protests, the same built environment becomes a space worth protecting. The paradox, in my opinion, could be addressed by examining a phenomenon of grassroots anticonstruction activism, occurring in a typical socialist *mikrorajon* and challenging the spatial changes brought about by neoliberal governance policies.

CEU eTD Collection

I.i. Post-Socialism as a Debated Concept

Post-socialism seems to lose its explanatory potential as a spatial-temporal conceptual frame for the Central and Eastern European (CEE) and Former Soviet Union (FSU) countries. It has often been criticised for upholding the binary opposition between the West and the East,

neglecting differences between post-socialist countries, privileging a transitional rupture over the continuity of the process of change, and proclaiming socialism as a failed project (Muller, 2019; Tuvikene, 2016). Moreover, post-socialism is blamed for the lack of specific content, which could not be explained by globalisation and neoliberalisation tendencies worldwide (Stenning & Hörschelmann, 2008).

Nevertheless, "post-socialism" is not an entirely vapid concept, and I employ it to emphasise the continuity of phenomena that originated in Soviet Ukraine (UkrSSR) but persist today in *independent* Ukraine. Moreover, I fill the term "post-socialist" with the meaning of the accelerated and simultaneously patchworked process of social, political and economic transformation. The transition to a liberal economy was sped up compared to the Western history of capitalist markets. However, these liberal reforms have never entirely replaced the Soviet legislation. Moreover, the new policies were also influenced by the socialist legacy in ways which gave a different colouring and direction to the neoliberalising processes, global otherwise[3].

Additionally, I use the term "post-Soviet" to differentiate the experiences and legacies of FSU from CEE countries, wherever the term encompasses institutes and policies implemented uniformly within the Soviet Union (i.e., the planning and construction institutes). To summarise, I utilise "post-socialism" as a conceptual framework for the globally present processes that spread to Eastern Europe and Eurasia after 1989. In contrast, the term "post-Soviet" in this thesis is tied to the geographical dimension and is used here merely to reflect the domestic experiences of the countries of the Former USSR[4].

CEU eTD Collection

[3] For instance, the tendency of financialization of housing, investigated by Liasheva in Ukrainian context (2019).

[4] Moreover, I refrain from using the term "post-communism" since it is usually put as a synonym to "post-socialism", however, it is a debatable question whether the Soviet society was indeed a communist society. Even the Communist Party of the USSR had not reached the point to proclaim communism achieved.

As louder calls for abandoning the term “post-Soviet” in regards to Ukraine have emerged in the wake of the Russian invasion (Eggart, 2022), it seems crucial to bring up the entanglements between the Soviet socialist legacy in the built environment, housing policy, planning practice, and the neoliberalising processes infiltrating these material and institutional legacies. Indeed, the country's state is not transitional or merely “post”. However, it is also a fact that fundamental Ukrainian institutions are a product of socialist Ukraine, as well as a significant part of the population born and raised in the UkrSSR. By using the terms “post-socialist” and “post-Soviet,” I want to follow through on the impact of socialism on the current instances of urban redevelopments and public perception of these changes.

There are numerous explanations for the failure of post-socialism as a development project aiming at incorporating socialist societies in the liberal democratic world. The most common is the claim about the numbness of a post-socialist citizen, who is either afraid or disinterested in participating in a democratic process (Mendelson & Glenn, 2002; Howard, 2003). Another commonly blamed factor is the mysterious "corruption" present at every level of life in post-socialist countries (from high politics to a doctor's appointment) (elaborated in Swain, Mykhnenko, & French, 2010), fuelled by the rapid establishment of the “oligarchy” presumably under the tacit consent of the population. These "sins" of a post-socialist individual are claimed to be acquired with life experience in a socialist regime. Indeed, these assumptions are widely used in politics to scare and persuade, as described by the term "zombie communism" (Chelcea & Druță, 2016). As one may notice, these phenomena (political passivity and corruption) are not exclusively present in the post-socialist part of the world. However, when one assesses (post-)socialism with the Western frame of reference (as Judit Bodnar calls it - "a unified [urban] logic"), these shortcomings of post-socialist societies seem to surpass the Western experience in quantitative terms (2001, p.19).

CEU eTD Collection

Another qualitative parameter for discussing socialist and, consequently, post-socialist experience is featured in what Bodnar refers to as the "Historical Continuity of Idiosyncratic Eastern Features" (ibid, p.22). This perspective aims at connecting the socialist governing model to the patterns of pre-existing historical formations. With this approach, the peculiarity of Soviet socialism is denied, as the "Historical Continuity" model looks for the patterns of the core "culture circles" in the socialist project. At the same time, from this point of view, post-socialism under the guidance of Western institutions is indeed a project of a civilisational transition destined for failure.

Hence, post-socialism, in one form or another, is a concept which utilises the narrative of "progress". As Stenning and Hörschelmann suggest, "post-socialism" justifies the *transition* as a development movement from the West to the East, claiming the differences on its way as "backwardness" (2008). The concept of post-socialist transition relies heavily on the modernist idea of development and evolutionary progress, applied to societies and economies in a tradition of late 19th-century evolutionist anthropologists. For instance, Burawoy accuses Sovietologists of "one of the oldest sins of modernisation theory: the uncritical adoption of categories elaborated out of the specific experiences of Western capitalism in order to comprehend the very different experience of non-capitalist societies" (1992, p.778). In this regard, the Soviet project, which was based on "progress" itself, is rejected without concern for what constituted the socialist idea of progress on its own terms (Murawski, 2018; Chukhrov, 2020)[5]. However, as the literature demonstrates (Alexander, 2004; Dunn, 1998), the post-socialist transition, which was meant to push the Second World to adjust to the global capitalist

CEU eTD Collection

[5] By phrasing my concern as "seeing the socialist idea of progress on its own terms", I want to distinguish ideas of scholars from the post-socialist places and spaces from those whom Bodnar identifies as acting in "socialist versus capitalist urban logics" (2001) - scholars from the West who understand socialism as what capitalism is not. More critique of the Western interpretation of socialism and communism could be found in Chukhrov's chapter "Aberrations of anti-capitalist critique" (2020).

market with the help of international aid (Creed & Wedel, 1997), was not necessarily perceived and felt as progress in different aspects of the everyday life of ordinary citizens.

While the durable histories of anticonstruction protesting in Ukraine regularly evolve in the *mikrorajons* constructed in Soviet times, the activists rarely consciously reflect on the socialist legacy of these districts. In my account, these protests manifest what happens when the common flow of life encounters the grabbing tendencies of post-socialist development. Resisting invasive construction is a struggle to maintain the built environment, the living space it has created, and one's place in it. However, for a researcher, it is essential not only to bring the struggle to light but to contextualise it and problematise its character.

I.ii. Neoliberalism in the Post-Socialist Urban Context

The sudden switch to a market economy created a specific context where socialist-organised urbanity had to be re-established to function according to a new logic. Thus, as Bodnar writes regarding the case of Budapest: "post-socialism offers a context in which many of the widely documented effects of globalisation may be observed in a clearer, more pronounced form: they are more sudden and, hence, less mediated." (2001, p.6). One of the most vivid global processes, taking over the legacy of socialism, is neoliberalisation (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Chelcea & Druţă, 2016; Birch & Mykhnenko, 2010).

Neoliberalism as a (quasi-)system is self-contradictory and place-specific to the point that some scholars demand to discontinue the all-encompassing usage of the concept. Swain, Mykhnenko and French (2010), for instance, argue that contrary to the perception of neoliberalism as a cruel top-down economic regime undertaken in collaboration between transnational corporations and local elites after the fall of the USSR (also in Drahokoupil, 2008), on the grassroots level of

CEU eTD Collection

communities and individuals there have been springing plenty of practices which "domesticate" neoliberal reforms, reducing their potential and transforming their effects.

Thus, the criticism of Swain et al. condemns three ways of current thinking about neoliberalism. Firstly, when neoliberalism is represented as a total, unified and systemic entity despite its observable situatedness and inconsistency. Secondly, when it is captured as an emblematic theory of resistance. The authors state that: "as Rose (2002: 384) argues: 'Resistance theory attempts to disrupt structuralist notions of hegemony by demonstrating that systems are always destabilised. Yet, in doing so, it simultaneously constitutes the structured nature of the system as primary'." (ibid., p.115). Thus, although the approach of resistance studies recognises the power to disbalance the neoliberal "system", it also embraces such a system as a structured entity which it is not. Thirdly, some researchers of neoliberalism compare the "pure" economic model with "actually existing neoliberalisms", thus, justifying the relevance of theory as separated from practice and, therefore, introducing expert knowledge which privileges a Western view of the economy. Swain et al. conclude that neoliberalism escapes any comprehensive theory of economy; thus, perhaps it might be sensible to abandon thinking of neoliberalism as a powerful (and productive) theory. While considering the criticism, I explore the urban transformations, characterised as neoliberal in other regions of CEE and FSU.

For instance, among the effects of neoliberal spatial transformations and due to the barely reconciled privatisation policy, "an asymmetry of power favouring the private sector" has developed (Czepczynski, 2008, p.184). This imbalance is vivid in the housing sphere. Contrary to the socialist housing policy, which largely prevented class division based on location and the condition of housing, the current process of financialisation of housing manifests a shift from housing as a public good to its commodification and creation of gated communities, gentrification and polarization within a post-socialist city (in Bodnar, 2001; Bodnar & Molnar,

CEU eTD Collection

2009; Hirt, 2012), which in itself is implicated in uneven development (Mykhnenko & Turok, 2008) and progrowth governance (Molotch, 1976; Pierre, 1999; Fedoriv, 2017).

Indeed, the prospect of liberal economic development (and, correspondingly, urban redevelopment and growth) overbalanced the social meaning of housing in Ukraine. Whereas the privatisation of housing in Ukraine had been conducted more equally than the privatisation of other state assets (i.e. industrial sector), it nevertheless did not aim at securing the right to housing for all as a universal human right (Madden & Marcuse, 2016).

Therefore, in this thesis, I am talking about place-specific spatial transformations, which are recognised as the effects of post-socialist neoliberalization. I do not presume that neoliberal reforms can explain the complexity of path-dependent, partial and tendential changes happening in Ukrainian cities over the last 30 years. However, I recognise the validity of some neoliberal phenomena which bear significant influence on the city scale, such as neoliberal financialisation (Aalbers, 2016), "creative destruction" (Brenner & Theodore, 2002), and privatism (Hirt, 2012).

I.iii. Housing and Anticonstruction Social Movements in CEE and FSU

The uneven distribution of housing and its effects on urban restructuring (limited access to public places, deterioration of built environment and privatisation of space) elucidate social movements and grassroots initiatives all over post-socialist space. In this regard, the scholarship on CEE countries (for instance, in Florea, Gagyi & Jacobsson, 2022; Krstic, 2022 and others from ELMO series: CEE housing movements resisting neoliberal urban transformations, 2022) surpasses the research on FSU both in quantity and diversity of approaches applied.

CEU eTD Collection

Although the post-Soviet context shares many similarities with the CEE experience of the transition, some processes related to housing and urban governance took a different form, thus leading to a diversification of issues in the post-socialist space. For instance, property restitution which was a prominent “transition” reform in many CEE countries, enforced the deepening spatial inequality and segregation in these countries, which consequently became an object of protesting (Florea, Gagyi & Jacobsson, 2018 describe activism addressing homelessness, mortgage debt in Budapest and mobilisations against Roma evictions in Bucharest). In contrast, the privatisation program to sitting tenants in Ukraine and other FSU countries (i.e., Georgia, Russia, Belarus) allowed them to avoid evictions and preserved a decommodified status of housing for the time of reform.

Despite the persistence and variety of grassroots anticonstruction activisms in post-Soviet countries, there needs to be more heterogeneity in the available research about these. Some political science publications, in a somewhat expected way, mobilise the discourse around "civil society" (Laverty, 2008) and "national identity" (Brudny & Finkel, 2011) when approaching the topic. Researchers of anticonstruction activisms find the “democratic” striving of post-Soviet societies in independent grassroots mobilisation (Frölich, 2019 in Moscow), in the struggle for inclusion into the current political order (Zverev, 2016 in Sankt-Petersburg), and in the tension between state and politically energised civil society (Tsuladze et al., 2017 in Tbilisi). One may notice that grassroots movements in such accounts are constructed as opposed to the state's power and principally outside of it.

Two perspectives on grassroots social movements in FSU can be identified: the earlier assumption of the inherent passivity of a post-socialist citizen (Diamond, 2002; Putnam, 1993; Tismaneanu, 1998) versus the later fascination with the grassroots initiatives (Darieva, & Neugebauer, 2019; Frolich, 2019; Tsuladze et al., 2017), making their way despite the inert and oppressive machine of the state. When analysing social movements as opposed to the state's

CEU eTD Collection

oppressive power, authors often overlook the changing meaning of democracy and citizenship itself. As Chantal Mouffe argues, the theory of deliberative democracy, developed by Jurgen Habermas and John Rawls and informing the scholars of social movements in FSU, disregards power relationships *between* subjects while concentrating primarily on the power tensions between the citizens and the state (2000, p.100). The relationships between a grassroots initiative and other citizens or political actors are usually lacking in the analysis. However, they are significant since the fight for a better city does not necessarily mean a just city for all. For instance, Olga Baysha demonstrates in her analysis of mass liberal protesting in Ukraine and Russia the paradoxical output of exclusionary narratives in the struggle for democratisation (2015; 2018).

The recent publication "Urban Activism in Eastern Europe and Eurasia Strategies and Practices" (Neugebauer & Darieva, 2019) provides an analysis of grassroots movements driven by context and originating in fieldwork. The volume editors find neoliberalism of the same importance for setting urban resistance in post-Soviet places as authoritarian tendencies of governing in the region. Furthermore, they acknowledge the "everydayness" as "central for civic activism in Eastern Europe and Eurasia" (ibid, p.12) - a statement which is vital for this thesis as well.

However, I catch the telling contradiction in their statements that "they [grassroots activists] are ordinary residents, non-elite urban dwellers" and "At the same time, we should not overlook a relatively high level of education and social skills [among the activists]. Urban pioneers are often university graduates, engaged in intellectual and creative work associated with cultural heritage, architecture, geography and sociology" (ibid, p.18). In contrast, in this thesis, I demonstrate that although grassroots activists present themselves as "ordinary citizens", not only is their understanding of this "normality" based on the exclusion of other groups but also that their well-off social status gained within their professional field gives them benefits in

CEU eTD Collection

accessing decision-makers in an environment of secluded governance. Thus, I am suspicious of the editors' claim that grassroots movements "seek to bring about structural change" (ibid, p.8).

In several studies of Ukrainian social movements, much attention is given to the formation and development of "civil society". In this regard, Ukrainian researchers are pursuing the agenda of verifying the "democratic" character of Ukrainian society and, consequently, the state. As a "third realm" between the state and the market, "civil society" in the public sphere embodied high citizenship morale and ethics of the common good. At first glance, someone like Cohen and Arato would find a perfect example of their theory in Ukrainian civil society nowadays: it is comprised of social movements, orients itself to a new terrain of democratisation, influences political and economic society, and its self-identification is could be characterised as “classless” since "civil society is not necessarily identical with the creation of bourgeois society but rather involves a choice between a plurality of types of civil society" (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p.16). However, such a "post-Marxist" perspective ignores the resources at the disposal of those individuals and groups who claim to represent "civil society". As Craig Calhoun aptly notes, "Their sociological theory thus marginalises the role of direct social relations - the kinds of structures studied, for example, under the rubric of social networks, and the basis of the communities." (1996, p.272). Therefore, in my account of anticonstruction protests in Kyiv, I find it essential to identify the particular composition of citizens who claim to speak in the name of the majority, not to discredit them but to convey the specificity of their struggle. I examine how the resources in their use, their rhetoric and the harmonisation of their property rights with the common good make their protesting visible and relatively successful.

CEU eTD Collection

I.iv. Research Objectives

Thus, this thesis aims to draw the connection between the post-Soviet built environment, neoliberal ways to produce the housing within it, and the local anticonstruction activisms against the new development projects. The question under investigation is how anticonstruction movements relate to Kyiv's housing and urban landscape production. I look for the answers to the composite questions through embedded observation, in-depth interviews, and discourse analysis. What are the legal and historical contexts where resistance to new developments occurs? Why do people oppose new housing construction in Kyiv's "sleeping" (*spal'ni*) *mikrorajons*? What specificities of housing production in Ukraine do the anticonstruction movement make visible?

This study aims to take the object of protest at face value and look at grassroots activism as a legitimate struggle arising alongside the inequitable system of planning and housing development in Ukraine. The specificity of housing production (the processes and structures of the financial, construction and real estate markets) in Ukraine after 1991 was studied by Ukrainian (Pavlov, 2018; Cherkes, Petryshyn & Konyk, 2019; Bibik & Dril, 2017; Liasheva, 2019; Fedoriv, 2017) and foreign (Kessler, 2011; Struyk, 1996) researchers. Nevertheless, there is no evaluation of the effects that such a system produces on the social life of urban citizens, which may lead to the springing of local resistance to instances of unwanted development.

The thesis' goal is to draw the connection between palpable social discontent and the material conditions of its occurrence. It is suggested that anticonstruction protests (regardless of their ambiguous relation to the political scene) point from below to the contradiction in housing politics, which produces palpable everyday life effects while resulting from a more abstract political-economic structure of the production of space (Lefebvre, 1991). Although

CEU eTD Collection

anticonstruction activists use powerful ecological, legal, "civil society," and nationalist narratives to oppose developers in the public sphere, the phenomenon of anticonstruction protests itself also reveals systematic features of the Ukrainian housing regime. The instances of negligence in the housing construction sector are known to everyone, but only in the spring of an anticonstruction protest do they occur in the public sphere, embodied in the construction pit.

A construction pit, then, assumes a metaphorical dimension as a space of future development, yet not accomplished. A fence around a construction site appears as a materialisation of a decision made regarding the future of the place. Furthermore, unlike "backroom deal" decisions of a city council, material changes are sometimes easier to see and contest. The parallel with Andrej Platonov's "Kotlovan" (published in 1930) could be suggested regarding a new publics formed around the construction pit. Only for Platonov, the construction pit was an embodiment of a common striving for a revolutionary new world, whereas, in the case of Kyiv's anticonstruction protests, the construction pit appealed to the reformist fantasies of *the* public. All in all, the construction pit manifests the space where the promise of housing as public infrastructure and the violence of the conditions of production of housing infrastructures take place.

In order to prove this argument, the following text is divided into six chapters. The next chapter, "Methodological guidance and a question of ethics," introduces the cases of anticonstruction protests in Mykilska Slobidka, Horbachykha and Rusanivski Sady on the "Left bank" of Kyiv. The chapter examines the methodological groundings of the thesis and my positioning in the field. The following chapter, "History of the Ukrainian Cityscape and Urban Life: From the Socialist *Mikrorajon* to the Neoliberal *Novobudova*", lays out the historical background of my field. In this chapter, I move both in time and space: from the pre-Soviet history of Kyiv's "Left bank" to the present, but also in the scale: from the level of socialist political agenda to Kyiv's

CEU eTD Collection

governance regime. The chapter "Mykilska Slobidka: *Hromada* against Emptification" is dedicated to the case of active protesting in the district of Mykilska Slobidka in summer of 2021. Here I examine the interaction of a developer and a community, both of which have their own ideas about the potential for the development of a contested area, on which I elaborate, employing the observation of protesting events and the discourse analysis of the *novobudova*'s advertisement. The fifth chapter, "Horbachykha and Rusanivski Sady: the Construction of Podilsko-Voskresenskyi Bridge and its Repercussions", delineates the connected case of protesting in Kyiv's Horbachykha and Rusanivski Sady. In this chapter, I observe the interplay between the city government and the community regarding the protracted construction of the Podilsko-Voskresenskyi transport bridge and the protection of the forests of Horbachykha and the neighbourhood of Rusanivski Sady from the potential residential development. Finally, the "Discussion" chapter traces the effects of the juxtaposition of the socialist and liberal political-economic systems on the condition of "post-socialism". Soviet institutions, development projects, and, consequently, public expectations limit the extent of neoliberal reforms in urban governance. At the same time, the legacy of socialist city planning has become instrumentalised to justify the contradictory projects of urban redevelopment nowadays.

CEU eTD Collection

Chapter II. Methodological Guidance and a Question of Ethics

This chapter briefly introduces the field and the contestations over the space in Mykilska Slobidka, Horbachykha and Rusanivski Sady. Additionally, I outlined the conditions of stepping into the field in the summer of 2021 and the obstacles appearing throughout the research process. All in all, I gradually moved from the attempted active participant research to the participant observation. Therefore, the distance I developed in relation to my field keeps me from speaking with the activists. Hence, the goal of this chapter is to develop a coherent stance that justifies my criticism of the *hromada* while simultaneously acknowledging the importance of public dissent in the process of urban redevelopment.

II.i. Clearing up the Field: The Context of the Protests in Mykilska Slobidka, Horbachykha and Rusanivski Sady

The floods over the centuries created a porous soil condition on the left bank of Dnipro, with groundwaters dangerous for construction, which was probably why Soviet planners had not attempted any substantial reconstruction project on this part of the left bank until the 1970s. Though Soviet engineers allegedly used the technology of “alluvial soils" while constructing the *mikrorajon* of Mykilska Slobidka downstream from Horbachykha, the decision to situate the neighbourhood a considerable distance from the river was still influenced by the natural condition of porous soil. Thus, the complex replanning and construction of this district happened relatively late. It was not until the intensive urbanisation in the seventies that the old neighbourhood of Mykilska Slobidka obtained its recognisable cityscape image with a large

CEU eTD Collection

boulevard road in the middle with libraries and *prodmagazyny* (goods stores) along dozens of rhythmically levelled panel housing, kindergartens and schools inside their green yards.

Although the current image of Kyiv's left bank (including my field in Horbachykha, Rusanivski Sady and Mykilska Slobidka) had been predominantly formed in the late Soviet period, it preserved the substantiality of the pre-socialist formation on this territory. For instance, before grand planners of the UkrSSR established a dam system above Kyiv's section of the Dnipro, the left bank of the river had been subject to heavy annual floods. As a result of the construction of Kakhovska and Kyivska HES, some of the shores and islands of Dnipro were partially submerged, and others acquired floodplain forests, a vivid example of which is the nature of Horbachykha.

The case of protesting, depicted first in Mykilska Slobidka, occurred relatively recently. The community in this district was first organised in 2014 to oppose the construction at the riverbank. That fight was lost, as two buildings are now erected. However, the struggle to protect another plot of the riverbank from a different developer continues with intermittent success.

Meanwhile, Rusanivski Sady's lands (bordering the *mikrorajon* Mykilska Slobidka and the forest of Horbachykha) going deep into the sandy land, from 1957 were distributed between unions and gathered into "dachnyj kooperatyv", which exists till today as "Ob'jednannia Sadovykh Tovarystv" (association of garden societies). While in Soviet times, such cooperatives usually consisted of summer houses and gardens for seasonal work and leisure, nowadays, many people reside there permanently. Nonetheless, the form of housing association has persisted though many plots were not privatised till the late 2000s. The association consists of 45 *tovarystv* (societies, groups) with councils, regular meetings, various responsibilities and internal politics. Many people in the association are pensioners who received their *dacha*

CEU eTD Collection

already in the 1960s through the factory allocation, and some of them later solved their housing question by making the *dacha* their permanent home. Others are newcomers who bought their house in the area to live in the city with a feeling of the countryside.

Thus, the second case of protesting occurred in Horbachykha and Rusanivski Sady. Here, in Rusanivski Sady, the community was initially organised in the early 2000s to fight against the plan of construction of the Podilsko-Voskresenskyi bridge and the forceful relocation of residents of the cooperative. Later the struggle came to include also the preservation of Horbachykha as its lands became non-publicly allocated to the construction of the residential complex. In the fifth chapter, I elaborate on both struggles - to preserve Horbachykha and Rusanivski Sady - since their objectives are deeply intertwined.

CEU eTD Collection

II.ii. Research Methods, Limitations, Positionality and the Power of Field Stories

"Private property begins here. Protected by Ukrainian law," - states a two-metre banner on the concrete fence in Mykilska Slobidka. "No to construction arbitrariness! Let's save the park!" - proclaims a smaller sign on the sidewalk nearby. Both statements refer to the 1,489.2 sq.m. of empty land, surrounded by a high fence and situated on the riverbank. A seemingly vacant place is actually a construction site for a *novobudova* "Nova Slobidka"- a future residential complex of three 24-storey buildings, underground parking and a kindergarten. However,

CEU eTD Collection

before, this place was part of a more extensive leisure infrastructure in the *mikrorajon*, complementing the green belt around the district with a beach, a park, and small huts to hide from the summer sun. This plot was used by KyivKhimVilokno workers[6] as a place to rest during summer, with boats, tiny houses and fishing equipment on this territory. For the last 15 years, the whole riverbank in Mykilska Slobidka has been subject to sometimes violent clashes between the private developers who bought out the right to construct housing projects and the *hromada* of residents who believe that they have a right to define the fate of their district.

I came to the field in the middle of June 2021 and spent six weeks altogether at both places. In the case of Horbachykha and Rusanivski Sady, there were no significant protesting activities for some time. However, in Mykilska Slobidka, I spotted almost the entire cycle of a protest: in a sequence, a triggering event, community meetings, barricades, and then release when the municipality obliged the developer to interrupt the construction.

Prior to conducting my interviews, I had spent two weeks in the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine, researching the history of the two places and the principles of Soviet planning and construction in the 70-80s (times when Rusanivski Sady and Mykilska Slobidka were shaped). I dedicated some time to the historical inquiry because I wanted to show the change in the theory and practice of city planning and residential construction, which has informed the perception of living space by the dwellers.

I conducted nine in-depth semi-structured interviews (including one dyadic interview) with ten residents of Mykilska Slobidka and the neighbouring area who supported the protest against the construction of a housing complex “Nova Slobidka” in August 2021. Some of the interviews were walking conversations, with informants showing me around places. In May

[6] Unfortunately, I did not manage to find the proofs about the relation of the factory to the place. I was told about this site’s history by my informants, and the satellite maps from April 2004 and later prove that this was indeed some designated green area with small lodges.

CEU eTD Collection

2022, I conducted one additional interview with an informant from before. The interviews lasted from 40 minutes to 3,5 hours. Most interviewees were women (8), and others were men (2). All of the people interviewed were between 30-65 years old, which from my observation, reflects the age of the protesters at that site. All interviews were anonymised. Moreover, I conducted the participatory observation of the active phase of the protest in Mykilska Slobidka with the gatherings of locals, the municipality and the developer's representatives, and the consequent construction of barricades. The observation allowed me to identify the core activist group, contact local people who occasionally support the protest but are not involved in its organisation, capture people's moods during the protesting events, and also see how the development physically transforms the place. I also performed a discourse analysis of the Internet materials to understand the development framing from the developer's position.

The interviews and field notes were coded to map out the core topics appearing out of the protest. On the one side, there appeared to be strong emotional feelings about the situation (which were comprised of anger, fear, deception, and a feeling of injustice). On the other side, these feelings occurred in relation to the infrastructures (the construction pit, the fence, the barricade, the future *novobudova*, and the park). Consequently, in the thesis, I attempt to unite both topics and demonstrate in what context housing construction could become an object of a passionate grassroots protest.

The research could have been more extensive in time, space and the number of recorded interviews. However, it was the first anthropological inquiry into the phenomenon of anticonstruction protests in Kyiv. This research provides valuable qualitative data on residents' motivations to protest the construction, their understanding of the situation and their aspirations regarding the desired organisation of their *everydayness* (Darieva & Neugebauer, 2019). Although I have the experience of defending the Soviet cinemas in Kyiv from the privatisation and destruction as an activist of OccupyKyivCinemas (Shnaider & Lishchynska, 2020), the

CEU eTD Collection

fieldwork in Mykilska Slobidka constituted a challenge for me since “doing fieldwork at home” (Hansen, 2017) comes with the need to distance yourself from the field, but also because I had to disillusion myself on the matter of the overly romanticising the grassroots activists prior to entering the field. Thus, an additional value of the research is that it shows that the anticonstruction activists depicted here constitute, indeed, a very particular group of people who, while fighting for spatial justice for themselves, (un)intentionally exclude other groups of the population on their way.

This research is an attempt to realise an anthropological project as different from a purely ethnographic or sociological perspective. Thus, although the study relies on on-site and digital ethnographic observation and interviewing, its purpose is not to describe interlocutors' points of view or provide a case study for a greater theory (Tim Ingold, 2017, p.24). This inquiry aims to present a view of a situated and informed observer on the political, economic and social relations highlighted by the phenomenon of anticonstruction activism in Ukraine as of 2021.

Initially, I planned to interview three categories of people to understand the situation: activists, locals, and experts in the field of housing. However, later as I was putting together pieces of two stories, I realised that both cases consist of much hidden, lost, and manipulated information, which is impossible to complement and present coherently in this thesis. Therefore, I did not talk to experts and decided only to pay attention to the stories told me by people involved in the struggle. All these stories involved some legends - accounts that I heard repeatedly but that no one could prove. As I was looking through my notes and transcriptions, I realised that I encountered what Kristen Peterson calls “phantom epistemologies” (2009, p.38) - a collection of “common sense” tellings, untrackable rumours, and partial and slippery stories. Such “phantom epistemologies” frequently occurred in my cases.

CEU eTD Collection

For instance, I repeatedly heard from different people that constructing high-rise housing complexes on the riverbank in Mykilska Slobidka contradicted the zoning plans and legislation; therefore, developers' actions were allegedly unlawful. Unfortunately, as I discovered later, in the city hall, it was decided to locate housing complexes here already in 2004, if not earlier[7]. The city also gave permission and planned to situate high-rise residential constructions on the riverbank long before the residents learned about this and opposed the construction with the regulation which forbids high-rise construction in this area less than 100 metres close to the Dnipro. Indeed, developers on this site overcame many legal obstacles, such as the mandatory provision of social infrastructures in the area, various zoning norms, obligatory public hearings and others. However, they were always backed up by courts and decisions of city deputies. As if out of spite, these new housing complexes have become embossed with local legends: allegedly, one of them, "Rusanivs′ka Havan′ ", was built so close to the river that it started to slip down the bank, making the elevators inside unusable because of the acute angle of inclination. Another complex, "Kovalska" 's, is claimed to have cracks in walls since the buildings are allegedly built on loose soil.

Luise White, a historian, suggests that these kinds of stories should be "taken at face value" because "the inaccuracies of these stories make them exceptionally reliable historical sources as well: they offer historians a way to see the world the way the storytellers did, as a world of vulnerability and unreasonable relationships" (2000, p.5). In a similar way, my thesis is an attempt to take activism seriously and show how the elusive stories of protesting reside in the context of a struggle, which is also "shadow" because of the unaccountable political economy behind it.

CEU eTD Collection

[7] Dsnews.ua, 2004, April 19.

Following Sherry B. Ortner, I attempt to go beyond the binary relationships between the powerful “dominant” and resisting “subordinate” actors (2006, p.46). The additional goal of the thesis is to demonstrate the contradictions and tensions within the resisting group, and the partial incoherence of their ideas since they are often “springing not from their own senses of order, justice, and meaning, but only from some set of ideas called into being by the situation of domination itself” (ibid., p.50). Indeed, I do not claim that the protesters stood up for the legacy of Soviet mikrorajon and the ideas of social justice presupposed by it in theory. Instead, I show that the overwhelming construction process in Kyiv provoked the grassroots mobilisation of locals to protect their own space.

Therefore, as Ortner suggests: “the question of adequate representation of subjects in the attempt to understand resistance is not purely a matter of providing better portraits of subjects in and of themselves. The importance of subjects (whether individual actors or social entities) lies not so much in who they are and how they are put together as in the projects that they construct and enact. For it is in the formulation and enactment of those projects that they both become and transform who they are, and that they sustain or transform their social and cultural universe.” (ibid., p.58). The alternative projects suggested by anticonstruction activists are not revolutionary, and I try to avoid romanticising their struggle. Instead, in this thesis, I explore how "The widening of these cracks [of capitalism] is an "opening of a world that presents itself as closed" (Holloway, 2010, p.9**).** Following Swain et al. (2010), I aim to complicate the idea of the systemic nature of neoliberal capitalism and the struggles within it. Thus, I stick to the point that the anticonstruction activisms in Ukraine appear as a response to the disintegrating housing production system and not as an answer to the governance crisis that produced it.

I have faced several limitations during my fieldwork. The first concerns the access to archives of DIPROMISTO, the leading institution for planning and construction in UkrSSR, which was located in Kharkiv, and because of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to them was limited and

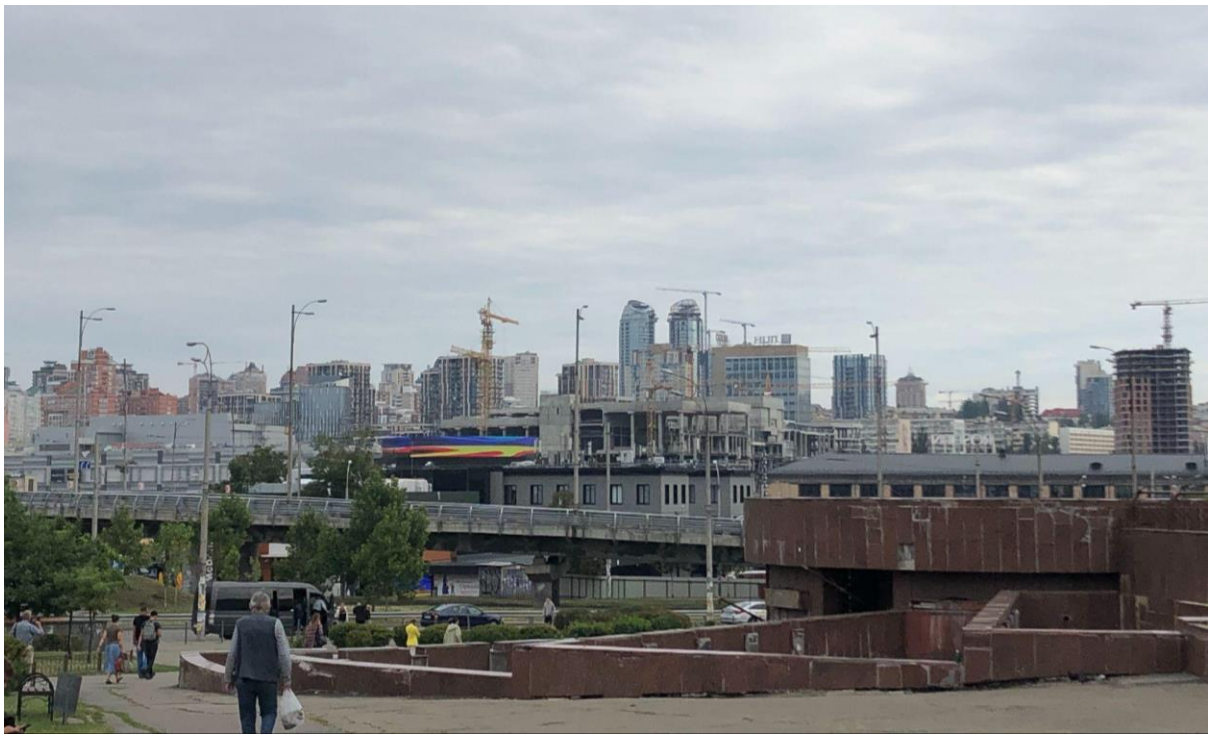
CEU eTD Collection

delayed. The second obstacle was my own stepping into the field. Because I had the luck to enter the research precisely at the time of escalation, I was also unluckily subjected to suspicion from activists. Knowing that developers use various methods of discrediting activists, locals were hesitant to converse with strangers, including myself.

The last and major impediment to my fieldwork was and still is the full-scale war that the Russian Federation started on the 24th of February 2022, involving the whole territory of Ukraine. Kyiv has been attacked numerous times, with much of the population fleeing the city. This event limited my field in space and time, as I believe the political economy of housing in Ukraine is undergoing irreversible changes. The structure of financing the construction of housing, therefore, the process of housing production, and consequently, the public opinion on housing will be transformed.

CEU eTD Collection

Chapter III. History of the Ukrainian Cityscape and Urban Life: From the Socialist *Mikrorajon* to the Neoliberal *Novobudova*



Kyiv's horizon with *novobudovy*, August 2021

"We [activists] went to meetings of various associations [tovarystv] and explained our position, explained what and how. And once we were at a meeting in one association, which is located near the bridge, and we were listened to carefully, some questions were even asked. In the end, one grandpa raises his hand and says, "What are you doing here anyway? Back in 1985, we already wrote a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and sent our representative there, and he personally delivered this letter to the Central Committee of the CPSU [ZK KPSS]." And we simply were flabbergasted, that is,

CEU eTD Collection

the person completely remained somewhere in the communist past."

Galyna, activist and resident of Rusanivski Sady

The cases of urban activism discussed in the following chapters contest the planning and construction principles as they are currently established in Ukraine. As the activists and residents are not experts in city planning, their ideas of a comfortable and sound urban environment rely first and foremost on their everyday experiences. This *everydayness* which is common for Kyivians was predominantly formed in the Soviet times through the means of socialist planning, construction and distribution. Thus, in this chapter, I describe the spatial transformation brought by socialism and heavily influenced by the market economy after 1991. The first subchapter traces the development of socialist planning, from the theoretical aspirations to rebuild cities based on a socialist economy and new type of relations of production to the mass housing and its most vital project of *mikrorajons*. The second subchapter explores in detail the spatial conflicts surfacing with the declaration of independence of Ukraine and the consequent privatisation of its socialist assets. Finally, the third subchapter lays out the types of anticonstruction activisms which address the spatial conflicts of post-socialist Ukraine.

III.i. Socialist Space Production: General City Plan, *Mikrorajon* and Everyday Life

Despite the general scepticism regarding the question of actually-existing socialist space, I would like to suggest that the Soviet Union indeed produced a distinguished space, the proof of which one can see in its persistent legacy. As space is a historical product (Lefebvre, 1991, p.46), it should be possible to grasp the facts of a previous economic system and examine its influence on the current disposition of material conditions of life, social processes and popular

CEU eTD Collection

expectations. Henri Lefebvre suggests inspecting the production of space by using dialectically interconnected elements, which together constitute a particular constellation of space. These are representations of space, representational spaces and spatial practice. Before looking into the spatial legacy of socialist Ukraine, I would like to briefly examine these three categories as they were produced and reproduced in the USSR.

The author of "Cities of Future and Organisation of Socialist Everyday Life" (1929), Moisei Ginzburg, quotes Vladimir Lenin in the epigraph:

> Capitalism finally breaks the connection between agriculture and industry, but at the same time, in its highest development, it prepares the elements of this connection - the union of the industry with agriculture based on the conscious application of science and the combination of collective labour, the new settlement of mankind (with the destruction of both rural desolation, its isolation from the world, its wildness, and the unnatural accumulation of gigantic masses in big cities)

To eliminate the division between a town and a countryside was an underlying objective of consequent socialist planning policies. The outcome of these policies was a relatively even development of settlements regardless of their size, achieved through the restrictions imposed on large cities' growth and the agriculture sector's industrialisation.

The thinking and imagination of Soviet city planners, architects, and political bodies constitute particular representations of space as it *ought to* be organised. In contrast to capitalist planning, in the Soviet Union, the relation between theory and practice was de-naturalised and rationalised by proclaiming a direct interdependence between the planned economy and city planning (Uspenskyi, 1967, p.1). This interdependence was already explained in 1930 as an engine of progress: "when increasing the accumulation rates in the country (capital investments

CEU eTD Collection

in the economy), we should at the same time also increase the standard of living of workers" (Miljutin, 1930, p.11). These objectives should have been accomplished through the increase in the productivity of labour (achieved with industrialisation) and the reorganisation of the economy and *everyday life* (conducted with the instruments of planning and architecture). As appositely distinguished by Collier, in contrast to liberal social modernity, which considered the population to be an "autonomous domain outside of the state", Soviet social modernity approached the population as a "collection of individuals as labour power and the subject of need" (2011, p.67).

Accordingly, in UkrSSR in 1930 the *State Institute for City Planning* (*Hiprohrad*) was created in order to develop the main principles of planning and shape the development of Ukrainian Soviet socialist city and to create types and forms of mass housing "for the satisfaction of material and cultural needs of the population" (Ivanova, 1953, p.4). However, at the time, the state was allegedly more concerned with industrial construction, and until 1956, the construction sector was controlled by NKVD[8]. These, as well as political and economic reasons, might explain why the housing projects released in the 30-50s had not produced a large-scale solution for the housing shortage in their time.

It was not until the 1957's "Housing Program" of Nikita Khrushchev that the state officials publicly declared a bold promise that "by the end of 1965 every family living in state housing be given a separate apartment and for the single adult urban dweller—a separate room."[9] (Krämer, 2019, p.191). As a part of the program, zoning and experimental planning institutes were created for developing the typical housing projects and their documentation to speed up residential construction all over the USSR. In Ukraine, the experimental KyivZNDIJeP

[8] People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs and secret service of the USSR.
[9] Despite the fact that the official was criticised by others for raising people's expectations, same promise happened again with the "Housing 2000" program by Mikhail Horbachev.

CEU eTD Collection

institute was created in 1963 to develop a housing series for normal, ground subsident, and seismic zones. Although in the beginning, Khrushchev's program encouraged "people's construction" and cooperative construction, later, as Harris concludes, "the state in Khrushchev's mass housing campaign had many different voices—with sometimes conflicting agendas" (2013, p.305). Meanwhile, Khrushchev's program engendered the tendency to increase state housing construction. According to Moizer and Zadorin, from 1961 to 1975, the share of state construction increased from 51 to 68% (2018). This period of housing construction in the USSR was fundamentally different from any before and after, not only for defining the socialist face of Ukrainian cities but also for developing a complex and organised set of construction documentation, norms and municipal institutes, most of which continue to exist today.

Though city plans for large cities existed before, the "General City Plan" concept was first formulated union-wide in 1966 (Uspensky, 1967). This document was used to determine the prospects for the city's development and its complex zoning and construction according to the goals of the 5-year plans. However, the General City Plan, alongside the planned economy itself, was seen as a temporary stage of socialist (planning) development (Gutnov, 1984). Since the housing construction was to be induced with the most economical and fastest methods, socialist planning preferred developing "empty" places to the reconstruction of previously existing districts. According to the conclusions of Moiser and Zadorin, "city planning as a discipline was compelled to obey the dictate of effective allocation of buildings" (2018, p.141). Consequently, referring to Castells, Bodnar also concludes that "the socialist city becomes invariably the incarnation of political will—that of the state, the party, and the planner." (2001, 15). This leads to the question of what physical forms did such planning produce?

Indeed, the material products of these ideas, representational spaces of Soviet socialism, are now dominating the urban landscape in the former republics. The late 20s - early 30s signify

CEU eTD Collection

the shift from the low-storey to multi-storey mass residential construction, which was developed in the 1950s and then in a well-known period of mass housing construction in the 1960s-80s. The latter years are famous for the establishment of a *mikrorajon* - an open structure organisation of buildings and places with different social service functions. The structure of *mikrorajon*, which pushes transport outwards of the residential area, is partially rooted in the idea of "superblock". However, the leading social idea to organise a complex of services for the population derives from the theoretical discussions in the 1930s (Ikonnikov, 1966). The principle of *mikrorajon* allowed for the allocation of a unified list of necessary social and service infrastructures, which were produced using the standardised panel blocks set and organised by project institutes with regard to natural parameters of a landscape within walking distance from the residential buildings and usually surrounded by greenery (Berger, Ruoppila & Vesikansa, 2019). As Roy Rapoport emphasises, the built environment bears the ideas encoded in it (2005). In this regard, the organisation of *mikrorajon* was defined with the ideas of a classless society, decommodification of land, plan economy and satisfaction of various needs of the population (for home, education, medical care, communication, culture, work, leisure). Thus, in the *mikrorajon*, "every separate building does not play an independent compositional role but is only an organic part of the whole complex, ensemble" (Arkhitektura SSSR, 1963, p.50). The organisation of communication and time (Rapoport, 2005) catches the eye in mikrorajon since one of its predetermined features was the minimal walking distance and minimum weekly commuting time (Tyshchenko about Vynogradar, 2016; also Hess, 2018). As a result, “If there was anything special about socialist housing estates, it was their class composition: they were not pockets of poverty or concentrations of the urban underclass” (Bodnar, 2001, p.30). To sum up, *mikrorajon* was a way to improve everyday life according to the developing standards of living (Šiupšinskas & Lankots, 2019) and relying on the "achievements of scientific and technical progress".

CEU eTD Collection

The spatial practice that *mikrorajon* produced in the socialist period goes far beyond the most famous depictions of Soviet *byt* (everyday life) in "common" language (Yurchak, 2010), advertisement (Buck-Morss, 2000), art (Chukhrov, 2020) or the spatial form of the *komunalky*[10] *(*"developed more by default than by design" Buck-Morss, 2000, p.199*)* and dormitories (Boym, 1994). *Mikrorajons*, which set a similar default experience for many post-Soviet people, constitute a mundane image of *everydayness*, usually neglected in research. However, in the same way as Soviet people used to reside predominantly in the built environment from the previous imperialist regimes with all their historicist architecture, nowadays, Ukrainians reside in large socialist-produced housing from the 1950-90s. I believe the spatial practice developed in *mikrorajons* set the conception of an adequate living space expected by many as a default.

Everyday life can reveal the shortcomings of the theories and planning without despising them altogether or idealising them. In everyday life, some unpredicted consequences of post-socialist change become visible. According to Boym, "The everyday is amorphous, unformed and informal, yet it is also the most conservative mode of preservation of forms and formalities. It is at once about spontaneity and stagnation." (1994, p.21). For instance, the author of "Astana Dvory" (Lazczkowski, 2015) tells the reader about one of the common practices in *dvor* (yard) of the socialist housing complex: repair of the utility infrastructures, which are left neglected by the state in the aftermath of socialism (also in Leetmaa & Hess, 2019). Since *mikrorajons* were built to fulfil the state's promise to satisfy the needs of the population, with the transition to liberal governing, the widespread expectation that the state would take care of housing persisted (Lux & Sunega, 2014). However, the new state gradually withdrew from the responsibility to maintain housing by underfinancing the municipal enterprises responsible for

[10] Expropriated and reorganised petty-bourgeois housing from the early XXth century which consequently became a distinctive form of living in the 1920-1950s

CEU eTD Collection

this. The “mundane scraps” (Lazczkowski, 2015) and dwellers' experience of dealing with them provide a *sense* of detachment between locals and the new state. Similarly, numerous everyday issues have appeared (Treija & Bratuškins, 2019), unregulated by the state and thus left to the judgement of a private owner (Tuvikene, 2019).

The on-ground accounts of the experiences and feelings of dwellers of Soviet neighbourhoods allow researchers to conclude that they are indeed associated with good living places (Janušauskaitė, 2019). In the view of long-term residents of socialist *mikrorajons*, it is indeed a post-socialist development tendency of densification which threatens their quality of life in the district. Thus, the quiet, spacious and green *mikrorajon* seems to be a valuable legacy of socialism, recognised by locals and difficult to undermine with the current development agenda.

III.ii. Spatial Conflicts of *Independent* Ukraine

> *“Of course, this is an overload, an overload on the district, and on the roads, and on the [transport] exit [from the district]. [...] Houses are being built, but the infrastructure is no longer being built. [...] you know, I grew up in the Soviet Union, and I don’t want to discuss whether it was good or bad, but it’s just that under the Soviet Union [pri “sovdepii”], for the life of me, these construction standards were obligatory: where were four houses, the stadium was built inside, and necessarily - a kindergarten, and definitely - a school. And it adhered! [...] And now what? They [developers] pasted houses, and no kindergarten, no school, nothing …”*
>
> Maria, activist and resident of Mykilska Slobidka

The dissolution of the USSR and the creation of independent countries came along with the re-establishment of the liberal market system on these territories, which changed the conditions

CEU eTD Collection

of spatial production. The primary goal to reorganise the economy on the principle of a free market meant that many regulations and limitations of state plan economy were deemed irrelevant or even harmful: “State socialism produced under-urbanisation, curtailed the urbanity of cities, filtered their marginality, and used urban space, from the perspective of capital, strictly speaking, in a wasteful manner (Szelenyi, 1993,1996).” (quoted in Bodnar, 2001, p. 185). For cities and their populations, the reorganisation of the economy led to a rapid increase in inequality. A study by Mykhnenko and Turok shows that the transition provoked uneven development of cities in all post-socialist countries, characterised by the swift shrinkage trend, where primarily the capital cities appeared to be "gainers or retainers" in the process (2008, p.329).

Michael Gentile’s research of the town of Stakhanov can complement this conclusion with the data bringing the Soviet “landscape of priority” (2015) into the picture. According to his research, the differences *within* socialist *mikrorajons* (specifically, between the producers of housing infrastructure) were transformed into unequal satisfaction with socialist housing later. Priority industries had more resources to produce better housing at their disposal, and housing cooperatives at the later point were better supported as well, whereas housing built by the city or self-constructed detached houses were less desirable. Significantly, at the time of the survey, in 2009 (considering that the assessed housing was built in 1958-1991, was not renovated and lacked maintenance for the next 20 years), most people assessed their socialist housing neutrally, and there were more dwellers satisfied with their housing than dissatisfied.

Meanwhile, the state's role shifted to mitigation between the disastrous effects of the quick introduction of the market and the popular expectations formed in the USSR. The consequent partial reforms of privatisation, land ownership, and governance of the 90s had long-lasting social, economic and political consequences.

CEU eTD Collection

To start with the foundations, the land market has been under a moratorium on sale until 1.07.2021: thus, non-agricultural lands in cities belonged primarily to municipalities, the state and industries[11]. For private housing development, it meant that developers would have to rent the land first and could not use it as a pledge for a bank loan. The schemes created out of this situation are well-known: since socialist neighbourhoods were planned as complex infrastructures with various functions (employment, dwelling, services, leisure), they became targets for post-socialist capitalist accumulation. Different sorts of enterprises: from big factories to tiny cinemas, were, first, privatised by the newly organised "workers' collectives" and then sold to businessmen. This scheme was used alongside the known process of privatisation of state enterprises (Alexander, 2004). Consequently, these assets were then used with the perspective of gaining profits, which comes along with the deindustrialisation and gentrification of cities.

The main goal of the privatisation of housing was to create a real estate market (Polanyi, 1944) as a part of the Ukrainian transition from a socialist to a market economy, but also as a “shock absorber” by lowering the adverse outcomes of the transition period (Struyk, 1996). Struyk, who assisted the privatisation in Russia and Ukraine in the 1990s, wrote: “More units on offer mean increased residential mobility, which in turn means price signals are sent to private developers about what type of housing and which locations are highly valued; and this is where new construction will occur. Hence, privatisation will facilitate the process of redevelopment of the city. Simultaneously, the decline in the size of the rental sector - particularly a (price-controlled) social rental sector - may have unfavourable consequences for lower-income families and newly formed families; and these need to be understood.” (ibid, p.194). The

[11] However, the lack of data does not allow us to provide the statistical proof of the assumption. The underdigitisation of lands constitutes a challenge for the taxation and management of lands, recognised by scholars and local governments themselves (Baljuk, Dubrovs′kyj, & Anisimov, 2022).

CEU eTD Collection

Ukrainian state took the risk and launched a large-scale privatisation of housing to sitting tenants.

The creation of new markets in post-Soviet countries required a specific form of financialisation of the spheres newly introduced to the market. According to Aalbers (Aalbers, 2016, p.1), "financialisation" is "the process by which something or someone is managed as a fund" (ibid, p.2). Thus, the financialisation of housing means that the government, following the market logic, defines housing as an asset, which, therefore, should be managed within the limits and rules of the market economy. The management of housing as an asset could be achieved in different ways. However, as Aalbers claims, the role of the state in the process is crucial: "The state is often a driver of financialisation process, for example by pushing families into housing debt, by enabling financial institutions to buy subsidised housing, or by simply withdrawing from providing or regulating the housing sector and opening up the field to rent-seeking financial institutions" (ibid, p.4). As housing market consists of "a twofold social construction, the construction of supply and demand, in which the state (national and local) actively participates, both directly and indirectly" (Bourdieu, 2005, cited in Bodnar & Molnar, 2010) - the organisation of the housing market, as well as a financialisation trend within is, are a product of a state housing policy.

In Ukraine, the privatisation of state housing stock and ownership-oriented state politics supported the springing of new residential developments in major cities. This development was interrupted by the global financial crisis in 2008 but then resumed and steadily grew in numbers even despite the internal Ukrainian economic crisis in 2014-2015 (Liasheva, 2019, p. 64). Liasheva claims that the alternative internal financing methods assured stable growth in the housing construction sector. After 2008 foreign banks withdrew from crediting the Ukrainian mortgage system with low-interest rates. Additionally, the Ukrainian state suspended interference in the real estate market after the post-Maidan crisis (ibid., 62). Due to the unstable

CEU eTD Collection

financial market, individuals considered investments in apartments as one of the few accessible sources of allocating savings in the context of an untrustworthy bank system and unstable national currency. Similarly, on the side of private development companies, an instalment system has flourished, which in fact, has made developer companies themselves function as financial institutes (ibid., 64). Consequently, in the last decade, Ukrainian housing construction was predominantly financed through individual investments by future flat owners. A developer, in contrast, was free to engage only in construction activity, leaving the responsibility of management and maintenance of the future housing complex to the municipal companies and future dwellers.

Nevertheless, to comprehend the context of the current housing production system, one should consider the reasons which make housing ownership desirable by the population and residential construction profitable for private developers.

First of all, the character of the super homeownership regime (Stephens, Lux & Sunega, 2015) established in FSU provides many benefits to homeowners. The property tax is minimal, moreover eliminated for households under 60 sq.m for an apartment, 120 sq m for a house and 180 sq m for non-residential property[12]. At the same time, the rental market is not represented in the legislation, thus, totally unregulated: rent prices follow the market only, the drastic consequences of which were seen with the beginning of a full-scale Russian invasion in a 10-225% jump in rent prices on safer territories (data from Flatfy). The state provides no affordable alternative for ownership or the private rental market. Despite the adoption of the law on social housing in 2006, the numbers of social apartment units are virtually non-existent - 1024 units

[12] Tax for property is defined by local governments, however, it cannot exceed 1,5% of a minimum wage (defined by the central government annually). Thus, in 2021 property owners had to pay max. 90 UAH per sq.m. over 60/120/180 sq.m. per year. For an average 67 sq.m. flat the property tax would reach max. 450 UAH per year = around 15-17 USD per year (Presslužba Deržavnoï podatkovoï služby Ukraïny, 2022). Thus, unlike in EU countries, property tax in Ukraine is not linked to an estimated value of a property, but to a minimum wage, which makes property ownership very cheap (which does not mean accessible, though). Moreover, because of the Russian invasion, for years 2022-2023 property tax was eliminated completely.

CEU eTD Collection

for a population of 40 million (Bobrova, Lazarenko, Khassai, & Shnaider, 2022). All this considered, in 1992, the state took responsibility for renovating all outdated housing stock, which has never happened. Meanwhile, the communal enterprises (ZhEK) were entirely responsible for maintaining the territory and cities' buildings until the reform of 2016[13]. Before that, owners of separate apartments did not own the building; only recently, the government started a campaign urging owners to organise in co-ownership structure (OSBB) through the provision of benefits and mortgages for making buildings more energy efficient. This reform should have been completed in March 2022 but was interrupted by the war.

Secondly, before the invasion, in the situation of unstable markets, the population considered real estate the only reliable asset for investment. This benefited private construction companies, who developed a pyramid scheme (Liasheva, 2019) to attract construction funds since the individual investments (in fact, purchase) in a flat are, as a rule, used to complete a previous construction. Since the global crisis of 2008 and a series of Ukrainian economic crises in 2014 and 2022, the government has pursued additional benefits for private developers. For instance, the fee for the construction of social infrastructure (usually pitched from public funds) was reduced. Meanwhile, the local governments were devoid of the possibility of exchanging the allocation of available plots for some social apartments in private residential complexes. On top of that, the creation of the "affordable housing" program led to the practice of government funding private developers "in order to maintain the profitability of private companies and hold flat prices for those who can buy it anyways" (Mohylnyi, 2022). Thus, the state adherently supports homeownership by introducing programs benefiting developers, homeowners and “investors”.

CEU eTD Collection

[13] Even after the reform, municipal enterprises are still largely responsible for the majority of the housing stock

Moreover, the interests of private developers dominate the zoning decision-making by soaking through the agenda of local governments. According to the conclusions of Viatcheslav Avioutskii, "the Ukrainian administrative system is strongly intertwined with the private sector. Most business groups succeeded in "privatising" strategic administrative posts or bodies. They influence state policy-making through legislative bodies (Rada, regional and municipal councils). The line dividing private business and state affairs has become unclear and floating. Some researchers argue that the state has been privatised" (Avioutskii, 2010, p.138)[14].

For instance, Kyiv mayors are seen as notorious producers of schemes of shadow allocation of lands for housing construction (Fedoriv, 2017). As a result, the municipal enterprises were destroyed, relocated, deteriorated or restructured to cover for the shortcomings and hidden interests of the governance. Thus, the General Plan of Kyiv has been criticised numerous times for being instrumentalised for the benefit of private developers (Verbytskyi et al., 2017; Cybriwsky, 2016). Thus, like back in the USSR, GenPlan remains a document formulated exclusively by "experts" and, as a rule, concealed from the public (Shcherbachenko, 2013). At the same time, it became a powerful political instrument in contrast to its previous very technical employment. To illustrate, researchers emphasise that Kyiv's GenPlan calculates the residential space with square metres per person instead of a housing unit per person (Ponomaryova, Anisimov & Ryan, 2020). This formula conceives the amount of empty or luxurious property or ownership of multiple apartments for speculation purposes. As a result, the General Plan constitutes an exemplary mechanism that justifies city planners' necessity for residential development.

CEU eTD Collection

[14] I.e. the party of Klytchko, who is the current major for the second term already, was from the start funded by the Partskhaladze and Myrhorodskyi, who are main players in construction business, with Partskhaladze being the chairman of the Confederation of Developers of Ukraine.

Whilst it was possible to change the expert and political representation of space as a reflection and embodiment of liberal market production, everyday life remained strongly linked to the practice cultivated by socialist urban planning. Residents of socialist neighbourhoods are used to the schools and kindergartens in a yard, hospitals, cinemas, theatres and parks within 15 minutes from home and the green belt surrounding *mikrorajon*. These social, cultural, and public facilities are a norm, transitioning to the post-Soviet understanding of a home as a place where basic service and leisure time are assured. In this regard, it is illustrative how a resident and activist from Mykilska Slobidka understands the value of the contested territory:

> *"And there was a green zone here, and that is why people are advocating for preserving this green zone, for access to water, which has always been here. Because there were big beaches here, historically. Everyone who lived in the area swam at these beaches. And people don't protest against everything, or just to protest. They protest against the fact that their environmental and cultural rights are being violated. That this area was publicly accessible, it was in good condition, for example, where they now want to build three high-rise buildings. [At the construction site of the housing project] Nova Slobidka, there used to be a water base, holiday houses. It was such a tourist location, where not only the locals rested, but it seemed to belong to KHimVolokno [a chemical industry enterprise in Kyiv]. And workers of KHimVolokno could rest here. It was such a touristic part of the city of Kyiv. And those people who lived here at first, they got used to it: others who settled here [later], they were also sold a park here, they were also told about it [the green zone]."* (Viktoria, resident of Mykilska Slobidka)

Thus, as infrastructures are linked to the "conventions of practice" (Star, 1999, p. 381), in this case, it is a practice of everyday life, conditioned by a built environment. Therefore, when a change in Soviet-planned neighbourhoods (for example, a spatial intervention in the form of a

CEU eTD Collection

new large housing construction) concerns the practice which has survived since decades after the USSR (like the availability of non-commodified recreation facilities in one complex with the housing stock), the social tensions, for instance, anticonstruction protests may follow.

III.iii. Types and Politics of Anticonstruction Activisms in Ukraine

Ukrainian anticonstruction activism has a relatively long history connected to unfolding the privatisation process in the country. In an article from 2010, Volodymyr Ishchenko assesses the prevalence of informal initiatives protesting against "social and economic issues", among which urban development and construction projects were the most contested (p.374). Back in 2010, the data indicated "a tendency to neglect social-economic problems by institutionalised "civil society" (ibid), which was more involved in the struggle over identity politics. However, I believe Ishchenko managed to grasp a crucial tendency that "aggressive politicisation of history had a visible and destructive impact even on such distant and different mobilisations as anticonstruction protests" (ibid, p.384). The observation of post-Maidan anti-construction activism in Ukraine, presented in this paper, proves the prediction. Grassroots initiatives become increasingly politicised, mainly by conservative parties and right-wing groups supporting the grassroots protests and participating in directing the agenda away from the socio-economic issues to the politics of Russian-Ukrainian relationships (i.e. framing some developers as "pro-Russian", emphasising the capital in construction coming from Russia).

Current anticonstruction activism in Ukraine can be broadly divided into two “types”. First is concerned with the protection of historical heritage sites (for instance, Zhuravel, A., 2022); thus, it is, as a rule, springing up in the inner city area. Mainly the contested places are buildings of pre-Revolution times (Tyshchenko, 2012 on Andriivskyi Uzviz; Zakusylo & Hryhorenko, 2018 on "Mapa Renovatsii") or examples of Soviet modernism esthetics (for example, initiative SaveKyivModernism protecting *Tarilka* on Lybidska str., initiative Save Kvity Ukrainy

CEU eTD Collection

fighting for the building on Sichovykh Striltsiv str.). The protesters range from intellectuals, artists, humanities, and art school students to a few locals and professionals in architecture, local history, and heritage. The narrations of these protests vary, but the main appeal to the broader society is concentrated around the issue of protecting the national heritage, unique examples of the past and Ukrainian history. These protests rarely get the attention of big media; however, they bring together the artsy cluster of Kyiv, ideologically motivated ecological, leftist, and anarchist activists. The core feature distinguishing the first type is that these activists aim to protect a particular building against destruction or redevelopment. Thus, they look for the legal and conceptual frames which would prove the object culturally valuable and, thus, worth preservation.

The second "type" of anticonstruction protests, with which I am concerned in this thesis, revolves around the development itself. Examples of such could be found all over Ukraine (Meshkantsi budynkiv, 2016: Lviv; Zhyloi kompleks "Chaika," 2015: Kharkiv). In Kyiv, the most famous instances are known by the names Protasiv Yar, Ososkorky, Vyrlytsa, and Park Natalka. The activists in these places aim to preserve the natural sites situated close to the Soviet-planned neighbourhoods. These protests predominantly mobilise the local population of respective districts, and they have relatively weak connections to each other. Sometimes these protests lead to violent clashes between locals and developer's guards, and only after such violence does the municipality intervene in the conflict. It has become a common practice that the local dissent to the process of *deryban*[15] is manifested by physical means: knocking down a construction fence, barricading an entrance to the construction site, and occupying roads.

CEU eTD Collection

[15] "*Deryban* denotes the process of distributing public or state-owned resources among a narrow circle of the elite, serving their private interests at the expense of the public interest. It is closely associated with corruption. Deryban often occurs by formally legal means, without violations of laws and procedures that are themselves designed in a way that creates opportunities for *deryban* (Datsyuk). The term has been used widely in Ukrainian and Russian. It takes various forms – derybanyty (verb), derybanivshiy (participle), derybanshchyk (noun referring to the one who loots) and deryban-team (noun referring to a team of looters)" (Chepurnyy, 2015)

These are the pictures picked up by the media, whereas a significant part of the protesting work happens in courts. Citizens who oppose the construction are by no means the oppressed groups in the ordinary sense of understanding; indeed, the activist core in this paper is represented by the middle-income homeowners from the capital city.

Additionally, since 2010 the Kyiv council abolished sub-governments in the districts, leaving only administrative bodies. Therefore, currently, every decision, even concerning a local issue, should be discussed at the level of the city council. Considering that deputies in Kyiv are not paid salaries for their service, average citizens rarely have the resources to access this level. As one of the protest leaders in Horbachykha shared with me, when she was suggested to participate in an election to the city council, backed up by *hromada*, she refused because she could sustain herself with the position, which was not paid. The question of access to decision-making in the city is recognised as an urgent one by active citizens. Later in the following chapters, I show how in the activist community the connections to high officials from the central city government define the success of the local demands.

Conclusion

I imagine *mikrorajon* as a unique concept which plainly brings the socialist legacy into the liberal "future". One should bear in mind that socialist *mikrorajon* was an inherently young project which never had the chance to fully mature in a socialist way before the country's dissolution. The adulthood of post-socialist *mikrorajon* has witnessed the production of a densely situated complex of *novobudovy*, which in their cheaper form are comprised of the same concrete blocks as buildings in a Soviet *mikrorajon*, but are much higher, with smaller "smart" apartments and poorly planned conditioning and light characteristics. The new mass housing has become more segregated in terms of quality, with higher-end options being significantly more expensive. Meanwhile, new housing development requires territory, and

CEU eTD Collection

social and public infrastructures, which it usually does not produce itself. Considering that the local governments lack the finances and effective strategical planning to complement the private residential development with improving and developing public infrastructures, private construction fills the gap with the exploitation of the legacy of Soviet public facilities. Moreover, in order to accumulate the public resources of *mikrorajon* for the needs of investors of *novobudova*, private developers simultaneously dispossess the dwellers of socialist *mikrorajons* of the benefits they once enjoyed.

CEU eTD Collection

Chapter IV. Mykilska Slobidka: *Hromada* against Emptification

"Everyone went to Dubai, and everyone saw how Dubai is developing..."

"Can I ask a question? And how are we going to attract investors to Kyiv?" Questions from the side of the head of *TOV* "Nova Slobidka" (LLC) Oleksandr Stelmashchuk to *hromada* at the public meeting on August 8, 2021

One of the features of infrastructure is that it "becomes visible upon breakdown" (1999, 382). In the case of Mykilska Slobidka, it is the general breakdown of public housing infrastructure in post-Soviet Ukraine which makes the current private housing development so outrageous[16]. This chapter displays the conflict between the *hromada* of *mikrorajon* Mykilska Slobidka and the developer of the residential complex "Nova Slobidka", based on the context of the previous experience of construction on the riverbank in the neighbourhood. The idea of *counterpublics* of infrastructures is introduced to identify the relation of *hromada* to the upcoming construction. Additionally, the concept of infrastructural violence is employed to emphasise the destructive effect of the contested construction on the *mikrorajon.*

IV.i. *Counterpublics* of Housing Infrastructure

As one of the features of the post-socialist condition, deindustrialisation also results in the infrastructural and social decline of the territories around it (Dzenovska, 2018). Often it is purposeful, as neoliberal governance encourages "creative destruction" (Brenner and

[16] Historically, a dominant amount of housing stock was owned by the Ukrainian state as a part of the USSR (more precisely, it was the property of state industries, companies and institutions), which had been distributed among citizens depending on their work experience, needs and location. In fact, this was public housing: it was rented out of the state at a low price, distributed according to the need (some indicators were: the size of the family, the income etc), and provided for indefinite use (could be inherited and exchanged).

CEU eTD Collection

Theodore, 2002) to sustain the accumulation needs of a city as a growth machine (Molotch, 1976). Thus, deindustrialisation in some places is often followed by the development of a more profitable business, such as housing construction. Kyiv, as one of the few growing cities in Ukraine, provides a vivid illustration of creative destruction. The case of Mykilska Slobidka in this regard is one of many. The vast territory adjacent to "Nova Slobidka" used to belong to a brick factory "Darnytskyi Kombinat Budivelnyh Materialiv i Konstrukzij" (DKBMK) that was privatised in the 1990s and, despite growing productivity and revenue in early 2000s, was officially dislocated by the city in 2006. Its land was rented out to private developers and currently accommodates two housing complexes built by the companies Miskbudinvest and Kovalska. In this case, the "creative destruction" was achieved through the deindustrialisation of the neighbourhood of Mykilska Slobidka with its consequent redevelopment into a prestigious and middle-class housing complex with access to the water, nearby traffic junction and social infrastructures of Soviet mikrorajon.

Collier et al. recall John Dewey's understanding of publics as "called into being by problems and events, [...] by infrastructures" (n.d, p.8). This idea of the publics suggests that they do not rely on any pre-existent entity but are rather produced (called into being) as a reference point for a developmental project. Thus, publics refer to as those "for which and on behalf of which" the infrastructure is produced (ibid). Similarly, publics can also appear as a force of negation - a counterpublics. I employ the term "counterpublics" of infrastructures to emphasise the ambiguous character of housing as public infrastructure. Although the term "counterpublics" was introduced by Michael Warner to contrast the discourse of the subaltern subjects with the universalist claims of *the* publics (2002, p.423), the counterpublics of infrastructures in my case are the civil society publics, who not only exercise their universalist claims but also contrast them with those of the developer. In this thesis, the emphasis is put on the counterpublics of infrastructures since its collective agency is visibly performed in the case.

CEU eTD Collection

As the housing construction on the riverbank was supported by the municipality, a new developer TOV "LV-Kholdyng" (LLC) decided to join the redevelopment and, around 2005, bought out the piece of land[17] neighbouring the construction sites of *Miskinvest* and *Kovalska*. In 2007, the company received permission from the city to build on the plot a multifunctional complex of housing, civil and commercial buildings, parking, and sports facilities. With the same ruling, the company rented out two communal (belonging to the city) pieces of land in order to gain access to the road and provide *blahoustrij* (landscaping) for the future complex. In 2013 the rent agreement was prolonged for another five years (Kyiv Municipal Council, 2013). In 2010, the new developer TOV Nova Slobidka bought the land and the construction rights from TOV LV-Kholdyng. Later, the new developer surrounded his plot and two communal plots[18] with a fence. However, his plot was the closest to the communal park and original neighbourhood. Furthermore, he was the most recent to start his construction. Thus, as the other housing complexes were already erected or further along in the construction process, "Nova Slobidka" constituted only a construction pit. Local *hromada* saw the opportunity to pressure this developer to give up on his tiny plot, "return their riverbank" and organise a proper public park. Thus, the community of Mykilska Slobidka acted as a counterpublics against the new residential development project in their neighbourhood.

The first intervening sign of new construction was a fence. People in Kyiv react to fences with growing hostility, which has little in common with the fading disillusionment about new development projects in Batumi, as described by Mathijs Pelkmans and later Frederiksen in his article (2013, p.153). Fences in Kyiv are known to appear unexpectedly overnight and are supported by tight-lipped guards. They are usually opaque and high, and holes or damages in a fence are dealt with faster than the renovation for which these fences are erected. Even the

[17] The cadastre number 8000000000:66:178:0086
[18] The cadastre numbers 8000000000:66:178:0142 and 8000000000:66:178:0143

CEU eTD Collection

material used for these fences shows the development of a struggle for the place they enclose (ranging from wood to concrete). Here is how a resident of Mykilska Slobidka recalls the history of the fence around the contested territory:

> *"Well, here the situation began with the appearance of this concrete fence. And the trees under the fence grew already during the time that the fence was there, that is, it stood for several decades. And the developer gradually removed the ground from this territory. That level of the land, above the current fence, was [like that for] all land that came up to this level. That is, many cubic metres of earth were removed by trucks, and the site was prepared for drilling and piling. [...] The concrete fence remained on one side, and on the other side, it was demolished [and replaced] a couple of years ago [in 2019] when this construction was restored. [...] And since that time, the developer has already put a metal profile fence on that side, and on this side it was fenced with a [metal] net. [...] As you can see, the capital grid was made... like in a concentration camp…"* (Vladyslav, local resident)

The riddle of a fence is not just *what is built behind it* but also *for whom*. For a fence is so untransparent that it conceives the process, method and purpose of construction. For instance, the publics of the residential complex Mykilska Slobidka (those for whom it is meant to serve in the future) reside in the data tables of potential flat owners. These publics exist only in the imaginary space of calculations and projections. As such, they are purely *representational publics* - since they are imagined and inscribed into the spatial project by the developer.

Instead, the publics manifestly produced by this infrastructural project are the counterpublics of *hromada*. This group of people in Mykilska Slobidka was brought to existence because of the contested perception of the neighbourhood's space: while the developer considered the place an opportunity for investment, locals opposed this view with their own perspective. The

CEU eTD Collection

protest in Mykilska Slobidka mobilised long-standing resentment towards unwanted constructions in the area to oppose a new residential project in the spring of 2021. I collected various accounts of the activists' relations to the construction during my fieldwork. Some emphasised the destruction of the riverbank, while others pointed to the community being removed from the decision-making process in the city. Many narratives evoked a feeling of being deceived by corrupt politicians. Residents identified themselves as a *hromada* (community) as contrasted to a *zabudovnyk* (developer) with corrupted politicians standing behind him.

> *"You see that there is no longer any shore; everything is built up. And this is what the officials quietly did for us. And I see myself that the only force that slows down, stops, does not allow [developers] to go on and simply fill it all with concrete, this only thing is that of the hromada and the resistance. And it is very strange to me to hear when the chief architect Svystunov appears in front of the architects and says that we have such a mess happening in Kyiv because the hromada is not working well and is slightly "underdeveloped" in our country, that is "stupid", yes. And it just seems to me that the struggle on Mykylska Slobidka, which my parents started, is an example of a good hromada that can defend its right to the land, the shore, and the river".* (Oksana, an activist, a speech from a public gathering)

The *hromada* had been organised in the process of protesting. This is a peculiar origin story since it also presumes an identification with the way people see the Maidan Revolution, which happened not so long ago: as a spontaneous gathering of those opposed to the regime, who, through the genuine struggle against the "evil", become mature citizens able to claim their rights out loud. Represented by the most active participants who, according to my interviews, are homeowners in this area, often with some political connections in the city council, the *hromada* distinguished itself from the passive and destructive citizens who allegedly had been

CEU eTD Collection

used by politicians and the developer to provoke, scare, and discredit the protests. Those "others" were often identified as belonging to marginalised groups such as Roma, homeless and *Titushka*, but also renters presumed by some activists to avoid participation in community struggle[19].

Resembling the ethnography from Astana's *dvory* (Laszczkowski, 2015) and Nikhil Anand's "hydraulic citizenship" (2017), the *hromada,* in this case, also performs the invisible maintenance work of sustaining their recreation infrastructures, created for them by Soviet city-governing. Back then, everyday life infrastructures used to be sustained by the city through its departments. During the 1990s and since underfinanced municipal organs (KyivZelenBud, ZhEK, Pleso) largely neglected the task of taking care of municipal properties[20] and natural resorts, so locals did this work. Now this experience makes them claim their right to dispose of the place.

> *"The skate park is a public budget, our community collected signatures. It is a lie that our community did not ennoble the park, we are fighting for it, collecting funds. There is a basketball court, which [locals] auctioned, collected funds, and we organised it. And now the children have a place to play basketball. That is, we are ennobling the park here with our own efforts."* (Andrij, local resident and activist, a speech from the public gathering)

The *hromada*'s strategy to return the plot under the future "Nova Slobidka" project involved two main lines. Firstly, activists pursued court cases to return two plots of land which the developer rented back to the city. Without those, the developer would lose half of the territory and be deprived of access to the road; thus, the whole construction process would be

[19] Obviously, neither of these are the publics of this infrastructure since their purchasing ability is limited.

[20] Fedoriv and Lomonosova about how privatisation politics led to the decrease of maintenance costs allocated by the state and municipalities (2019).

CEU eTD Collection

impossible. Secondly, activists created an alternative project for this territory: the park “Zona Zdorovja” (Health Zone). To pursue this project, they won a contest, the “Hromadskyi Bjudzhet” (Public Budget[21]), for partial park reconstruction and improvement. As of August 2021, one of the protest leaders told me that the city had already included their park project in the new zoning plans and intended to buy out the developer’s plot.

To conclude, in the case of Kyiv’s anticonstruction protests, the publics triggered and “evoked” by infrastructures are better characterised as counterpublics. While the “publics” of housing infrastructure (buyers) reside in imaginary space, in reality, the only vocal and performative community directly relating to the infrastructure of the housing complex is the *hromada* of neighbours and locals, who actively oppose the construction.

IV.ii. Facades of the Air Castle

In 2016 *hromada* initiated the court case against construction on the developer’s private plot, arguing that the construction on the plot was situated within the coastal protection strip of the Dnipro River and damaged the landscape and historical monuments of local importance, called “Historical landscape of the Kyiv mountains and valleys of the Dnipro river". The case was successful, and in 2020, the court “arrested” the plot forbidding any construction on the territory (Dnipro District Court of Kyiv, 2020).

The 5-year rent agreement for municipal pieces of land was over in 2018, and allegedly because of *hromada*’s active protests, the municipality did not prolong the rent contract with the developer of “Nova Slobidka” (Kyiv Municipal Council, 2019). Nevertheless, the developer applied to the court to appeal the municipality's decision, claiming that he had a right to an

[21]The "Public Budget" initiative is a participatory process in which citizens of Kyiv and NGOs propose projects for inclusion in the city's annual budget for the following year. The selection of the winning project is determined through a multistage voting process that includes online voting by citizens during the initial stage.

CEU eTD Collection

automatic extension of the rent agreement as a "*dobrosovisnyj korystuvach"* (conscientious user).

I came into the field at the moment when the developer's appellation regarding the rented plots was in court. More importantly, on the 19th of July 2021, the court decision restricting the construction on his private plot was cancelled (Dnipro District Court of Kyiv, 2021). Sure of his right to continue exploiting the territory, on the night of the third of August 2021, the developer moved his heavy drilling and concrete mixing machinery into the construction site.

The machinery did not just wake up people in the middle of the night but also manifested the start of another wave of protest at the place. First, activists and their lawyers applied to the court against the developer, claiming that his machinery damages the *blahoustrij* (landscaping) of rented plots (since their official functional purpose was not meant for construction). Therefore, the developer could not be considered a "*dobrosovisnyj korystuvach"* (conscientious user), and his rent should not be prolonged. Secondly, locals united to create barricades so the machinery could not enter the construction site, thus delaying the work. As locals explained to me, the struggle at the moment was over the construction of a foundation and first floor. It was common sense knowledge among activists that as soon as the developer achieves that, the law will consider the construction site as a building, invoking a new set of rules. While barricades delayed the construction, people pursued a media campaign against the new development. The activists pushed the popular idea of creating a park on the riverbank in the already overcrowded neighbourhood to the front page. The solution promoted by the activists consisted of the municipality buying out the developer's plot in Mykilska Slobidka or exchanging it for a plot in a less problematic place.

Meanwhile, an advertisement for the housing complex appeared on the website LUN.UA, an online catalogue for apartments for sale in *novobudovy* all over Ukraine. As Larkin notes,

CEU eTD Collection

"infrastructures also exist as forms separate from their purely technical functioning [...] They emerge out of and store within them forms of desire and fantasy [...]" (2013, 329). Along these lines, one can observe precisely how the work of advertising uncovers the fantasies inscribed in housing projects on the website for the residential complex "Nova Slobidka".

The website for purchasing apartments in ZhK "Nova Slobidka" is a noteworthy example of the mechanism of advertising. According to Judit Williamson, advertisements function in two ways: they both sell and create structures of meaning (1978, p.11-12). What Williamson did not approach in her analysis, however, is the subject of history. Here I would like to combine her method of decoding advertisements with the current development of their production - digitalisation. The shift to digital forms allows to modify an advert in the process of its work. The peculiar example of the "Nova Slobidka" website shows how the developer incorporated some wishes of hromada into his advertisement, which then served his attempts to reach a beneficial agreement about the improvement of the territory.

Because of the powerful protests against the construction of "Nova Slobidka", the developer made several attempts to incorporate what he saw as the "demands of the local community" into the advertisement of his housing complex. First, he erased the essence of what was built: the phrase "residential complex" on the front page appears in small letters as if to eliminate the fear of the inflow of thousands of newcomers. This is an issue worth addressing since the population density of Kyiv was increasing through in-migration, and the apartments built and sold in the "economy" and "comfort" housing sector are meant for people originally from outside of Kyiv.

Instead, the developer characterised the future project as a "contemporary space with an improved zone of health" - appealing to locals, who claimed that new construction violated their right to access and use the "Health Zone" (a small park with a baseball field, skate park,

CEU eTD Collection

tables and benches as well as the beach). Throughout the advertising text, there are several appeals to locals. “Comfort and health of residents above everything! - Lead idea of a philosophy of Nova Slobidka” (opposing critiques that the development damages nature and, thus, locals' health). “Due to architectural solutions, the buildings dissolve into the panorama of the city” (answering to those who reproach the enormity of the future building and its imposition on the view of the Dnipro). “Also, there are no restrictions on access to the beach and water for the residents of the neighbourhood” (addressing the fear that by creating another gated community, the development will appropriate a significant part of the beach). “Improvement (*blahoustrij*) of the surrounding area for the residents of the neighbourhood” (an attempt to find a compromise in which locals still have their “Health Zone” while the developer invests money in its improvement, which is challenging to get from the municipality). Finally, “The residential complex not only maintains a healthy lifestyle of its residents but also improves the health of everyone around. The concept provides for improving the surrounding area for the neighbourhood residents with the arrangement of the park area, playgrounds and sports grounds and the Health Zone”. Activists considered these statements as “lies”.

Much like a fence, an advertisement hides its direct object here: housing not for a living but for a profit. However, it also obscures the nature of the object. For instance, it is proclaiming the ecological and aesthetic benefits of the new building for the whole community in the district, whose struggle actually proves the opposite effects of such a project.

CEU eTD Collection

IV.iii. Violence in the Void of the Air Castle

The locals and activists I interviewed perceived the construction of “Nova Slobidka” as a violation of their right to the city. Previously, I argued that residents of Mykilska Slobidka gained the self-perception of themselves as citizens through performing the collective care

work in the Health Zone. The members of hromada were mobilised to clean the area, sign petitions with the demand to create the park, and raise money to install the sports equipment and playground. These actions were narrated in a way that environmental rights (a wish to live in a place with clean air and water), citizenship (demanding transparent and participative decision-making in the city), and private property rights (that if one purchases housing with access to the nature, transport and educational infrastructures, these cannot be taken away) became entwined. However, the event which triggered all these narrations was in itself an act of violence - the land grabbing of what was perceived and used as a common place for the purpose of private development.

> *"For some time, everyone followed these norms that were indicated. And at the moment when they [the development representatives] started telling us that all these documents and laws are not an instruction to them, and to do what they want, we started to oppose this additionally... that is, at first, it [the protest] was for the green zone, then it was against the arbitrariness of what was happening when documents were falsified when the construction appeared. They showed a letter from some incomprehensible office that it was not the Dnipro River but the Desenka [a small river]. And they lauded this letter everywhere. Even though we made a request to the state water agency, and they explained that the river's channel is a river. It cannot be a finger that is not part of the hand, that is.. this is it.. well, that should be clear. And they say, look in Google, it's written there. That's exactly what they say in court! Therefore, when you understand that there is deception, and there is deception, and there is deception, then a normal person simply has the desire to stop it. [...] Because for me as a Kyivan, it hurts me to look at it [injustice].* (Viktoria, local resident)

CEU eTD Collection

The picture and narration of the dream housing complex hide something more significant, mainly the violence of the infrastructure. Rodgers and O'Neill (2012) employ the concept of "structural violence" to describe the double meaning of infrastructural violence in its active and passive invocations. Active violence is performed within infrastructures which are specifically created for the purpose of oppression, capturing, and exploitation. Prisons, borders, and refugee camps are vivid examples of active infrastructural violence. However, passive violence is more difficult to grasp; it appears within seemingly innocent or even benevolent infrastructures, like schools and hospitals, as described by Foucault. Here "violence becomes thinkable as an effect of what Farmer (2004, p.307) calls a 'social machinery of oppression': complex processes of production whose outcomes are objectionable, in which all members of society are implicated and yet whose effects are ostensibly nobody's fault" (2012, p.404). Thus, violence appears out of the constellation of rational society, where, despite sensible oppression, grasping the roots of injustice is still predominantly unattainable.

Another name for the effects of the "social machinery of oppression" may be found in Zizek's notion of "systemic violence" (2009), described as "the often catastrophic consequences of the smooth functioning of our economic and political systems" (ibid., p.1). Systemic violence, according to Zizek, is one of the two types of what he calls "objective violence" - that which is not direct physical violence but inherent in the system of domination and exploitation. Objective violence is difficult to grasp since it is perpetuated beyond the borders of individual and isolated problems. According to Zizek's distinction, another dimension of violence would be subjective violence - a direct physical act of violence whose subject is easily identified and whose actions are manifestly harmful.

Therefore, I delineate the injustice produced at the construction site in Mykilska Slobidka as twofold: first, it is the subjective violence of private bulldozers tearing up the common area and instalment of the fence. While I believe that the local struggles indicate the subjective

CEU eTD Collection

violence in this case - the land-grabbing event performed through the fencing and construction process, accompanied by the physical violence of the developer's security guards; the passive infrastructural and systemic objective violence arises from the entanglements of Ukrainian unjust housing politics, biassed city planning, and restricted system of municipal governance[22]. Thus, secondly, there is more hidden, passive violence of housing as infrastructure (Rodgers & O'Neill, 2012, pp.406-407), which overlaps with the domain of Zizek's objective systemic violence.

Real estate advertising hides the structure of accumulation by dispossession in the housing market in Kyiv. This is a term coined by David Harvey in his work "The New Imperialism" (2003), where he describes some principles of the neoliberal developments of the 20th century. Accumulation by dispossession refers to Marx's idea of primitive accumulation, although taking place within neoliberalism. A grabbing of previously public lands with the consequent privatisation is one of the instances of accumulation by dispossession. The post-Soviet state of land governance in urban areas in Ukraine is a picturesque example of such. The territories previously owned by a municipality or a state industry and functioned as publicly-owned spaces become privatised and sold to private individuals who use them in their private profit interests. In Mykilska Slobidka, although evolving in a legal space of courts, this process deprives the local population not only of access to the territory but, more importantly for *hromada*, of the recreation opportunities they used to have before. That is how the dispossession happens through the enclosure of "wasteful" lands and "creative destruction" of workers' neighbourhoods (Brenner & Theodore, 2002, p.371). Framing the plot for the housing complex as the potential for capital investment is intrinsically linked to framing the riverbank as an intrinsic element of the socialist mikrorajon as wasteful.

[22] Although not only this, because the construction site in Ukraine is also a place where informal labour occurs, leading to the violence towards construction workers. However, it is not the object of this study.

CEU eTD Collection

Following this, one can consider the violence of the financialisation of housing as related to the dispossession. Housing, which was a public and decommodified part of the socialist welfare system, was first privatised and since then has been financialised within the last three decades. The financialisation of housing means that it ceases to be a home or even a commodity that gives profit in the production process, but that housing becomes another financial asset (Aalbers, 2016). The financialisation came alongside the speculation: there appeared strata of "investors" who would benefit from the differences in price between the flat under construction and the completed one[23].

Moreover, another feature of financialisation is that a collectively appreciated way to behave on the housing market is to purchase a property rather than rent it. As Aalbers mentions, among the features of post-Fordian flexible neoliberalism - the discourse of "tenants are losers" prevails in this kind of society - which is also the case in Ukraine. The rental market is deregulated in the eyes of officials but, in reality, informal. However, this shadow economy of rents is, at the same time, the factor which sustains the speculation market of real estate ownership. Precisely because the taxation in the rental business could be avoided and the taxation of property (real estate and land) is low (as described in subchapter III.II.) and does not depend on the amount of property a person has or the value of the property, real estate gives extreme profits. A rented-out flat used to pay off in 10-15 years, a reselling - to bring 30-50% of pure profit.

Similarly, the landscape of large cities has become dominated by construction cranes and the high-rise housing stock of *novobudova*. Due to this overproduction, the cases of unfinished

[23] For instance, I assessed the data available on the largest website for housing market in Ukraine, LUN.UA, and summed up the next data about Mykilska Slobidka. In January 2022 in Dniprovskyi rayon (to which Mykilska Slobidka belongs) average price for investment in 1 sq.m. of a flat in novobudova was 1100$. In January 2023, even despite the war, the reselling price for 1 sq.m. of just constructed flat in novobudova is between 1500$ and 1800$. The revenue for the timely investment is 20000-35000$ from a 50sq.m. apartment.

CEU eTD Collection

constructions multiplied as well. This was leaving behind people who invested in the hope of a decent dwelling and municipalities that had to deal with both: the popular infuriation of "investors" and the outrage of locals. In her research, Lyasheva (2019) warned about the finiteness of the construction boom and pointed to a couple of cases proving that (big developer companies are "freezing" their construction projects). By the end of 2020, there were already 70 large unfinished "frozen" housing projects in Kyiv alone.

The locals of Mykilska Slobidka have experienced the consequences of the housing construction over the years and have no positive expectations related to it anymore. Since new housing complexes tend to create gated enclaves, their appearance does not help to improve the whole district. Instead, it often worsens the existing condition since local social (kindergartens, schools and hospitals) and transport infrastructures become overwhelmed by the inflow of new residents. Not to mention the literal destruction of the green zone and resort area, as in the instance of Mykilska Slobidka.

To conclude, the passive violence of housing as infrastructure is a part of systemic violence occurring in the sphere of housing policy, which is occupied with the interests of the construction sector. The resistance in Mykilska Slobidka occurs as a reaction to unjust city planning and obscure land allocation, which happens on behalf of private housing development. The physical violence of land fencing, together with the clashes between local people and hired security guards, is just the starting point for the unveiling the housing production structure, making this direct violence possible and barely avoidable.

CEU eTD Collection

Conclusion

"One person's infrastructure is another's topic or difficulty", pointed out Susan Star (1999, p.380). The construction site of a future housing complex in Mykilska Slobidka demonstrates the intricate position of housing as infrastructure in the post-socialist city. The construction site

of *novobudova* “Nova Slobidka” offers a dream of ownership in a glossy wrapper of an “Air Castle”. The advertised comfortable living with a view of the Dnipro and in proximity to all the transport, social and leisure infrastructures is indeed a peculiar reference system (Williamson, 1978) of post-socialist, privatist culture, where public space is privately owned and used. However, the advertisement obscures reality by simultaneously exploiting the public representation of the city. The “Air Castle” rejects the history of the space (the preexisting socialist planning of the area), ignores its production (material reality of the place, i.e. ground waters), avoids the embeddedness in the context (misinterpreting publics and their needs, or speaking to non-existent or imaginary publics), and hides the violence of the housing production.

At the same time, the tension between the new way to produce housing and the high public expectations towards the quality of the built environment manifests itself in the local anticonstruction protests. The residents of Mykilska Slobidka relatively successfully instrumentalised the narrative of “community” and democratic rule to engage the municipality in the conflict on their side. Whenever the developer of “Nova Slobidka” acquired new leverages in the courts, *hromada* opposed him with the alternative project of the publicly accepted development.

CEU eTD Collection

Chapter V. Horbachykha and Rusanivski Sady: The Construction of Podilsko-Voskresenskyi Bridge and its Repercussions

"It is very important to see why the hromada is protesting. Not against building a bridge. I mean, we understand that this happened and that it [bridge] is being built. But there is some legislation that they [authorities] have to follow" (Galyna, resident of Rusanivski Sady)

This chapter introduces the key motives pushing the *hromada* of Rusanivski Sady and their supporters to oppose the "construction" of the Podilsko-Voskresenskyi bridge passing through the natural tract of Horbachykha and *dacha*-type housing on Rusanivski Sady. Bracketing the word "construction" allows me to broaden its meaning from the direct technical understanding of the act to the construction as a process embedded in, involving within and influencing complex historical, economic and social contexts. Thus, the community's opposition to the infrastructural construction, presented by the municipality as publicly beneficial, bears a peculiar convergence of post-socialist municipal governance, disjointed institution of private property, merging of nationalist agenda with Ukrainian grassroots social movements, and neoliberal commodification of nature.

The development of this area was predefined by a Soviet general plan, the last edition of which was published in 1986. One of the necessary improvements in Kyiv, planned by Soviet Ukrainian planners, was the construction of the fourth metro line, which would connect the already existing and densely populated neighbourhoods on the right (Vynogradar, Podil) and left (Troeshchyna, Voskresenka, Raiduzhnyi) banks of Dnipro. The bridge, meant to be the focal point of this plan, was simultaneously a part of another more ambitious aim - to construct

CEU eTD Collection

the largest arch bridge in Europe. Thus, the placement of this bridge was dictated by the task of "achievement" rather than by the economy. It is indeed demonstrably true that the mundane residential projects of *mikrorajons* had to be systemically economised upon due to the financial constraints of the construction in the UkrSSR. Meanwhile, individual exemplary infrastructural projects tended to overdo themselves for the pure sake of demonstrating the superiority of socialist production.

The project of the Podilsko-Voskresenskyi bridge has remained intact and heavily invested in until now. It is not a coincidence since the way Kyiv's socialist infrastructures have been developed after the dissolution of the USSR come close to Tania Li's understanding of neoliberal improvement, which in no way aims at the revolutionary transformation of society, but: "more often programs of intervention are pulled together from an existing repertoire, a matter of habit, accretion, and bricolage" (2007, p.6). As well as extracting money from the city budget for over 30 years since independence, the bridge is still employed as an influential political project by every new city mayor. The bridge and its construction constitute an exemplary story of "actually-existing neoliberalism" (Theodore & Brenner, 2002). In particular, the interaction (ibid., p.357) between the neoliberal restructuring of the city, the inherited framework of Soviet territorial development, and social turbulence that lies at the core of the case depicted here.

The bridge project had almost been completed when the war started. Two areas - the natural tract of Horbachykha and *dachne tovarystvo* Rusanivski Sady - are located directly on its way. The concerns raised by activists from the #SaveHorbachykha movement and residents of Rusanivski Sady touch upon where the exits from the bridge will be located and, consequently, if they will direct traffic through the territory of Horbachykha or Rusanivski Sady.

CEU eTD Collection

V.i. Zoning the Nature: Prologue to the Story of Dispossession

In 1994 the territory of the natural tract Horbachykha, alongside other Dnipro islands and natural sites, was included in the list of landscape monuments with the Decision of Kyiv City Council "On the creation, preservation and conservation of territories and objects of the natural reserve fund in Kyiv" (№14). The territory of Horbachykha was recognised as an important Ukrainian natural monument and a larger ecosystem, protected by the "Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats". The Bern Convention aims to preserve the original flora and fauna on an extensive European territory by protecting, besides others, the migration paths of species. As activists told me, Horbachykha is a place where birds that migrate seasonally stay on their way. The official #SaveHorbachykha Facebook page collects various kinds of birds, turtles, and beavers inhabiting the forested area. Indeed, apart from the uniquely preserved example of Dnipro's flora and fauna, many wildlife river-based protected species find their way through Horbachykha.

For locals from Rusanivski Sady, though, the neighbouring natural Horbachykha provides a natural border between them and the city, creating a feeling of the countryside, which is simultaneously not far from the urbanised area. Fresh air, closeness to nature, hidden beaches and fishing spots make locals use the area for recreation and leisure. It is also a common practice to bring children here for the summer season so they spend some time "outside the city". Thus, it is no wonder that the construction of the metro bridge threatens not only the ecosystem formed in Horbachykha but also the quality of life of people in the adjacent area.

The "legislation that they [authorities] have to follow" is, therefore, both the laws protecting nature, but also the laws protecting private property. In the case of protesting against the construction of the Podilsko-Voskresenskyi bridge, both claims come together in an interflow. The next subchapter discusses the rights of private property, whereas now I would like to lay

CEU eTD Collection

out the story of complaints between the transnational European institution of the Bern Convention, #SaveHorbachykha activists and the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture.

Horbachykha appears in the register of Bern Convention complaints in 2021 (European Council) under the number 2020/01, marked with a "Stand-by" status. In the report by the complainant (#SaveHorbachykha Activist Movement, 2021), activists identify the case as "a war of the city authorities with the community", in which developers appear to play an instrumental role. "The tactic is typical for Kyiv: first they [Kyiv authorities] neglect an area, and then they welcome developers who would, supposedly, clean the mess." (ibid, p.2). The complaint tells in detail about the recent cases of attack on the natural reserve: from damaging individual trees to attempting arson. Moreover, the activists blame Kyivzelenbud - a municipal enterprise that manages all city green areas - of manipulations with zoning prescriptions, which reduce the territory of Horbachykha to a couple of hectares and call it "a park" (ibid, p.3).

The role of municipal institutions in the conflict, indeed, is not limited to the disputable decisions of Kyiv's government. Here in Horbachykha, which is a natural reserve on municipal land, several public enterprises are involved in the "maintenance" of the area. Kyivzelenbud and Kyivvodokanal are the most critical executive actors. Both of these institutions are known by people for their corrupt policing practices. For instance, Kyivzelenbud numerous times appeared in scandals for damaging the trees in a way which would lead to their death, allowing development companies to take over the place (Tyzhden.ua, 2013; Melnyk, 2017; Gryshchenko, 2021). Damaging trees, purchasing decorative trees that do not survive the winter in the Ukrainian climate, and producing short-lived decorative expositions for millions of Hryvnias are practices associated with Kyivzelenbud. Meanwhile, Kyivvodokanal, a municipal enterprise managing water and canalisation infrastructures, is, in the case of Horbachykha, responsible for the illegal sewage emissions in this natural reserve. My informants showed me a spot on the shore of Dnipro in Horbachykha where Kyivvodokanal

CEU eTD Collection

poured sewage directly into the river without any preventive filtration. As they explained, Kyivvodokanal did not allow any investigation on its property, safely paying low fines instead.

In the eyes of activists, although all of these actions indirectly benefited developers' interests, the actual criminal was the corrupt municipality and its institutions. “We are even more convinced that international support is the key to breaking the vicious circle of corruption within Ukrainian authorities that is impacting ecology so negatively” (#SaveHorbachykha Activist Movement, 2021, p.5). In order to fight the decisions of the municipality, activists developed a large circle of acquaintances among city deputies, ecologists, media and even in development companies. Jakobsson and Saxonberg call this phenomenon “transactional activism”. They explain it as a situation when “movement actors manage to build productive relationships with institutional actors” (2015). The resourcefulness of the Ukrainian anticonstruction movement is indeed a meaningful characteristic, which primarily adds to the movement’s visibility and success. For instance, the struggle of #SaveHorbachykha activists was broadcasted several times on national TV, not to mention local news.

The answer to the complaint - “Report by the government” - by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine gives little explanation. Signed by Deputy Minister for European Integration, it states that although Horbachykha was reserved for the creation of a protected area in 1995 (78,4 hectares), “to further work toward the protected status of this site, the public may prepare a petition, which must be agreed with the natural resources’ users within the areas recommended to be protected”. These “resource users” are Kyivzelenbud, Kyivvodokanal and developers, who rent out some of Horbachykha’s territories from the city, waiting until it is possible to change the status of the territory. The ministry also informed the Secretary of the Bern Convention about the new protected areas created in Kyiv.

CEU eTD Collection

However, as activists from neighbouring Rusanivski Sady have noticed, some sites were excluded from the list of territories reserved for protection one by one. This process was not public and in breach of a regulation which should have been done by a different institutional body. The decision to exclude these sites from the list was made by the Kyiv City Council in 2006 (№ 628/3089), despite that the territory was reserved for protection from 1994 and, thus, the Department of Culture was formally responsible for the natural reserve and would have to approve the decision. With this decision of the Kyiv City Council to ensure the construction of the Podilsko-Voskresenskyi Bridge, the protected territory of Horbachykha was reduced from 78,4 to 32 hectares.

As of 2021, in the public cadastre map (which was hidden from the public in 2022 due to the war), 29.4 hectares of Horbachykha land above the bridge were zoned as "For other residential buildings for the construction, operation and maintenance of a shopping and office centre, residential and office and hotel complexes with underground and surface parking lots" (cadastre number 8000000000:66:054:0025). Although in cadastre, the area was in communal property, it has been rented by a private development firm, "Construction Cross-Industry Alliance", since 2007, and the city extended this rent in 2018 despite the protests of activists, who claimed that the firm was purposely destroying trees in the natural reserve.

To conclude, the way and courage with which residents of Rusanivski Sady defend their ecological rights exemplify the ideas of democracy and citizenship that international organisations are trying to plant in post-Soviet countries. In this example, the Ukrainian government and its representatives in Kyiv constitute the main anti-hero since they cannot harness the interests of private developers for them to act according to the law.

CEU eTD Collection

V.ii. Entanglements of Communal and Private Property in Kyiv's City Planning

"At the time, I had no idea what it was or who it was. Here. Then, over time, I learned that this territory was leased to Igor Nikonov [KAN Development]. That the lease was, in fact, illegal because, mysteriously, there was a "change in the designation of the land". That there were no public hearings, scientific justifications, nothing of it because this territory is part of a bigger "landscape monument."

(Oksana, activist and resident of Rusanivski Sady)

The pace of the Ukrainian privatisation process was characterised as slow compared to that of its neighbours (Elborgh-Woytek & Lewis, 2002). Although some research was done about the privatisation of state enterprises, we need more data about real estate privatisation. Notably, the privatisation is not formally finished yet. In 2011 the minister claimed that "92% of citizens have already privatised [their housing], but 8% - did not" (tsn.ua, 2011). His urge was to announce that privatisation was completed since "An effective owner is the most important thing that will give the prospect of a domestic housing economy" (ibid). This leads to why so many people have not yet privatised their properties.

As scholars show, privatising the flat rarely meant the change of owner's relationship with that property. Since the flats were privatised by sitting tenants who could already in the USSR exchange, inherit, and unofficially subrent their apartments while not being responsible for the building itself, people rarely changed how they behaved with their newly acquired private properties. The only new feature would be the possibility to sell the flat according to the market rules; however, in Gentile's account from Stakhanov, 70% of people continued to occupy the same flat 20 years after the dissolution of the USSR (2015). Thus, people sometimes did not see a purpose in dealing with the privatisation offers. Similarly, the privatisation of *dachi* (in

CEU eTD Collection

plural), garages, and dormitories was even more lagging since these were more important to their users for their use-value and less for exchange-value due to the stagnating economy. Therefore, the tendency was that such entities would be considered for "privatising" officially only if a family needed to sell them.

This brings us to the point where the bridge's construction could be postponed because of the obstacles created by the "transition". The socialist state, relying on the planned economy and absence of private property, had all the instruments and mechanisms needed to build a bridge through the territory of the *dachnyi cooperatyv*. Because people in the USSR were "renting" *dachi* and did not own them, they were expected to leave. The current Kyiv governing faced the problem that some people did not privatise their *dacha*, although they resided there and "owned it" through this fact (considering that the privatisation was encouraged but not coerced). Thus, as one of the interviewees told me, the juridical impossibility for the city to purchase a property which was not privatised - thus not a private property - created a problem of resettling these people. As a result, some people who lived in a non-privatised *dacha* gained leverage over the municipality because they had not privatised the *dacha* yet. They had not made a property out of it, which could be sold, exchanged, or confiscated.

The irony of the construction of the bridge is that although the project might have been beneficial for the city's development, at the same time, it created a problem for people whose homes and quality of life were undermined. The construction logic was not as "beneficial" for the whole society as users of NIMBY-slur would like to think. Mayor of Kyiv, Vitalii Klytchko, expressed his frustration with the residents of Rusanivski Sady who "block a project of a national scale and importance", referring to the Podilsko-Voskresenskyi bridge, whereas the residents themselves publicly state that they are fighting not against the bridge, but the way this construction was undertaken and performed.

CEU eTD Collection

Providing Molotch's theory of growth coalitions (1976) with a local example, Pavlo Fedoriv tells a typical story of Kyiv's development. In the 1990s, Kyiv's planners purposefully proceeded with developing the "Green" metro line to the "empty" territories of the left bank instead of providing the already established neighbourhoods on the right bank with railway transport. This was done to raise the demand and profitability of the housing built there (Fedoriv, 2018). Similarly, the fourth metro line to the distant *mikrorajons* on the left bank makes sense to Kyiv's municipality, considering that the empty lands (of the natural tract and probably *dachne tovarystvo*') could be profitably developed.

The principle of creative destruction could be seen in full power here. What was destroyed were the remnants of the previous economic system, which would allow such occurrences as *dachi* for workers within the city and the natural belt around residential neighbourhoods. What will replace the Soviet urban structure is the perspective of profitable development in these areas. Thus, in such examples, I see the systemic tendency and not an accident as would be suggested by the "corruption" discourse.

However, from the conversations with residents of Rusanivski Sady, I understood that they are, indeed, not protesting against the construction of the bridge, but against being deprived of their property rights - being compensated for their property according to market prices, being considered equal actors based on private ownership. For instance, one of the well-documented clashes between locals and construction workers with police during the construction of the bridge happened when construction machinery was moving to the construction site (Telekanal Kyiv, 2020). Locals became furious that "their" road was used by heavy vehicles, which could damage the road. Why "their"? Because the road was not central and predominantly used by local residents. The municipality did not renovate it for decades until people gathered money and hired a construction firm to renovate the road. The personal funds and effort people put in Rusanivski Sady, in contrast to the neglect of the state, in the perception of the locals, makes

CEU eTD Collection

the road “owned” by them, although officially, it belongs to everyone. Ironically, when the housing is still perceived by some people as “mine” although not privatised, in this example, something “public” is considered “private”. This example illustrates the strengthening of autonomy and self-protection in post-socialist *dacha* communities alongside Olga Shevchenko’s account of Novogradnoe (Shevchenko, 2018, p.139). The scholar assesses the specific understanding of “private” and “public” in the spatial politics of such places as “capitalist in form, but distinctly (post)socialist in content” (ibid, p.140).

This leads to the question if it is possible to oppose private property and democracy to the central economy and collectivity. As Monica Eppinger observes in her research on the agricultural land privatisation in Ukraine, the reform destroyed the material means that used to constitute collectives; meanwhile, “collective identity remained” (2017, p.882). In her case, the materiality of the collective was achieved through the state organising everyday activities like regular film screenings and dances, but also with the supply of the necessary equipment to a farm. Both productive and social infrastructures were ruined, leading to the disintegration of collective life, which in most cases resulted in “ghost towns” (2017). Notably, Eppinger emphasises that while a “ghost town” was less productive in economic figures, it was “remarkably more democratic, with local property owners enjoying greater political power than in the [socialist] past” (ibid., p.886). Although there could not be made any direct comparison, the social life of Rusanivski Sady was also disintegrating after *dachnyi kooperativ* lost its grounding in the workers' collective of the factory, which originally distributed the lands among people. Since in Kyiv parameters, Rusanivski Sady could be called a relatively underdeveloped area while very consolidated and bounded; it is also not accidental that local property owners became a viable political voice in the face of danger to their properties and, consequently, rights.

CEU eTD Collection

Violation of private property rights and, thus, democracy is at stake to the vocal residents of the neighbourhood. “The way they [authorities] do it” is wrong, not the principle. However, how then did the municipality persuade some people to leave?

V.iii. The Instrumentalisation of Class and Race: The Case of Modern *Blockbusting* in Kyiv

> *"If anthropologists deny themselves the power (because it implies a privileged position) to identify an ill or a wrong and choose to ignore (because it is not pretty) the extent to which dominated people sometimes play the role of their own executioners, they collaborate with the relations of power and silence that allow the destruction to continue."*
>
> (Scheper-Hughes, 1995, p.419)

> *“Once flourishing neighbourhood Rusanivski Sady is turning into a gipsy camp” (TV host, INTER, 2012)*

This subchapter is dedicated to the human level of the bridge construction process. The relationships established between the municipality, the community and its constitutive others were highly emotional and nuanced. The bridge construction, indeed, was a personal and very emotional issue for residents of Rusanivski Sady because of the immediate effects of the process on their everyday lives.

As interviewed people identified it, the unjust way Kyiv authorities decided to pursue the construction was probably driven by the logic of reducing costs and achieving the goal with the most negligible economic loss to the campaign. Residents were not necessarily opposed to the construction; they wanted (market-) fair compensation for the relocation. Instead, the municipality executives employed methods of deception and fear. Galyna told me that initially, the municipality assigned some housing for the relocated households. However, people did not

CEU eTD Collection

get those. Instead, there was an instance when the same flat was shown separately to different residents of Rusanivski Sady, implying that this flat would compensate for the relocation if a person signed the papers immediately. Similar method - substitution of agreement - was used when dealing with the older generation: "*There were cases when they came to people and said: 'Sign', - 'But the children told me not to sign, I will not sign', - 'Well, do you know that you will be evicted from here?' - the person says: 'I know', - 'Well, sign that you know', - and the person signed* [the agreement to the relocation]*."* My informants presumed that the reason behind this unfair, deceptive way of making people leave was the inherent corruption of the bureaucratic apparatus in Kyiv and Ukraine in general.

My informants were very expressive when talking about the methods used to make people stop protesting. For one, in Galyna's opinion, authorities tried to produce a feeling of fear among residents and activists. Being one of my main informants and a respectable activist, Galyna provided a comprehensive story of the construction and protesting, which she supported with video documentations. For example, some houses of people who agreed to leave the place were demolished right away: "*Such pressure, such demonstrative demolition of areas that the people have not yet freed. That is, a person signed a contract, and immediately a bulldozer came and broke through the locks. That is, people did not even have time to take out their belongings."* Moreover, for others, older residents, the fear of shame: "*That is, imagine if a person worked there at the enterprise, was a leader in production, a veteran of labour, or whatever it was called, had some awards. Here comes some bully and says: 'We will sue you!', and a person:* [further emotionally] *'Me? Me (in Soviet times) and the court? How is that - putting me in the court? I will do anything to avoid such a stain!'. [...] In other words, a simple horror was happening here".* Threatening, blackmailing, lying to residents - all of these tactics were employed officially and unofficially by authorities to secure the construction of the Podilsko-Voskresenskyi bridge through the neighbourhood of Rusanivski Sady.

CEU eTD Collection

It is worth noting that the bridge construction also led to the demolishing the workers' dormitory on Rybalskyi Island (Kryzhanivskyi & Stezhka, 2019). However, that case got little attention. The dormitory's residents, “Leninska Kuznia”, were evicted silently without any compensation, which, in my opinion, points to the dependency between property ownership and access to publicity in Ukrainian society.

However, there was a more extreme case. Allegedly, the municipality instrumentalised the classicist and racist tensions in Ukrainian society to evoke feelings of fear and danger among residents of *dachne tovarystvo*.

“*The whole horror of this situation is that the [Soviet] intelligentsia lives here, and they were so unprepared for such arrogance, such cynicism, with which the Kyiv authorities treated these people, they were simply not ready for it. And the fact that the gipsies were settled here by city planners, we have no doubts at all, because we repeatedly appealed to the police (then there was still a police force), wrote letters, called and no one responded, no one did anything at all. [...] That's how it all was. Such was the massive pressure, and it was all in the press.*”

“They brought the gipsies here, the gipsies just entered the house, where the owners are and everything, they just turned over everything there, [...], they stole everything, just settled in with huge families, camped there. Then, in a film [...] a representative of the Kyiv City Administration comes and says, "Well, the rumours about the stubbornness of the residents of the Rusanivski Sady are a huge exaggeration; in fact, the gipsies did everything for us."

Galyna, resident and activist of Rusanivski Sady

Indeed, the situation of having Roma as neighbours horrified Galyna to such an extent that this was a topic repeated several times in our conversations. Her account is that the municipality

CEU eTD Collection

purposefully allowed a couple of Roma families to settle in empty houses of some evicted people to scare the rest. Her memory of the story was that Roma began stealing metal from nearby houses, and they polluted the area. Similarly to the phenomenon of "blockbusting" in the post-war USA, in this case, Roma were used to scare the people who were already prejudiced against them. While it is difficult to say who was responsible for the situation, it benefited both - the municipality in its goal to evict people and the long-term local developers who have been renting a part of Horbachykha for a decade already. Activists say that parallelly to the bridge's construction, the properties of Rusanivski Sady are bought up cheaply to be resold to big developers later.

What, however, Galyna did not tell me while expressing in detail the whole "horror" of the situation with Roma taking over the abandoned houses was the fact that on the 27th of April 2018 (7 years after Roma first appeared in the neighbourhood) the neo-nazi group Nemezida[24] set on fire Roma homes in Rusanivski Sady, killing four Roma children (Obozrevatel, 2018). The case appeared in the press, as journalists found video footage of young guys spilling petrol inside Roma's houses which was published by the Nemezida themselves. This case was one of many in 2018 when neonazi groups attacked Roma settlements in Kyiv (Lysa Hora), Zakarpattia, and Lviv, destroying homes and beating and killing Roma. Notably, all of these were done not only in the name of racist ideals but also "to protect the city". In the case of the arson of Roma homes in Rusanivski Sady, neonazis explicitly stated their intention to help locals. Although nobody from the local activists voiced support for the pogrom in the media, I find it difficult to ignore that this truly horrific event was in no way revealed to me in the very detailed story by my knowledgeable informant.

[24] Self-described as "a group of nationalists and concerned citizens, who are tired of playing political correctness, shaking over their own image. We are the ones who will clean the streets of our cities from neo-Bolshevik and left-liberal rot. We are among you"

CEU eTD Collection

The image of civil society, enforced by the media, was the image of entering Roma's home: securing oneself while undermining the security of the other. Indeed, the public sphere of anticonstruction protests was not an "alternative" as in Frolich's Russia (2019); it did not need to hide. The problem posed by civil society representatives was not about the private developers; it was the "corruption" - violation of their private property, not enough liberalism, not enough active citizenship. Several of my informants shared their opinions about the relatively low participation in the protests, compared to the number of residents of the neighbourhood. Some explained this with a surprisingly popular opinion that "only 5% of people in any society are active; others are the obedient mass" (Serhij, resident of Mykilska Slobidka). Others just acknowledged that their neighbours might have more urgent tasks in their everyday life, being occupied with a family and making a living. However, most of the interviewed people expressed hope for the future strengthening of activism and civil society.

Indeed, "active citizenship", for Niamh Gaynor (2009), seems "as a salve to many of the social ills of our time. Emphasising citizen's own responsibilities, and espousing values of solidarity, community, and neighbourliness, active citizenship embodies all that is good, rendering it somewhat immune from criticism". Ivasiuc develops this idea with regard to what it projects onto the lives of "others": "If the onus is on the individual to change her own situation, then failure to become an „active citizen" through improving one's life conditions is no longer imputable to the state. The syntagm emerges in the trail left by the state in its retreat in the neoliberal era." (Ivasiuc, 2015, p.14). In the violent situation discussed previously in this subchapter, Roma are those who fail to perform their citizenship, not to mention the "active" citizenship.

Active citizens do not wait for the state to build the communal road - they do it themselves. They organise, raise money and hire a construction company. Active citizens do not wait for the state to protect their ecology; they organise to clean and defend the trees. Indeed, this proper

CEU eTD Collection

liberal narrative reflects the other side of the discourse, including a narrative about "passive" "Soviet" citizens. A foundational principle of a civil community is based on the exclusion and is working to solve the issues of a selected group of people. Furthermore, those who are not part of this group become easily instrumentalised as enemies.

The left screenshot above was taken from the video cited in References as Inter, 2012; the right screenshot is taken from one of Nemezida's videos from the Obozrevatel, 2018 "U Kyjevi pidpalyly budynok romiv: z"javylosja perše video."

What strikes me is the similar way in which Roma's homes are treated and portrayed both in news media and in the neo-nazi's social media. Roma are denied privacy and security of their own homes. The first screenshot shows a moment when a reporter enters and films Roma's home without permission in 2012, commenting for the audience, "As you can see, adults are not home". In the second screenshot, far-right "activists" in 2018 entered a similar home "without adults" in the same area to set it on fire, killing four children and not being prosecuted.

Roma people are denied the right to have a home as a shelter and as a place of socialisation. Since their homes might not be their private property, they remain in public space, to enter which uninvited is no shame neither for a news media reporter nor the far-right "activists". At

CEU eTD Collection

the same time, since "grassroots Roma movement" members are deprived of or avoid active participation in the established political process, they do not exist as citizens for the civil society publics either. The same way that it is acknowledged that Roma were used by authorities to produce fear among locals, Roma are constituted as deprived of agency and thus do not deserve rights in the society of active citizens.

Media studies researcher Olga Baysha argues that "the logic of self-proclaimed rightness nourished by progressivism and impregnated with intolerance for the 'undeserving' does not characterise the extremes of the political spectrum exclusively – it is also present within the 'democratic' discourses of those people who do not align themselves with ultra-rightist, ultra-leftist or any extremist forces." (2015, p.14). Indeed, the narrative of "deservingness" got a new layer of meaning in Ukraine nowadays. It is not only that active citizens are deserving since they fight for justice in a corrupted state. It is also that some groups of people are easily framed as "undeserving" or even "deserving their bad fate" with the very same discursive act.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown the complexities of urban development, which were enmossed with various contradictions. Given that the project of the Podilsko-Voskresenskyi bridge was initially planned, counting on its spectacular effects, the spectacle of its construction has taken unexpected turns. Starting with the bridge as "the biggest *nedobud* in Kyiv", following with it being one of the most expensive projects because of numerous scandals associated with funds allocation for the construction. However, the scale of this project also makes its completion a matter of time, understood by locals and activists. Such protests as in Horbachykha and Rusanivski Sady demonstrate the complex character of the anticonstruction movement: residents realised that the publicly beneficial project was more beneficial to the private developers, who have already taken care of renting our large communal territory of

CEU eTD Collection

Horbachykha, than to the local publics that has to deal with the process and consequences of the project. At the same time, activists employ more powerful narratives: about the ecological damage to Horbachykha brought by the construction; the inefficient process of engineering and construction, complemented with numerous corruption cases; destruction of the vibrant community. The public appeals are directly and indirectly addressed to the Western institutions of global influence, which, in a way, are believed to provide leverage in a struggle against the local government.

CEU eTD Collection

Chapter VI. Discussion

A sense of confusion associated with post-socialist countries also finds its way into the theoretical scholarship. The protracted socialist institutional legacy, physical environment and everydayness intersect with the accelerated establishment of a market economy, a new political regime and the strengthening of civil society discourse. Thus, alongside the privatisation and financialisation of housing in Ukraine, urban grassroots activisms appear to contest new construction projects and are seen as the spring of the democratic aspirations from below (Frölich, 2017; Darieva, T. & Neugebauer, 2019).

The thesis explored some ideas about the nature of anticonstruction activism in Ukraine and its relation to the broader political and economic context. In this concluding chapter, I would like to lay out the ideas which found their grounding in the research - limited both in space and time - which I conducted in Mykilska Slobidka, Horbachykha and Rusanivski Sady.

The socialist materiality embedded in *mikrorajons* accommodates a particular everydayness persistent through the past 30 years of neoliberalisation processes. The "default" set of ideas about a good standard of living is tightly connected to the experience of residing in a socialist *mikrorajon*. Despite the post-socialist reality of deteriorating housing stock, shrinking public infrastructures and overburdening of transport, *mikrorajons* continue to deliver essential services such as communal kindergartens, schools, libraries, hospitals, cinemas, post offices, and playgrounds. In contrast to the organisation of space in *novobudovy*, these facilities are available to everyone. Thus, no wonder that for some time, developers used to rely on the preexisting services formed back in the UkrSSR and rarely provided new facilities instead. They were "free-riders" on the infrastructure of state socialism. However, the overexploitation of the social infrastructures is expected to culminate in either the state taking over the situation and providing new facilities or the reformation of the construction legislation, which would

CEU eTD Collection

find a way to oblige developers to provide the services. None of these was taking place; therefore, one could find anticonstruction activism as a logical outburst of widespread dissatisfaction with the incoherence of the city development.

My first argument is that anticonstruction protests are springing from the neoliberal governing of post-socialist cities, which merges developers' interests with the state housing policy, excluding locals from decision-making. In order to prove this, in the third chapter, I described the conditions of the homeownership-oriented housing policy in Ukraine. These conditions include high and peaking levels of residential construction even through the crises with the government support of homeowners, investors and developers, which consists of low land rent, low or absent property tax, freeing a developer to invest in the public infrastructures, numerous low-interest state mortgages for various groups of investors. This policy has been gradually established throughout the last 30 years, leaving behind the development of social housing, neglecting the fully private and unregulated rental market or any other alternative option of housing provision. These incentives of the central government were driven by the goal of mitigating the influence of crises on the real estate market and construction sector to support capital investments in these. The constellation of homeownership-oriented housing policy, together with the support of the construction sector dominated by private developing companies, create a "spatial fix" (Harvey, 2006), which exploits the "wasteful" manner of socialist city planning to decrease the spendings on social and public infrastructures for both the government and the private developers. In this way, accumulation happens both territorially through the occupation of previously socialist spaces of *mikrorajons* but also through the overburdening of services planned in *mikrorajons*. Consequently, through neoliberal accumulation, dwellers of socialist districts are deprived of the planned benefits and living standards.

CEU eTD Collection

Meanwhile, on the level of local city government, the abovementioned policy found its way into rewriting the principles of zoning and city planning. First, eliminating subgovernance in Kyiv in 2010 limited the public's access to decision-making, even on the level of neighbourhoods. As I show in the case of Mykilska Slobidka, almost exclusively those groups of anticonstruction activists, who obtain resources (connections, time and finances), can expect to get the attention of the deputies of Kyiv City Council. Secondly, outdated and inaccessible to the public, the General Plan allows speculation with zoning. So, activists have to initiate court cases to combat the unlawful decisions of predecessors and hire lawyers to find out the actual legal status of the contested territory.

Secondly, anticonstruction protests are indirectly based on the experience of socialist urban everyday life, predefined in the concept of *mikrorajon*: social infrastructures at a short distance from home. Socialist urban governance regime had its own shortcomings, which resulted in housing inequalities (although not as severe as in capitalist economies): for instance, state factories developed better quality and more promptly distributed housing than the municipalities. Consequently, socialist housing inequalities were accelerated into so-called "winners and losers" of privatisation. My case talks about "winners": people whose parents were from the *intelligentsia* families in Kyiv, who previously owned property and are used to some privileges that came with living in *mikrorajons* developed in the 70-80s. Thus, the argument is such that people perceive the development of *mikrorajons* as a privilege, a benefit, if compared to the current urban development, because they expect to have kindergartens, schools and leisure as basic social infrastructures. This speaks to the earlier assumption that some socialist policies (i.e. housing policy) might have produced "actually-existing success" (Murawski, 2018).

Thirdly, today the "winners" are hromada (a term linked to territorial belonging). So if we discuss a transformation of a Soviet citizen to a member of a "civil society" in a liberal Ukraine,

CEU eTD Collection

it could be defined as a transition from *commonality* (as common ownership) to a *community* based on the rights to private property. Thus, democratic rights are equated with private property rights, which in the post-socialist context also appear to include the specific quality of life provided by post-socialist *mikrorajons* and cities themselves. Upscale versions of this particular planning principle - the geographically accessible provision of basic residential infrastructure in every neighbourhood - have resurfaced in recent (post)pandemic proposals for the "15-minute city" in many other cities without the Soviet-era connotations of the *mikrorayon*.

CEU eTD Collection

References

Aalbers, M.B. (2016). *The Financialization of Housing. A political economy approach*. London: Routledge.

Alexander, C. (2004). Values, relations, and changing bodies: Privatization and property rights in Kazakhstan. In K. Verdery & C. Humphrey (Eds.), *Property in question* (pp. 251-273). Oxford, UK: Berg Publishers.

Anand, N. (2017). "Introduction, Water Works." *Hydraulic City: Water and the Infrastructures of Citizenship in Mumbai*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Arkhitektura SSSR. (1963, November). *Problemy stilya v sovetskoy arkhitekture* [Problems of Style in Soviet Architecture]. Issue 11.

Avioutskii, V. (2010). The Consolidation of Ukrainian Business Clans. *Revue internationale d'intelligence économique*, 2010/1 (Vol 2), pp.119-141.

Baljuk, B., Dubrovs′kyj, V., Anisimov, O. (2022, October 6). *Zemel'na polityka v hromadach: upravlinnja i opodatkuvannja / 2-j seminar kursu* [Land policy in communities: management and taxation / second seminar of the course]. [Online course].YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uoRPI4YsUY&list=PL3r3_USwMcJT2hIyonAXkKVsJJENMqv54&index=2

Baysha, O. (2015). Ukrainian Euromaidan: The exclusion of otherness in the name of progress. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 18(1), pp.3-18.

Baysha, O. (2018). *Miscommunicating social change: lessons from Russia and Ukraine*. Lexington Books. Lanham, MD.

CEU eTD Collection

Berger, L., Ruoppila, S. & Vesikansa, K. (2019). Baltic Crossings: Soviet Housing Estates and Dreams of Forest-Suburbs. In: Hess, D., Tammaru, T. (eds) *Housing Estates in the Baltic Countries. The Urban Book Series*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-23392-1_5

Bibik, N., & Dril, N. (2017). Trends of Housing Construction Development in Ukraine: Retrospective and Contemporary Situation. *Baltic Journal of Real Estate Economics and Construction Management* ISSN: 2255-9671 (online) November 2017, 5, pp.51–61.

Birch, K., & Mykhnenko, V. (Eds.). (2010). *The Rise and Fall of Neoliberalism: The Collapse of an Economic Order?*. Zed Books.

Bobrova, A., Lazarenko, V., Khassai, Y., & Shnaider, V. (2022). Social′ne, tymčasove i kryzove žytlo: z čym Ukraïna zustrila povnomasštabnu vijnu [Social, temporary and crisis housing: with what Ukraine faced a full-scale war]. *Cedos*.

Bodnar, Judit. (2001). *Fin de Millénaire Budapest: Metamorphoses of Urban Life*. London: University of Minnesota Press.

Bodnar, J., & Molnar, V. (2010). Reconfiguring Private and Public: State, Capital and New Housing Developments in Berlin and Budapest. *Urban Studies*, 47(4), pp.789–812. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098009351188

Bohle, D. & Greskovits, B. (2012). *Capitalist Diversity on Europe's Periphery*. New York: Cornell University Press. pp.7-25.

Boym, S. (1994). *Common places: Mythologies of everyday life in Russia*. Harvard University Press.

CEU eTD Collection

Brenner, N. & Theodore, N. (2002). Cities and the geographies of "actually existing neoliberalism", *Antipode*, 34, pp.349–79.

Brudny, Y. M., & Finkel, E. (2011). Why Ukraine Is Not Russia: Hegemonic National Identity and Democracy in Russia and Ukraine. *East European Politics and Societies*, 25(4), pp.813–833. https://doi.org/10.1177/0888325411401379

Buck-Morss, S. (2000). *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The passing of mass utopia in East and West*. MIT Press.

Burawoy, M. (1992). The End of Sovietology and the Renaissance of Modernization Theory. *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 21, No. 6 (Nov. 1992), pp.774-785.

Burawoy, M. (2001). Neoclassical sociology: From the end of communism to the end of classes, *American Journal of Sociology*, 106(4), pp.1099–1120.

Burbank, M. J., Heying, C. H., & Andranovich, G. (2000). Antigrowth politics or piecemeal resistance? Citizen opposition to olympic-related economic growth. *Urban Affairs Review*, 35(3), pp.334–357. https://doi.org/10.1177/107808740003500303

Burningham, K. (2000). Using the language of NIMBY: A topic for research, not an activity for researchers. *Local Environment*, 5(1), pp.55–67. https://doi.org/10.1080/135498300113264

Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. (2010). Postanova vid 27 sichnia 2010 r. № 55 Kyiv Pro vporiadkuvannia transliteratsii ukrainskoho alfavitu latynytseiu [A resolution from 27.01.2010 № 55 Kyiv About arranging the transliteration of the Ukrainian alphabet in Latin]. *Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy*.

Calhoun, C. (1996). Introduction: *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. pp.1–50.

CEU eTD Collection

Channell-Justice, E. S. (2019). Thinking through positionality in post-socialist politics: Researching contemporary social movements in Ukraine, *History and Anthropology*, 30:1, pp.47–66, DOI: 10.1080/02757206.2018.1532894

Chayinska, M., Minescu, A. & McGarty, C. (2018). 'We fight for a better future for our country': Understanding the Ukrainian Euromaidan movement as the emergence of a social competition strategy. *British Journal of Social Psychology*. Vol.58, Issue 1, pp.45–65. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12283

Chelcea, L. & Druţă, O. (2016). Zombie Socialism and the Rise of Neoliberalism in Post-Socialist Central and Eastern Europe, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 57 (4–5), pp.521-544.

Chepurnyy, Y. (2015, October 21). Deryban-Komanda. *Hromadske TV*. Retrieved from http://www.hromadske.tv/politics/deribankomanda/

Cherkes, B., Petryshyn, H., & Konyk, S. (2019). Urbanizational Trends and Impulses in The Housing Construction of Ukraine. In *IOP Conf. Series: Materials Science and Engineering* 471, IOP Publishing, doi:10.1088/1757-899X/471/9/092058

Chukhrov, K. (2020). *Practicing the Good: Desire and Boredom in Soviet Socialism*. E-flux, the University of Minnesota Press.

Cohen, J. & Arato, A. (1992). Introduction. *Civil Society and Political Theory.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp.1–26.

Collier, Stephen J. (2011). *Neoliberalism, Social Modernity, Biopolitics*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Collier, S.J., Mizes, J.C. & Schnitzler, A. (2016, July). "Preface: Public Infrastructures/ Infrastructural Publics". *Limn*, 7. Accessed July 1, 2022. https://limn.it/issues/public-infrastructuresinfrastructural-publics/

Creed, G. & Wedel, J. (1997). Second Thoughts from the Second World: Interpreting Aid in Post-Communist Eastern Europe. *Human Organisation*, Vol. 56, No. 3, pp.253-264

Czepczyński, M. (2008). *Cultural landscapes of post-socialist cities: representation of powers and needs*. UK: Ashgate.

Darieva, T. & Neugebauer, C. S. (eds). (2019). *Urban Activism in Eastern Europe and Eurasia Strategies and Practices*. DOM Publishers.

DeLeon, R. E. (1992). The urban antiregime: Progressive politics in San Francisco. *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, 27 (4), pp.555-79.

Diamond, L. (2002). Thinking about hybrid regimes. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2), pp.21-35.

Dnipro District Court of Kyiv. (2020, March 13). *Uchvala Dniprovs'koho rajonnoho sudu m. Kyjeva vid 13.03.2020* [Decision].

Dnipro District Court of Kyiv. (2021, July 19). *Uchvala Dniprovs'koho rajonnoho sudu m. Kyjeva vid 19.07.2021* [Decision].

Drahokoupil, J. (2008). *Globalization and the State in Central and Eastern Europe: the Politics of Foreign Direct Investment*. London: Routledge.

Drahokoupil, J. (2009). The Politics of the Competition State: The Agents and Mechanisms of State Transnationalization in Central and Eastern Europe, in *The Transnationalization of Economies, States, and Civil Societies: New Challenges for Governance in Europe*, Bruszt and Holzhaccker, eds. New York: Springer.

CEU eTD Collection

Dsnews.ua. (2004, April 19). *Darnitskiy kombinat stroikonstruktsiy vyselayut* [Darnitsa building construction plant is being evicted]. https://www.dsnews.ua/politics/art14724

Dunn, E. (1998). Slick Salesmen and Simple People: Negotiated Capitalism in a Privatized Polish Firm. In *Uncertain Transition: Ethnographies of Change in the Post-Socialist World*, M. Burawoy; K. Verdery, eds. Lanham: R. and Littlefield.: pp.125–150.

Dzenovska, D. (2018). Emptiness and its futures. Staying and leaving as tactics of life in Latvia. *Focaal. Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology*, 80, pp.16–29.

Edwards, P. N. (2019). "Infrastructuration: On Habits, Norms and Routines as Elements of Infrastructure*." In *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, 62, pp.355–66. doi:10.1108/S0733-558X20190000062022.

Eggart, C. (2022, June 1). The End of the Post-Soviet. *ZOiS Spotlight*, 21/2022. Retrieved from https://www.zois-berlin.de/en/publications/zois-spotlight/the-end-of-the-post-soviet

Elborgh-Woytek, K. & Lewis, M. (2002). *Privatization in Ukraine: Challenges of Assessment and Coverage in Fund Conditionality*. IMF Policy Discussion Paper.

Eppinger, M. E. (2017). Property and Political Community: Democracy, Oligarchy, and the Case of Ukraine. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2526308

European Council. (2021). Register of Bern Convention Complaints 2021 [Register prepared by the Directorate of Democratic Participation]. In *Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats: Standing Committee*, 41st meeting, 29 November-3 December 2021. T-PVS/Inf(2021)5. Strasbourg, France: Council of Europe.

CEU eTD Collection

Fedoriv, P. (2017). *The financialization of housing in Madrid and Kyiv*. UNICA Euromaster in Urban Studies 4Cities. Thesis under the supervision of Ass.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Walter Matznetter, MSc; Second reader: David Bassens.

Fedoriv, P. (2018, April 19). Upravlinnja čy urjaduvannja. Komu naležyt′ vlada v mistach [Government or governance. Who owns the power in the cities]. *Mistosite*. https://mistosite.org.ua/articles/upravlinnia-chy-uriaduvannia-komu-nalezhyt-vlada-v-mistakh?locale=uk

Fedoriv, P. & Lomonosova, N. (2019). *Derzhavna zhytlova polityka v Ukrayini: suchasnyj stan ta perspektyvy reformuvannya* (State housing politics in Ukraine: the contemporary state and the perspectives of reforming). K.: Analitychnyj centr CEDOS.

Florea, I., Gagyi, A. & Jacobsson, K. (2019). A Field of Contention: Evidence from Housing Struggles in Bucharest and Budapest. *Voluntas*, Vol 24, no3.

Florea, I., Gagyi, A. & Jacobsson, K. (2022). *Contemporary Housing Struggles*. Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97405-3

Fredriksen, Martin Demant. (2013). "Chapter 7. Subjunctive Materialities" In *Young Men, Time and Boredom in the Republic of Georgia*. Philadelphia, PH: Temple University Press, pp.147-159.

Frölich, C. (2019). Urban citizenship under post-Soviet conditions: Grassroots struggles of residents in contemporary Moscow. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 24 Jun 2019, pp.1–15.

Gaynor, N. (2011). In-Active citizenship and the depoliticisation of community development in Ireland. In *Community Development Journal* , 46(1), pp.27-41

CEU eTD Collection

Gentile, M. (2015). The "Soviet" factor: Exploring perceived housing inequalities in a midsized city in the Donbas, Ukraine. *Urban Geography*, 36(5), pp.696-720. https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2015.1012363

Gibson, T. A. (2005). NIMBY and the Civic Good. *City & Community*, 4(4), pp.381–401. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6040.2005.00144.x

Ginzburg, M. (1929). *Goroda budushchego i organizatsiya socialistitcheskogo byta* [The cities of the future and the organisation of socialist everyday life]. Moscow, USSR: State Publishing House of Construction Industry.

Gryschenko, V. (2021, April 29). U Pušì-Vodicì nebuvala virubka vìkovih derev zaradi čergovoï zabudovi [In Puschcha-Vodytsya there is an unprecedented cutting down of old trees for the next construction]. NERukhomi.ua. Retrieved from https://nerukhomi.ua/ukr/news/gorod/u-puschi-voditsi-nebuvala-virubka-vikovih-derev-zaradi-chergovoi-zabudovi.htm

Gupta, A. (1995). Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State. *American Ethnologist*, 22(2), pp.375– 402.

Gutnov, A. E. (1984). *Evolyutsiya gradostroitel'stva* [Evolution of urban planning].

Hansen, C. (2017). Doing fieldwork at 'home': Ethical and emotional considerations on the academic-activist relationship. *Journal of Resistance Studies*, 3(2), pp.147–156.

Harris, S. E. (2013). *Communism on tomorrow street: Mass Housing and Everyday Life after Stalin*. Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

Harvey, D. (2005). *The Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press

Harvey, D. (2003). *The New Imperialism*. Oxford University Press.

CEU eTD Collection

Harvey, D. (2006). *The limits of capital* (New edition). Verso.

Hatherley, O. (2015). *Landscapes of Communism. A History Through Buildings*. New York and London: The New Press.

Hess, D. B. (2018). Transport in Mikrorayons: Accessibility and Proximity to Centrally Planned Residential Districts during the Socialist Era, 1957-1989. *Journal of Planning History*, 17(3), pp.184-204.

Hirt, S.A. (2012). *Iron Curtains: gates, suburbs, and privatization of space in the post-socialist city*. UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Holloway, J. (2010). *Crack Capitalism*. London: Pluto Press.

Howard, M.M. (2003). *The weakness of civil society in post-communist Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Humphrey, C. (2005, March). Ideology in infrastructure: Architecture and Soviet imagination. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2005.00225.x

Ikonnikov, A.V. (1966). *Esteticheskiye problemyi massovogo zhilishchnogo stroitel'stva* [Aesthetic problems of mass housing construction]. Leningrad: Stroyizdat

Ingold, T. (2017). Anthropology contra ethnography. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 7(1), pp.21–26.

INTER. (2012). Excerpt from the public TV (private archive). Provided by an anonymous informant.

Ishchenko, V. (2011). Fighting Fences vs Fighting Monuments: Politics of Memory and Protest Mobilization in Ukraine. *Debatte*, 19(1–2), pp.369–395. https://doi.org/10.1080/0965156X.2011.611680

Ivanova, A. D. (1953). *Planirovka i zastrojka zhilikh rayonov* [Planning and construction of residential neighbourhoods]. Kyiv: Izdatelstvo Akademii Arkhitektury Ukr.SSR.

Ivasiuc, A. (2015). Provincialising Citizenship: Critical Anthropological Notes on the Uses and Usefulness of "Citizenship" in the Context of the Roma Political Subject. In *BASEES Conference*: Cambridge, pp. 1–25.

Jacobsson, K. (Ed.). (2015). *Urban grassroots movements in Central and Eastern Europe*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Janušauskaitė, V. (2019). Living in a Large Housing Estate: Insider Perspectives from Lithuania. In: Hess, D., Tammaru, T. (eds) *Housing Estates in the Baltic Countries. The Urban Book Series*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-23392-1_9

Kessler, K. (2011). Ukraine: Impact and Recovery from the Crisis. In: Jungmann,J. and Sagermann,B. Eds. *Financial Crisis in Eastern Europe*, Springer

Krämer, P. (2019). *Communism on Tomorrow Street: Mass Housing and Everyday Life after Stalin*. Oxford University Press.

Krstic, I. (2022, December 22). How to turn the locus of deprivation to a place called home: A discussion on the main housing struggles in CEE. In *ELMO series: CEE housing movements resisting neoliberal urban transformations*. LeftEast. https://lefteast.org/category/all-posts/elmo-series-cee-housing-movements-resisting-neoliberal-urban-transformations/

CEU eTD Collection

Kryzhanivskyi, O., & Stezhka, T. (2019, March 11). Mist imeni Petra Porošenka: Čomu budivnyctvom «perepravy na Troješčynu» zajmajet′sja sudnobudivnyj zavod «Kuznja na Rybal′s′komu» [Bridge named after Petro Poroshenko: Why the construction of the "crossing to Troeshchyna" is being carried out by the shipbuilding plant "Kuznya na Rybalskomu"]. *Unian.ua*.

Kyiv City Council. (1994, February 17). *Rišennja Kyïvs'koï mis'koï rady vid 17.02.94 №14 "Pro stvorennja, rezervuvannja ta zberežennja terytorij i ob"jektiv pryrodno-zapovidnoho fondu v m. Kyjevi"* [Decision of the Kyiv City Council №14 of February 17, 1994 "On the creation, reservation and preservation of territories and objects of the natural reserve fund in Kyiv"].

Kyiv City Council. (2006, January 9). *Rišennja № 628/3089 vid 09.01.2006 Pro vnesennja zmin do Rišennja Kyïvs'koï mis'koï rady vid 17.02.94 №14 "Pro stvorennja, rezervuvannja ta zberežennja terytorij i ob"jektiv pryrodno-zapovidnoho fondu v m. Kyjevi"* [Resolution № 628/3089 from 09.01.2006 On making changes to the Decision of the Kyiv City Council №14 of February 17, 1994 "On the creation, preservation and preservation of territories and objects of the natural reserve fund in Kyiv"].

Kyiv Municipal Council. (2013, November 13). *Rišennja Kyïvs'koï mis'koï rady № 641/10129* [Resolution].

Kyiv Municipal Council. (2019, December 19). *Rišennja Kyïvs'koï mis'koï rady № 592/8165* [Resolution].

Larkin, B. (2013). "The Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure". *Annu. Rev. Anthropol*, 42, pp.327–43.

CEU eTD Collection

Laverty, M. (2008). *The Problem of Lasting Change: Civil Society and the Colored Revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine* https://www.academia.edu/3531332/The_Problem_of_Lasting_Change_Civil_Society_and_the_Colored_Revolutions_in_Georgia_and_Ukraine

Lazczkowski, Mateusz. (2015). Scraps, Neighbors, and Committees: Material Things, Place-Making, and the State in an Astana Apartment Block. *City and Society,* 27(2), pp.136-159.

Leetmaa, K. & Hess, D.B. (2019). Incomplete Service Networks in Enduring Socialist Housing Estates: Retrospective Evidence from Local Centres in Estonia. In: Hess, D., Tammaru, T. (eds) *Housing Estates in the Baltic Countries. The Urban Book Series*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-23392-1_13

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Blackwell.

Li, T. M. (2007). *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Liasheva, A. (2019). Zpilishchnyj bum v postkrizisnom Kieve: Rost bez finansov [The housing boom in post-crisis Kyiv. Growth without finance]. *Городские Исследования и Практики*, 4(3), pp.60–70. https://doi.org/10.17323/usp43201960-70

Lux, M., & Sunega, P. (2014). Public housing in the post-socialist states of Central and Eastern Europe: Decline and an open future. *Housing Studies*, 29(4), pp.501-519. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2013.875986

Madden, D. & Marcuse, P. (2016). *In Defense of Housing. The Politics of Crisis.* UK: Verso.

CEU eTD Collection

Me'nyk, H. (2017, July 12). Rìzati po-živomu: navìšo v Kiêvì roblât′ masove kronuvannâ derev [Cutting down trees: why massive crown cutting is taking place in Kyiv]. *Hmarochos.kiev.ua*. https://hmarochos.kiev.ua/2017/07/12/rizati-po-zhivomu-navishho-v-kiyevi-roblyat-masove-kronuvannya-derev/

Mendelson, S. E., & Glenn, J. K. (Eds.). (2002). *The power and limits of NGOs: A critical look at building democracy in Eastern Europe and Eurasia*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Meshkantsi budynkiv, shcho bilia skandalnoi zabudovy na vul. B. Khmelnytskoho, 249, znovu vyishly na protest (Residents of buildings near the scandalous building on the street. B. Khmelnytskoho, 249, came out again to protest). (22.02.2016). Galinfo. https://galinfo.com.ua/news/meshkantsi_pryleglyh_budynkiv_skandalnoi_zabudovy_na_vul_b_hmelnytskogo_249_znovu_vyyshly_na_protest_220554.html

Miljutin, N.A. (1930). *Problema stroitel'stva sotsialisticheskikh gorodov. Osnovnye voprosy ratsional'noi planirovki i stroitel'stva naselennykh mest SSSR* [The problem of building socialist cities. The main questions of rational planning and construction of populated places in the USSR]. Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo: Moskva, Leningrad.

Mohylnyi, H. (2022). “Budivnytstvo zhytla pid chas viiny: liky chy otruta dlia ekonomiky? [Wartime Housing Construction: Medicine or Poison for the Economy?]”. *Zn.ua*. https://zn.ua/ukr/macrolevel/budivnitstvo-zhitla-pid-chas-vijni-liki-chi-otruta-dlja-ekonomiki.html

Moizer, F. & Zadorin, D. (2018). *K tipologii sovetskogo tipovogo domostroitel'stva. Industrial'noe zhilishchnoe stroitel'stvo v SSSR* [Towards a Typology of Soviet Mass Housing. Prefabrication in the USSR 1955-1991]. DOM Publishers: Berlin

CEU eTD Collection

Molotch, H. (1976). The city as a growth machine: Toward a political economy of place. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(2), pp.309–332.

Mouffe, C. (2000). The democratic paradox. In D. Beetham (Ed.), *The Commonwealth of Citizens: A contemporary case for civic republicanism* (pp. 99-118). New York, NY: Routledge.

Murawski, M. (2018, October 1). Actually-existing success: Economics, aesthetics, and the specificity of (still-)socialist urbanism. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Cambridge University Press, 60(4), pp.907–937.

Müller, M. (2019). Goodbye, Postsocialism! *Europe-Asia Studies*, 71(4), pp.533–550.

Mykhnenko, V. & Turok, I. (2008). East European cities: Patterns of growth and decline, 1960-2005. *International Planning Studies*, 13(4), pp.311-342.

Nikolayenko, O. (2020). The significance of human dignity for social movements: mass mobilisation in Ukraine, *East European Politics*, 36:3, pp.445–462. DOI: 10.1080/21599165.2020.1757444

Obozrevatel. (2018, April 27). U Kyjevi pidpalyly budynok romiv: z″javylosja perše video [A Roma house was set on fire in Kyiv: the first video appeared]. Incident.obozrevatel.com. https://incident.obozrevatel.com/ukr/kiyany/crime/u-kievi-pidpalili-budinok-romiv-v-merezhi-zyavilosya-pershe-video.htm

Obozrevatel. (2018, April 27). "Dity zhorily živcem": u Kyjevi romy rozpovily pro znyščennja ïch budynkiv ["Children were burned alive": Roma in Kyiv spoke about the destruction of their homes]. *Incident.obozrevatel.com*. https://incident.obozrevatel.com/ukr/kiyany/crime/diti-zgorili-zhivtsem-u-kievi-znischili-budinki-romiv.htm

CEU eTD Collection

Ortner, B. Sherry. (2006). Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal. *Anthropology and Social Theory*, pp.42–62.

Pavlov K. V. (2018). Methodological Approaches to Determining the Monopolisation Level of Primary Residential Real Estate Regional Markets in Ukraine. *Economics, Entrepreneurship, Management*, Lviv, (5)1, pp.63–72. https://doi.org/10.23939/eem2018.01.063.

Pendall, R. (1999). Opposition to housing: NIMBY and beyond. *Urban Affairs Review*, 35(1), pp.112–136. https://doi.org/10.1177/10780879922184310

Peterson, K. (2009). Phantom Epistemologies. *Fieldwork Is Not What It Used to Be: Learning Anthropology's Method in a Time of Transition* (eds. Faubion, James D. & Marcus, George E.). Cornell University Press: New York. pp.37–51.

Pickles, J., & Smith, A. (eds.). (1998). *Theorising Transition. The Political Economy of Post-Communist Transformations*. London: Routledge.

Pierre, J. (1999). Models of urban governance: The institutional dimension of urban politics. *Urban Affairs Review*, 34(3), pp.372-396.

Polanyi, K. (1944). *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Beacon Press, Boston.

Ponomaryova, A., Anisimov, O. & Ryan, B. D. (2020, September 3). Kyiv's General Plan is not an accident. Part II. *Mistosite*. https://mistosite.org.ua/en/articles/kyivs-general-plan-is-not-an-accident-part-ii

Powers, T. & Rakopoulos, T. (2019). The anthropology of austerity: An introduction. *Focaal—Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology*, 83: pp. 1–12.

CEU eTD Collection

Presslužba Deržavnoï podatkovoï služby Ukraïny. (2022, January 11). Ščodo administruvannja podatku na neruchome majno, vidminne vid zemel′noï diljanky, z fizyčnych osib [Regarding the administration of the tax on immovable property, other than land, from individuals]. *Tax.gov.ua*. https://tax.gov.ua/media-tsentr/novini/552211.html

Platonov, A. (1973). *Kotlovan*. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis.

Putnam, R. D. (1993). *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rapoport, A. (2005). Vernacular architecture and the cultural determinants of form. In A. D. King (Ed.), *Buildings and society: Essays on the social development of the built environment*. London, UK: Routledge, pp. 158–169.

Rodgers, D. & Bruce O'Neill. (2012). Infrastructural Violence: Introduction to the Special Issue. *Ethnography,* 13(4), pp.401-412.

Rose, M. (2002). The Seductions of Resistance: Power, Politics, and a Performative Style of Systems, *Environment and Planning: Society and Space*, Vol. 20, No. 4, pp.383–400.

Scheper-Hughes, N. (1995). The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology. *Current Anthropology,* 36(3), pp.409-440. https://doi.org/10.1086/204344

Scott, J. (1998). *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Shapovalova, N. (2019). *Assessing Ukrainian Grassroots Activism Five Years After Euromaidan*, (February), pp. 2–6.

Shcherbachenko, V. (Eds.) (2013). *How Comprehensive City Plans in Ukraine are Classified for "Limited Official Use" and What Consequences this has for Society*: A collection of

CEU eTD Collection

materials accessed through public examination and an analysis of how and why items are included on the list and classified for “Limited Official Use” by the Ministry of Regional Development, construction and Housing and Communal Services of Ukraine. Luhansk: Eastern-Ukrainian Center for Civic Initiatives.

Shevchenko, O. (2018). Putting the 'Public' in Public Goods: Space Wars in a Post-Soviet Dacha Community. In J. F. Bailyn, D. Jelaca, & D. Lugaric (Eds.), *The Future of (Post)Socialism: Eastern European Perspectives*. Suny Press. pp.117-143

Shnaider, V. & Lishchynska, N. (2020, Juni 18). "OccupyKyivCinemas": Gegen die Zerstörung kulturellen Erbes. *Filmbulletin*

Star, Susan L. (1999). The ethnography of infrastructure. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 43, pp.377-391.

Stenning, A. & Hörschelmann, K. (2008). History, Geography and Difference in the Post-Socialist World: Or, Do We Still Need Post-Socialism?, *Antipode*, 40, 2, pp.312-335.

Stephens, M., Lux, M. & Sunega, P. (2015). Post-Socialist Housing Systems in Europe: Housing Welfare Regimes by Default? In *Housing Studies*, 30(8), pp.1210–1234. DOI:10.1080/02673037.2015.1013090

Struyk, R.J. (1996). Housing Privatization in the Former Soviet Bloc to 1995. In: Andrusz, G., Harloe, M., and Szelenyi, I., eds. *Cities After Socialism. Urban and Regional Change and Conflict in Post-Socialist Societies*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Swain, A., Mykhnenko, V., & French S. (2010). The Corruption Industry and Transition: Neoliberalizing Post-Soviet Space? in *The Rise and Fall of Neoliberalism: the Collapse of an Economic Order?* Zed Books: London, pp.112-132.

CEU eTD Collection

Szelenyi, I. (1996). Cities under Socialism—and After. In Gregory Andrusz, Michael Harloe, and Ivan Szelenyi (eds.), *Cities after Socialism: Urban and Regional Change and Conflict in Post-Socialist Societies.* Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 286–317.

Šiupšinskas, M., & Lankots, E. (2019). Collectivist ideals and Soviet consumer spaces: Mikrorayon commercial centres in Vilnius, Lithuania and Tallinn, Estonia. In *Housing Estates in the Baltic Countries*, pp. 301-320. doi:10.1007/978-3-030-23392-1_14

Telekanal Kyiv. (2020, June 19). U Kyjevi vidbulysja sutyčky protestuval′nykiv z policijeju [Clashes between protesters and police took place in Kyiv]. [Video]. *YouTube.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEL5ks59RkI

Tismaneanu, V. (1998). *The reinvention of politics: Rethinking modernity in the global social order*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Treija, S., Bratuškins, U. (2019). Socialist Ideals and Physical Reality: Large Housing Estates in Riga, Latvia. In: Hess, D., Tammaru, T. (eds) *Housing Estates in the Baltic Countries. The Urban Book Series*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-23392-1_8

Tsn.ua. (2011, November 20). V Ukraïni možut′ prypynyty pryvatyzaciju žytla [Privatization of housing may be stopped in Ukraine]. https://tsn.ua/svit/v-ukrayini-mozhut-pripiniti-privatizaciyu-zhitla.html

Tsuladze, L., Macharashvili, N. & Pachulia, K. (2017). SOS Tbilisi. Challenges to Environmental Civic Participation in Georgia. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 27 Apr 2017, pp.1–17.

Tyshchenko, I. (2012). Khronika andriivskoho uzvozu: istoriia borotby za odnu vulytsiu (Chronicle of Andriivskoho Uzvozu: the history of the struggle for one street). *Urbanistychni studii. Anatomiia mista: Kyiv*. Smoloskyp: Kyiv, pp.160-184.

CEU eTD Collection

Tyshchenko, I. (2016, May 25-27). Constructing ideal neighborhood: Soviet residential environment and its decline in post-socialist Kyiv. Paper presented at the *Architecture, Democracy, and Emotions since 1945 conference*, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin, Germany.

Tuvikene, T. (2016). Strategies for Comparative Urbanism: Post-socialism as a De-territorialized Concept. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 40(1), pp.132–146.

Tuvikene, T. (2019). Between Community and Private Ownership in Centrally Planned Residential Space: Governing Parking in Socialist Housing Estates. In: Hess, D., Tammaru, T. (eds) *Housing Estates in the Baltic Countries. The Urban Book Series*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-23392-1_15

Tyzhden.ua. (2013, August 15). Aktivìsti: bìlâ kiïvs′kogo zooparku virubuût′ dereva dlâ budìvnictva bagatopoverhìvki [Activists: Trees are being cut down near the Kyiv zoo for construction of a high-rise building]. https://tyzhden.ua/aktyvisty-bilia-kyivskoho-zooparku-vyrubuiut-dereva-dlia-budivnytstva-bahatopoverkhivky/

UCMC Press Center. (2017). About 70 per cent of Ukrainian housing should be social housing to meet the needs - experts. *UACrisis.org*. https://uacrisis.org/en/54190-socialne-zhytlo

Uspensky, V. N. (Ed.). (1967). *General'nyie planyi krupnyih gorodov* [General plans of large cities. Collection of articles]. Kyiv, "Budivelnyk".

van Baar, Huub. (2018). Contained mobility and the racialization of poverty in Europe: the Roma at the development–security nexus, *Social Identities*, 24:4, pp.442–458.

CEU eTD Collection

Verdery, K. (1999). Fuzzy Property: Rights, Power, and Identity in Transylvania's Decollectivization. In *Uncertain Transition: Ethnographies of Change in the Post-Socialist World*. M. Burawoy, K. Verdery, eds. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield: pp.53–82.

Wacquant, L. (2012). Three steps to a historical anthropology of actually existing neoliberalism. *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale* 20, 1, pp.66–79.

White, L. (2000). *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Williamson, J. (1978). *Decoding Advertisements. Ideology and Meaning in Advertizing*. London: Marion Boyars.

Yurchak, A. (2005). *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Zakusylo, M. & Hryhorenko, S. (2018, October, 02). Proiekt «Mapa renovatsii»: yak kyiany zberihatymut istorychni budynky z dopomohoiu biznesu? (The "Renovation Map" project: how will Kyivans preserve historic buildings with the help of business?). *Detector Media*. https://video.detector.media/reports/kinoteatry-mayut-zhyty-u-kyyeviprotestuvaly-proty-zakryttya-kinopanoramy-ta-ukrainy-i768 [accessed 12.12.2021].

Zhuravel, A. (2022). *Protecting architectural heritage in post-communistic cities from commercial-oriented real estate development through community engagement: Analysing constraints and opportunities of actions of collectiveness and solidarity by the case study of Save Kvity Ukrainy* (Master's thesis). Technische Universität Berlin. Unpublished.

StroyObzor. (3.07.2015). Zhyloi kompleks "Chaika": budet ly prodolzhenye? [Residential complex "Chaika": will there be a continuation?]. https://stroyobzor.ua/ru/kharkov/news-builders/zhiloy-kompleks-chayka-budet-li-prodolzhenie

CEU eTD Collection

Žižek, S. (2009). *Violence: Six sideways reflections*. Profile Books: London.

Zverev, A. (2016). “My nash, my novyj mir postroim! Faktory jevoljucii dvizhenija po ohrane pamjatnikov v Moskve (1990-2015 gg.) [“We will create our new world!”. Factors of heritage movement evolution in Moscow 1990-2015]. *POLITEX: Political Expertise,* 12(1), pp.90–105.

#SaveHorbachykha Activist Movement. (2021). Complaint on stand-by: 2020/01 Recognizing Horbachykha as a protected area to save it from residential developments (Ukraine) [Report by the complainant]. In *Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats: Standing Committee*, 41st meeting, 29 November-3 December 2021 (pp. T-PVS/Files(2021)33). Strasbourg, France: Council of Europe.

CEU eTD Collection