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CHALLENGING SPACE THROUGH ACTIVISM

THE ART OF RESILIENCE IN THE CASE OF SKOPJE

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To my lovely parents, Divna and Vladimir Nikolovski.

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Sommario

I movimenti sociali sono diventati comuni nelle città post-jugoslave. Conseguentemente, l'ondata di attivismo è stata notevolmente presente a Skopje. A partire dal 2009 l'ondata di attivismo a Skopje è emersa con la nozione di città. Diverse iniziative sono apparse in città per difendere i luoghi che sono stati contestati del progetto di sviluppo urbano SK2014. L'ondata attivista si è diffusa in molte iniziative e in diversi temi. Il risultato è stato l'unificazione in un unico movimento di massa nel 2016, chiamata la rivoluzione colorata.

Questa tesi esplora lo scopo dell'attivismo a Skopje, prendendo in considerazione l'influenza della trasformazione dello spazio, del progetto SK2014. Inoltre essa esamina i processi di spazialità nel plasmare la contesa a Skopje, concentrandosi su approcci interdisciplinari e approfonditi.

Ad eccezione della diversità di quadro teorico fondato principalmente sulla teoria politica conflittuale e sullo spazio di elaborazione da diverse prospettive, questo studio si basa sul lavoro di campo sulla base delle interviste condotte.

Attraverso l'uso di un approccio interdisciplinare ed il focus su tre dimensioni principali, la tesi contribuisce a comprendere le dinamiche del ondata attivista e l'importanza dei processi spaziali nella creazione della contesa a Skopje. Inoltre, essa elabora le caratteristiche, i possibili effetti, e le riflessioni dei cicli di proteste a Skopje.

I principali risultati della ricerca hanno mostrato che la dinamica dello spazio è importante nella creazione dell'ondata attivista a Skopje ed inoltre il contesto dello spazio può dare una spiegazione su come si diffondano le opportunità e si crei la trasformazione. Lo studio ha contribuito a una profonda comprensione dell'importanza della spazialità nella politica contenziosa, ha dimostrato che in generale i casi di politiche contenziose contese possono beneficiare di analisi più

specifiche del luogo. Infine, la tesi si oppone alla tradizionale interpretazione lineare di movimenti sociali, e ne propone un'elaborazione più dinamica, approfondita, e sensibile.

Parole chiave: movimenti sociali, Skopje, SK2014, politica conflittuale, spazio, luogo.

Abstract

Social movements have become common in the Post Yugoslav cities. Consequently the wave of activism has been considerably present in Skopje. Starting from 2009 the activist wave in Skopje emerged with the notion of the city. Diversity of initiatives appeared in the city in order to defend places that have been contested by the urban development project SK2014. The activist wave diffused into many different initiatives and diversity of issues. The result was unification in one massive movement in 2016, called The Colourful Revolution.

The thesis explores the scope of activism in Skopje, with taking into consideration the influence of the spatial transformation, the project SK2014. Moreover, it examines the processes of spatiality into shaping the contention in Skopje, focusing on interdisciplinary and comprehensive approaches.

Except the diversity of theoretical framework mainly founded on contentious politics theory and space elaboration from different perspective, the study is founded on field work based on the conducted interviews.

Using an interdisciplinary approach and focusing on three main dimensions the thesis contributes to understand the dynamics of the activist wave and importance of spatial processes in the creation of the contention in Skopje. Moreover, it elaborates the characteristics, possible effects, and reflections of the cycles of protests in Skopje.

The main results of the research showed that dynamics of space is important in the creation of the activist wave in Skopje, moreover space context can give explanation about how opportunities diffuse and transformative power is created. The study contributed into deeper understanding of the importance of spatiality in contentious politics, it showed that in general contentions politics can benefit from deeper analyses of place specificity. Finally, the thesis opposes the traditional

linear understanding of social movements, and proposes more dynamic, comprehensive, and sensitive elaboration.

Key words: social movements, Skopje, SK2014, contentious politics, space, place.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 State of the problem

A more geographically sensitive conceptualization of social movements is necessary if social movements are to be understood in their full complexity and variability (MILLER, 2000, page 3). Social movements operate “at local as well as regional and international levels” represent recognition of geographic differentiation, but still only in a descriptive sense. These are all valuable suggestions that clearly recognize the need to study social movements in context, as well as the potential contributions of a variety of disciplines to the understanding of social movements (MILLER, 2000, page 5). Contextual space is of broad philosophical interest in generating discussion about its absolute and relative properties, its character as "container" of human life, its objectifiable geometry, and its phenomenological essence (SOJA, 1980, page 209). Scholars would be well advised, therefore, to focus attention on the mechanisms and processes of contention, as they play out in specific historical and spatial contexts, in order to understand particular episodes of contentious politics (MARTIN and MILLER, 2003, page 149).

1.2 Introduction to Skopje case

(...It was June 2014 when I visited Skopje in order to conduct the interviews for my research thesis. From the last visit, the city now had totally different image, all the white buildings in the centre were totally changed by appearance, from the extreme whiteness and sterility, Skopje suddenly seemed very colourful. Every day the centre of the city was crowded with flows of people, you can loudly and clearly hear people yelling “No justice, No peace”, The Colourful Revolution was ongoing...)

The emergence of urban social movements in Macedonia is quite new phenomena, since Macedonia has been considered as country with weak civil society. The emergence of the pre - activist wave began during the late 2007 and beginning of 2008, with the creation of generative

activist cores like Točka, and many intellectuals like Iskra Gešoska, Igor Toševski and Jasna Koteska began to raise a certain questions in Skopje. The following year was significant for the birth of the activist wave, materializing and taking a bit explicit appearance. Starting from 2009, following the example of the other Balkan cities the expansion of citizen's initiatives became common in the Macedonian capital Skopje and also to some extends in other towns in the country.

What is interesting that the activist wave in Skopje started from the notion of the city, the birth of the resilience firstly appeared to defend the city. So, the spatial manifestation of the city is strongly connected to the emergence of the activist wave in Skopje.

...the reason for the more and more organized and articulated emergence is facing with many levels of dissatisfaction. Everyone, this way or that, I would say, started to feel, first on an intuitive level, that something has been taken away from them (I am not speaking about financial crime) and that is why it started with the story of the city, the story of buildings, the idea of the right to the city. It grew more and more and it got free (INT12, GEŠOSKA).

The urban development project SK2014 plays a significant role. Furthermore, as a result of the enlargement of the project SK2014, following the practices of defending public spaces numerous urban issue initiatives emerged. Moreover, the activist wave expanded into creation of diversity of initiatives covering much wider issues like democracy, freedom to speech, gender equality etc. The result was unification in one massive movement, The Colourful Revolution.

1.3 Why Skopje?

Numerous academics and journalists are focusing on the recent wave of activism in Western Balkan cities and Skopje. Following the wave of activism in Balkan cities, Skopje is attracting a lot of media due to its latest urban transformation and the explicit emergence of several grass roots movements.

What inspired me to choose Skopje is its particularity and uniqueness within the theme of social movements, actually the temporal dimension of the research was what attracted me the most. The city nowadays is facing with tremendous urban and cultural transformations, due to the birth of the new activist wave; it is ongoing in this moment. Moreover, the urban social movements have tremendous impact on citizen's life. The wave of the activist movements, particularly with the recent Colourful Revolution created a cloud of raising voices of experts, artists, and social scientists. Following the case of Skopje, researchers and scholars from different fields started to be interested about social movement phenomenon in Skopje and consequently the emergence of the common resilience in the Western Balkan cities.

Secondly, the spatial dimension of the research. The most interesting part is working on a certain case study, an authentic interpretation. The wave of the social movements in Skopje can be considered as a bordered phenomenon due to characteristics tied only to a particular city, but also at the same time they are widely connected to larger phenomena on a global scale.

Finally, because Skopje is my city, the place where I was born. So, I have a sort of intimate relationship with the city and the subject that will evolve in the thesis.

1.4 Why SK2014?

When discussing about Skopje and social movements, it is inevitable not to mention the project SK2014. The latest spatial transformation of the city was exactly the project SK2014. Firstly, in comparison with other urban developments in the region, the project is a unique and specific case which has multisided effects hidden by the means of profit, "nationality" building and city promotion.

Moreover, the project SK2014 is taking central position in elaboration of many scientists, anthropologists, ethnologists, politico logs, artists etc. Many of the recent articles are pointing the relation between the

emergence of the activist wave in Skopje and the recent project SK2014. Among many other reasons, the project SK2014 is very interesting spatial manifestation upon which the initiatives acted.

1.5 The thesis

Following the events occurring from 2009 until today, I will explore the scope of activism in Skopje, with taking into consideration the influence of the spatial transformation, the project SK2014. In the elaboration it is crucial to determine the roll of the project SK2014 in order to give more peculiar image of the frame of contention in Skopje.

The thesis will examine the processes of spatiality into shaping the contention in Skopje, focusing on interdisciplinary and comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the activist wave in Skopje and possible transformative power. The main questions that will be elaborated through the thesis will be: How space can be facilitator and be reproduce through the movements?; In what way the social movements have transformative power?; Which are the possible effects from the social movements?

In order to discuss the questions above, the thesis is focused on three main dimensions which will contribute to elaborate the reasons, dynamics, characteristics, possible effects, and reflections of the cycles of protests in Skopje. Moreover the study will interpret deeper analyses in order to elaborate the peculiarities of the place specificities and their relation to social movements in Skopje.

The first dimension, the context of the study, consists of analyses of the political, economic and spatial transition of the Western Balkan cities and the continuation of the activist wave in these cities. Moreover, a deeper analyses based on survey conducted in 2009 for Macedonia will be provided as a quantitative data. The context will be grounded on different resources which will provide more peculiar information about the Yugoslavian transition, additional resources from internet and articles will be used in order to give a chronology of the activist wave in

the Western Balkan cities. The elaboration will unveil the importance of historic context into framing the contention in Skopje, how opportunities developed, transformation of culture and values that citizens possess. In addition, the context will show the common reasons and characteristics of the struggle in these cities.

The second dimension of the study is focused into understandings which are the main reasons for emergence of the activist wave in Skopje, and the main elements that characterized the movements. It will focus on scholars like Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow, using the theory of contentious politics as a backbone in its elaboration. So due to the interdisciplinary context several other constructivism approaches will be taken into account, considering culture and identity and their role into forming the frame of contention. The elaboration will give different aspects for the emergence of the struggles in Skopje.

The third dimension will focus on the relation between spatiality and contentious politics. The study will elaborate how space can be facilitator and reproduce through social movements, thus it will provide more comprehensive and deeper analyses of the specificities of the context and it will help us to understand the importance of spatiality into formation of the frame of contention in Skopje. The following questions will be elaborated: How spaces can become context of the social movements in Skopje? How spatial processes can produce space and opposite? How space can transform its meaning?

The study will display concepts of spatiality mainly base on Lefebvre's production of space, Messey, Soja and Agnew's conception of specificity of space/place will be taken into consideration in order to elaborate the complex relation between the project SK2014 and the emergence of the social movements in Skopje. The elaboration will reveal the importance of context, sense of space, a possible creation of what Lefebvre refers to representational space in the case of Skopje.

The main aim of the thesis is not to point peculiar results from the activist wave, but to give more comprehensive image of the dynamics of social movements in Skopje and their transformative power.

1.6 Overview of the chapters

The first chapter is underling the main peculiarities of the study, goals and questions that will be elaborated in the thesis. Chapter two discusses the methodology. The first part of the chapter explains the procedure of the research. The second part explains the main criteria for choosing the case studies that will be elaborated in the thesis, and the last part is focused on explaining the qualitative method of the research, the interviews.

Chapter three discusses the main elements for framing the contention in Macedonia. In order to give more comprehensive analyses, the Yugoslavian context is taken into consideration. The first part of the chapter is grounded on theoretical framework, mainly using contentious politics theory (Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow). Following the theoretical framework, a wider common context of economic, social, political and spatial transition and chronology of common struggles in the Western Balkan cities is presented. In addition, the economic, social and political context of Macedonia is taken into account. The chapter ends with discussion based on the theoretical framework presented in the first part and observations from the second part in order to elaborate the reasons and elements for emergence of the activist wave in Skopje.

Chapter four discusses the importance of space in framing the contention wave in Skopje. In order to give a peculiar perspective of the complex relation, the first part of the chapter is grounded on theoretical framework, indicating the importance of spatiality in contentions politics and importance of space and place in this context. Following the theoretical framework, the next part of the chapter is focusing on the particular case study, Skopje, a short discussion with some reflections

from several authors in Macedonia concerning the transformation of the city and the manifestation of the project SK2014 are introduced. Following Skopje introduction, a short discussion with reflection from the interviews about why space is important in the context of Skopje is presented.

Chapter five presents the chronology of events explaining the emergence of the activist wave in Skopje starting from 2009 until 2016. The chapter ends with a catalogue of selected case studies and initiatives with providing the characteristics and performances of each initiative, at the end some common relations between the initiatives are underlined.

Chapter six discusses the complex relation between the initiatives and social movements and the project SK2014. Grounded on the theoretical framework and observations from the interviews this chapter is exploring the complex relation in three main perspectives. The first part is considering the project SK2014 as a setting for different performances and political claims, discussing different approaches of the initiatives towards the project. The second part is unveiling what actually means context of space in the case of Skopje, and the third part is discussing some reflections about sense of space and how counter space is created through the activism in Skopje. Following the spatial dimension, the next part discusses some reflections about the possible transformative power of the activist wave in Skopje. The chapter ends with conclusions that summarize the questions posed at the beginning of the thesis and ends with some further considerations and possible questions.

1.7 Significance of the study

The mainstream of contentious politics is focused on empirical studies based mainly in Western Europe and America, with recently studies in Latin America and some initial studies focusing on Eastern Europe. There are no findings of the context for the Balkan countries. The Western

Balkan cities should be taken into account in order to broaden the geographical empirical base of the field of contentious politics.

The particular context of post Yugoslavian Balkan cities is following different configuration. The context is characterized with different time and pace of implementation of democracy due to the transition of the system from socialistic Yugoslavia. The diversity and different timing of appearances of the movements can be traced in the different pace of transition, the degree of democracy and the state peculiarities in terms of strength in social and economic levels. Parallel with the system what distinguishes these cities is the cultural background.

Since the wave of activism is more present many researchers and a lot of workshops were organized in the last three, four years on the subject on social movements in the Balkan, and recently in Skopje. The particular field of social movements in this region, especially in Skopje started to be elaborated very recently, so due to the absence of materials concerning the subject of social movements in Skopje, the main idea was to create a sort of a basis, an archive with life discussions from the activists involved and different profiles of intellectuals in order to elaborate the peculiarities of social movements in Skopje context. Anyway, there are no such similar attempts of exploring the relation between spatiality and social movements in Skopje, obviously due to the temporal dimension and no resources for the topic. So, I think that the thesis will be interesting documentation of the activist wave in Skopje and it will help into contribution of widening the research filed on this topic.

Finally, the significance of the study was very important for me, working on my own city contributed on changing my perspectives. The process with the interviewees was incredible; the learning was very interactive, and interdisciplinary. The research recomposes some of my opinions, and rethinking issues about Skopje primary, but also in general for the subject involved in the thesis. It was really great experience.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 The procedure

In order to discuss the main questions in the dissertation except the selected theoretical framework, the thesis is based on field work, the descriptive content analyses of the selected case studies (initiatives), and qualitative method of research, the interviews.

The procedure for research was not conventional. I was mainly following a sort of bottom up methodology for constructing the direction of the thesis. The field work was important phase of the research. In the first phase I created the basis and info concerning the initiatives and movements in Skopje, mainly from newspapers and articles. Following the chronology of the initiatives and movements, the interviews were conducted.

At the beginning it was very unpredictable process, because the results from the interviews actually were a sort of a compass in what direction the thesis will evolve. After I finished the field work, I continue my further literature research.

2.2 Case studies and criteria

Since the project SK2014 has significant role in the emergence of the activist wave in Skopje, the main criteria for choosing the selected initiatives and case studies was the relation with the project SK2014. For the catalogue, in total nine initiatives were chosen, First Arch brigade, Freedom Square, Park defenders, I love GTC, Skopje is not Disneyland, Singing Skopjans, Anonymous art “guerrilla” actions and some review of autonomous centres in Skopje.

2.3 The qualitative method of research – The interviews

The qualitative research focused on bringing on the surface, both the objective opinion and subjective perception of a certain topic. A

qualitative research interview seeks to cover both a factual and a meaning level, though it is usually more difficult to interview on a meaning level. (KVALE, 1996, page 32). Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, to further investigate their responses. (COLDWELL and HERBST, 2004, page 54).

This qualitative method of research was very useful in Skopje context, moreover the timing when I conducted the interviews was important, it was the period in the explicit peak of the movement Colourful Revolution and the interviewees were even more than motivated to discuss on the topic. The interviews are an important point of the research, because they actually unveil the authenticity of the events in Skopje, and contributed into creating more intimate elaboration for the subject.

For the research I have conducted in total eighteen interviews. Most of the interviews were conducted with face to face conversation. The interviews were directed towards two main categories of interviewees, based on two different prepared surveys divided into two sets of questions.

The first category is activists that are directly involved in civic activism, founders and leaders of certain movements. From the interviewees: (INT1) **AHMETI**, Safet, (АХМЕТИ, Сафет) – member of I Protest; (INT2) **ANONIMOUS** – member of anonymous group of art “guerrilla” actions; (INT3) **BOGOEVSKI**, Pavle, (БОГОЕВСКИ, Павле) – one of the main leaders and founders of the Colourful Revolution; (INT4) **DOMAZETOVSKA**, Snežana, (ДОМАЗЕТОВСКА, Снежана) - member of the First Arch brigade; (INT5) **GOČEV**, Aleksandar, (ГОЧЕВ, Александар) - member of Park defenders; (INT6) **KOTESKA**, Jasna, (КОТЕСКА, Јасна) - Professor at the University Sc. Cyril and Methodius, ex member of Professor's plenum; (INT7) **NAUMOVSKI**, Nikola, (НАУМОВСКИ, Никола) - one of the founders of Freedom Square and also active member and

founder of Singing Skopjans; (INT8) **PAVLOVSKA**, Danica, (ПАВЛОВСКА, Даница) - founder of I love Gtc, and director of the Association of Architects in Macedonia; (INT9) **TOŠEVSKI**, Igor, (ТОШЕВСКИ, Игор) - artist and one of the founders of Kooperacija; (INT10) **TRAJKOVA**, Marina, (ТРАЈКОВА, Марина) - member of Singing Skopjans;

The questionnaire for these interviewees is more detailed and concerns matters involved around the organization and work of the initiative. The survey is divided into four main categories. The first part is general about the initiative, the essence of the activist action, main reason for organization, inspiration from other initiatives and goals. The second part is about networks and organization, questions for collaboration with local and Balkan initiatives, and relation with SK2014. The third part is mainly about urban dimension, how the initiative perceives and influences the urban dimension in Skopje, and the project SK2014. The fourth part is focus on the results, transformative power, next step, possible outcomes etc.

The second categories of interviewees consist of diversity of intellectuals from different fields. From the interviewees: (INT11) **BLACKWOOD**, John – an art researcher from Scotland, work at Gray’s School of Art, Aberdeen, since 2015 working on a book on Critical Contemporary Art in Macedonia; (INT12) **GEŠOSKA**, Iskra, (ГЕШОСКА, Искра) - president of Civic Association Kontrapunkt and president of Association of Independent Cultural Scene of Macedonia, active in the field of cultural policies since 1994; (INT13) **GRČEV**, Miroslav, (ГРЧЕВ, Мирослав) – an Architect and Urban Planner, a professor of urban planning at the Faculty of Architecture in Skopje; (INT14) **JAKIMOVSKA**, Ilina, (ЈАКИМОВСКА, Илина) - professor at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Faculty of Sciences in Skopje, a writer; (INT15) **JANČEVSKI**, Vladimir, (ЈАНЧЕВСКИ, Владимир) - independent researcher, works in the field of contemporary art, art theory and visual studies; (INT16) **JOVANOVIĆ**, Branimir, (ЈОВАНОВИЌ, Бранимир) - currently a visiting researcher at the University of Turin, Department of Economics and Statistics, a researcher at the Association of Economic

Researcher, Skopje; (INT17) **PROKOPIEV**, Aleksandar, (ПРОКОПИЕВ, Александар) - novelist, essayist, poet, founder of postmodernism in Macedonian contemporary literature and currently professor at the Institute of Macedonian Literature at the Ss.Cyril and Methodius University; (INT18) **SAVESKI**, Zdravko, (САВЕСКИ, Здравко) - doctor of political science, long-time activist, trade unionist and member of the Presidium of the newly formed Left party.

The questionnaire for these interviewees is more open, focusing on personal opinion about the appearance of the activist wave, the main reasons and the important activist practices that can be detected in Skopje, the results and consequences, and personal story about Skopje, and the right to the city in this context. The main idea was to record people's intimate relation with the topic and how they feel about certain perspectives.

The questionnaires are covering qualitative insights concerning initiative organization, knowledge, values, personal opinions, feelings etc.

2.4 Limitation of the study

Due to the complexity and diversity of the scope of the activism in Skopje it is impossible in one master thesis to discuss about all aspects, or analyzing all elements in deep manner. However, if the thesis is going to develop in further research there are some considerations that can be useful.

Grounded on contentions politics, deeper analyses should be taken into account for further research. When discussing about political opportunities, they can be significantly different in different cities in the country, so therefore in order to give more real image of the political opportunities and constrains, the ruling system on the level of the city should be taken into account. Moreover, opportunities can differ significantly within the same city according to their local actors, and ruling municipalities. Political systems are more open in particular places and at particular scales; elite alignments are rarely stable everywhere;

the presence or absence of elite allies varies from place to place; the state's capacity and propensity for repression vary not only among states but also among regions and highly localized geographic areas within states (MILLER, 2000, page 21). So, different locations can have different level of openness and availability of political resources. In Skopje case this is quite visible.

If the thesis will be used for further research, the elaboration will be more complete if deeper understanding and elaboration will be focused towards the whole scope of initiatives and movements, initiatives focusing on different issues should be taken into deeper analyses.

Apart from the literature framework, the thesis is grounded on the conducted interviews, reflecting a qualitative perspective of the subject, which I think that is strength of the research because it gives authentic interpretation, anyway quantitative data research should be analyzed additionally.

Finally, in my opinion a further synthesis of many others perspectives and disciplines can be taken into account in order to elaborate the dynamics of this particular case. But, even if all resources and data are available, still it will not be perfectly complete due to the interdisciplinary approaches of the subject and temporal dimension of the fieldwork. So, my aim was to understand the dynamics or processes that evolve during the activist wave in Skopje and their possible implications.

3. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN SKOPJE; ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND SPATIAL CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction - Social movements and contentious politics

Social movements have always been active agents for society recomposing. From the past until today, diversity of movements made significant changes in the societies. Starting from the Revolutionary wave in 1848 in Paris, the University Reforms in Argentina 1918, the Soviet Revolution in 1917, the Seattle General Strike 1919, the Student and Urban based movements in 1968 (starting from Paris, New York, Mexico), the Anti globalization protests in 1999 etc.

Nowadays, public space become central in today's resilience. Resistance towards privatization of public space is taken global scales, as Castells argues, that is the critical moment, in which the networks go from outrage to hope. In public space, they can begin deliberating and debating. They can symbolically lay claim to the city. Symbolic squares, avenues. They are simultaneously tactical and symbolic: if you block the main square or street, the city grinds to a halt. But they are urban social movements that demand recognition in public space (CASTELLS, interview). Recent events starting from the Egyptian protest on Tahrir square, the occupy Wall Street movement, the Greek rebellion in Syntagma square are tightly connected to a specific places. Moreover, resilience struggling for different issues like urban protests in Rio de Janeiro, reclaiming housing rights in Amsterdam, uprisings in the Middle East are using public space in order to claim their right to the city.

Throughout history a lot has been written about social movements, particularly in the last years the field and scholars started to expand a lot. Consequently due to the diversity and the frame of emergence of social movements and scholars the definition and meaning of the term has been changed significantly in the last years.

The main shift has been made in the 60's starting with the civil rights movement in the United States and broadening in the 68 in Europe, which expanded and restructured in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 70s and 80s, scholars focused on the interaction between the social movements and emergence of new restructures of the society, in terms of economy, politics and culture. Since then scholars of social movements following the "new" dynamics in its elaboration, recombine the theory and research into main fields of three leading scholarly approaches: the resource mobilization, the political process model, and the constructivist approach based on collective behaviour and cultural emphasizes in its elaboration.

The resource mobilization theory (scholars like McCarthy and Zald) are focused mainly on internal organization of the social movements, based on structural approach and availability of resources for mobilization. Mancur Olson raised the question about collectiveness in social movements, moreover why people mobilize in collective action. Since then the theory diffused into many other scholars trying to elaborate the question not only based by rational means, but other important elements like values, identity, culture etc. The further approach of important scholars like Alberto Melucci and Manuel Castells emphasized the framing of identity, spatiality, and culture into the explanation of emergence of social movements.

Following the 80's, the next significant shift in the theory was made in the 90's when the wave of restructure in society and democracy opened new issues for research concerning the study of social movements. Scholars like, Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow changed the focus from the importance of the actors to the relation of the state as central point, and emphasized the importance of the spatial dimension. According to Tilly and Tarrow, social movements are connected to the historical context and space, considering both, the movements and the participants. The state became both a target for claims and a place in which to fight our disputes with competing groups (TARROW, 1998, page 67). Contentious collective action is the basis of social movements (TARROW, 1998, page

3).Social movements are collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities (TARROW, 1998, page 4).

According to Tarrow's elaboration, what distinguish the traditional from modern social movements is the repertoires of contention, the new repertoire is national, flexible and based on autonomous form of association created for struggle (TARROW, 1998, page 42). But as Tarrow explains, the repertoire is at once a structural and a cultural concept, involving not only what people do when they engaged in conflict with others but what they know how to do and how others are expect them to do (TARROW, 1998, page 30).In this sense in order to examine the elements for emergence of particular social movements framing plays important role.

Hence, framing is a dynamic ongoing process. Framing processes are affected by number of elements of the socio-cultural context (BENFORD and SNOW, 2000, page 628). Just as the political opportunity structure constraints facilitates movement frame and framing activities, so does the cultural context in which movement activity is embedded (BENFORD and SNOW, 2000, page 629). Social movements are not only a result of strategic or rational actions, opening opportunities etc, but they are processes connected to cultural dimensions, beliefs system and practices. Social movements are conceived of as producers of meaning and functioning as signifying agents (BENFORD and SNOW, 1991, page 151).Hence, social movements challenge dominant meanings thus transforming mainstream culture and institutions (BAIERLE, 1998; PAMELA, 2003, page 229).

Starting from this point, the theoretical shift was restructured from the old discussion and moving towards interdisciplinary and context approach for elaboration of contention, placing the social movements and their dynamics historically, explaining the causes and processes of movements. The new context gives more precise understanding that studying social movements it's not only a straight relation of movements

and outcomes, but rather dynamics and consequences of the movements are what is important. As Tilly argues (1999, page 268) “success or failure hardly describe most of the movements effect (PAMELA, 2003, page 220).

The interdisciplinary approach is giving opportunities to elaborate the emergence through both structural means and cultural and ideological reasons. The approaches become a challenging field for further elaboration today.

3.2 The context of social movements – Introduction

Each national – cultural context explains not only how but why different goals converged or became disjoint, as well as how the organizational operators of the movements connected, disconnected, or took over, the relationship between urban demands, state, and society (CASTELLS, 1983, page 325). Political processes, socioeconomic restructuring, collective identity construction, issue framing, and the mobilization of resources are examined in interaction and, increasingly, in their historical context. The interaction of processes is recognized to unfold over time; the past clearly shapes the possibilities of the present and future (MILLER, 2000, page 36).

The socio economic frame is a sort of a barometer that explains the mode of a certain processes. In order to analyze deeper the emergence of social movements in Skopje, it is significantly important to take into account the macro frame of political, social, economic and spatial transformation that occurred during the post- Yugoslavian transition.

3.3 The political, social and economic transition in the Western Balkan cities



MAP OF YUGOSLAVIA

Before explaining the transition process, I want briefly to introduce some crucial and significant important issues about Yugoslavia. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) consisted of six socialistic republics: Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia together with two autonomous provinces in Serbia, Kosovo and Vojvodina. Yugoslavia was a mix of ethnic groups and religions, with Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism and Islam being the main religions. Facing with the falling of communism and coming back of nationalism in Eastern Europe during the late 1980s and early 1990s, Yugoslavia experienced a period of intense political and economic crisis, central government weakened and the political parties on one hand

were forcing the independence of the republics and on the other hand urged greater power of certain republics. Due to the unbalanced political power and resurgent of ethnicity Yugoslavia faced with two devastated civil wars and conflicts. The wars and the political ideology managed to erode the common Yugoslav identity and create mistrust among different ethnic groups, which resulted into future collapse of the country. So, by 1991 the separation of the SFRY started with the declarations of independence of Slovenia and Croatia, and by the year of 1992 the further declarations of independence from Macedonia as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina were announced, so Serbia and Montenegro were left the only one by the Union of Serbian and Montenegro which ended in 2006.

All countries in ex Yugoslavia followed a common trajectory of transition in two main aspects, political change from communism to democracy, and economic change from socialism to market economy. The third common aspect of the process of the transition was the transformation of the local governments in which the new institutions took the responsibilities for all kinds of services.

The transition of the post socialist Yugoslavian cities had serious consequences in many levels. The first decade of the transition from one system to another was faced with series of explicit events, conflicts, destabilizations, civil wars etc. The last decade was marked with facing many problems, firstly on economic level (the industries transition), social level (the demographic and income level changes), spatial transformations and governance (reestablishment of local planning institutions and land transformation due to the trends of the new ways of production).

The political transition from socialist to democracy in Yugoslavia was followed by a transformation from a single party to a multi - party democratic system. Yugoslavia's political institutions were dominated by one single communist party until the 90's. What was interesting that it was a communist country, but did not follow the Soviet ideology,

functioning between the West and the East politics. The decision of the political power was divided among the republics (the federations) with a certain division in the responsibilities, with no dominant leader. All the Republics had equal political power, but the centers of the ruling institution were placed in the main cities, like Belgrade, Ljubljana, significantly more developed than the rest of the cities.

Due to the external and internal influences, braking down the bipolar structure with falling down the Berlin wall in 1989, and the civil wars that occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia led to a political instability and redefinition of the political identity of the country. After 1989, the political transformation led to a domination of some countries and destroying the concept of the national unity, rising of the nationalism was dominated in some countries which contributed to division by ethnicity.

The main changes in the economic transition were marked with shifting the already existing industries into service oriented, information economies and parallel preparing for the new trends of the global economy flow. The economy shift had reflection in all levels, both social aspects and spatial reorganization of the cities, resulting with high rates of unemployment, increased poverty rates, social inequalities, and creating differentiation of the urban rent due to the economic attractiveness.

In addition to the economic transition difficulties, the social transition in the post Yugoslavian cities had negative reflections due to the complexity of the previous Yugoslavian regime which was characterized with very strong social system. The slogan working class, the “middle class” of citizens, was part of the social progress in terms of possessing social ownership and directly influencing the labor in which the main goal was the common interests, the main aspects of the brotherhood and unity ideology, equal rights in terms of income which implies distribution according to work and equal rights in politics. As a consequence of mishandled privatisation, the “working class”, suffered

the most, thousands of people were left without job and became the most vulnerable group of people.

Although during Yugoslavian period all countries followed common trajectory, I need to clarify that the pace of the transition and development of the success countries was different, which was depending firstly from the initial development of the federation as part of Yugoslavia, the destabilization caused by the ethnic conflicts and internal and external policies of the country.

Starting from the fact that Slovenia was the most developed republic as part of Yugoslavia, it also remained with a successful economic transition. Slovenia during the transition years chose an economic model that was different from those adopted elsewhere in the other success countries. Most of the success countries decided to open up for foreign investments, which resulted into rapid process of privatization, in contrary Slovenia adopted gradual process of transition, and pluralist party system accompanied with social associations, corporative politics, characterized with consensus building, involvement of trade unions, non government organizations as part of the policy making. Significant element in the process of transition was the position of the country, which is culturally closer to the West and Hungary, going more towards the Western model of economic and social system.

In contrary to Slovenia the other success countries like Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina did not followed much of successful stories of transition. The transition was accompanied with a lot of controversy, conflicts and civil wars. Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina faced with civil wars, the wars in both countries had tremendous consequences in the process of the transition. So, the first decades of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina transition was oriented more into solving war related problems. Due to the war situation those countries experienced slower democratization process, but this resulted quite differently in the development of the countries. Except Slovenia, Croatia in contrary to Bosnia and Herzegovina, managed to achieve a

highest economic growth from the success countries. Macedonia was the only country that split from Yugoslavia peacefully, but its transition pace was similar to the one in Serbia and the rest of the countries followed by a reforms in the economic, social and political sphere, accompanied with internal and external post events that influenced the transition.

3.4 The political, social and economic transition in the Macedonia



MAP OF MACEDONIA

Macedonia- General information

Geographic position: The country is located in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula, South East Europe.

Neighbouring countries: Bulgaria to the East, Republic of Greece to the South, Republic of Albania to the west, and Serbia to the North.

Territory: It occupies an area of 25,713 sq.km. It is land-locked country, predominantly mountainous with striking massifs, as well as ravines and planes.

Climate: Influenced by two major climate zones – Mediterranean and Continental – with variations

Estimated Population: 2,069,162 (2014)

Social and political system: Parliamentary Republic

Capital: Skopje with 545,228 inhabitants (according to the 1994 Census)

Economically active population (in 000): 823.8 inhabitants (According to Labour Force Survey, 1998)

National currency: Denar, market determined exchange rate depending on supply and demand GDP 1998, per capita: 2.9% HDI 1998: 0.793

Language: The official language is Macedonian and Cyrillic alphabet

Ethnicity: 64.2% Macedonians, 25.2% Albanians, 3.9% Turks, 2.7% Romani, 1.8% Serbs, 2.2% Others.

Moving back more deeply into Macedonia's mode of transition, I can say that although Macedonia followed some similarities with the other former countries, the country has been marked with its one specific transition characteristics. Over the last twenty years Macedonia reforms are focused mainly on restructuring and establishment of market economy, state building and democratic development.

The economic transition and establishment of the market economy in Macedonia followed rather different path from some of the former Yugoslavian countries. The Macedonian economy is small relying mainly on import. The transition process of opening up the market was not followed by governmental policy, except the privatization of several

biggest companies; the other companies handled the process of privatization by themselves. This resulted in even more complications and irregularities in which certain people involved took advantages of the whole situation. In 2001, the country became a member of the World Trade Organization and opened up the borders for foreign investments. One of the most invested sectors and activities is the service sector, particularly in relation to the financial sector and tourism.

Except the economic restructuring, the political reform towards democratic development was one important part of the transition process. Since its independence, starting from 1991, Macedonia today is a parliamentary democracy, the Head of State is the President of the Republic and the government is led by a prime minister. The transition in Macedonia to a multi-party system was marked with the formation of several political parties after the 90's. There are two dominant parties: VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM. VMRO-DPMNE (Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian Unity) is the right political party. The party's goals are traditionally oriented towards family, tradition, religion, private property etc. SDSM (The Social Democratic Union of Macedonia) is the left-oriented party that ruled SR Macedonia as a republic of SFR Yugoslavia from 1942-1990. The basic principles are development and democracy, equality and solidarity, peace and security etc. There are also two dominant Albanian parties: DUI (The Democratic Union for Integration), which is the largest Albanian party in Macedonia formed immediately after the conflict in 2001 and DPA, the second largest party (Party of Albanians). Today's ruling party is the right political party VMRO-DPMNE.

The process of state building in Macedonia was marked with several post-war events that made a remarkable impact on Macedonian social, economic and political development, this resulted in a painful process of social transition with tremendous impact on the identity and the social status of the citizens of the country. During 1993, because of Greece's objection, the country was forced to enter the United Nations by a provisional name as "The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

(FYROM). Today, Greece continues to reject the use of Macedonia as official name because it perceives this name to imply a territorial claim against Greece. Greece's obstinacy not only stopped Macedonia's NATO membership, but also was one of the main obstacles for further negotiations for candidacy of European Union. The country applied for EU membership in 2004 and became a candidate in 2005.

Except the Greek embargo and the name rejection, in 2001 crucial event that marked Macedonia destabilization was the armed conflict between Albanian rebels and government forces that occurred after the crises in Kosovo in 1999. The Albanians are the largest minority ethnic community in Macedonia, constituted 25% of the whole population, since the independence they refused to accept the status on ethnic minority and forcing towards a bi-ethnic state system. The conflict finished the same year, with an official agreement, the so-called Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA), followed by a series of political and constitutional reforms, fulfilling much of the demands of the Macedonian Albanians since 90's. In 2001, as part of the conflict-prevention efforts, Macedonia signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union that envisaged the successive liberalization of trade and established an institutional framework for cooperation.

Another important external event that had influence on quality of life in Macedonia was the world crisis in the last quarter of 2008 and fully in 2009. It caused a decline in economy, the public earning and unemployment rates decreased.

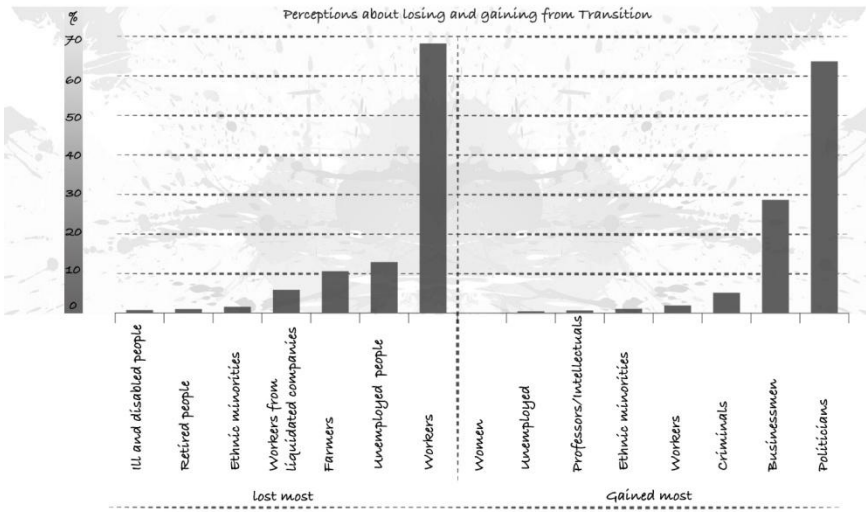
3.5 Main problems in Macedonia

In order to authenticate the specific problems that occurred in Macedonia after the transition, I will refer to a research; "Perceptions of Transition and the Crisis in Macedonia" made by Mirosljub Šukarov which is grounded and use resource and date conducted from the "Social Exclusion Survey 2009" made by (UNDP Macedonia, 2009). The

comments and the graphs are taken from the conducted research and paper and plus some other observations are added. The research provides some interesting insides about the results of the perception of the transition process in Macedonia which I think that are interesting for my research work. The survey has been conducted in 2009, and is describing the difference of citizen's perceptions about the pre-transitional period and its effects in 1989 with comparison to a current situation in 2009.

Before detecting the main consequences of transition and the main problems that Macedonia is facing nowadays, first I need to point that we need to keep in mind that Macedonia was one of the poorest republics in former Yugoslavia, the county had low investments during Yugoslavia also, and today is one of the poorest countries in Europe, GDP per capita in terms of purchasing power is about a quarter of the European average. After the period from 1995 to 1998 and the post-conflict, in the period of 2001-2004 the GDP growth rate in Macedonia started to increase. However, over many years the country tried to change its perspective in terms of economics and governance. In 2009 as a consequence of the world economic crises, the development of the country was negative.

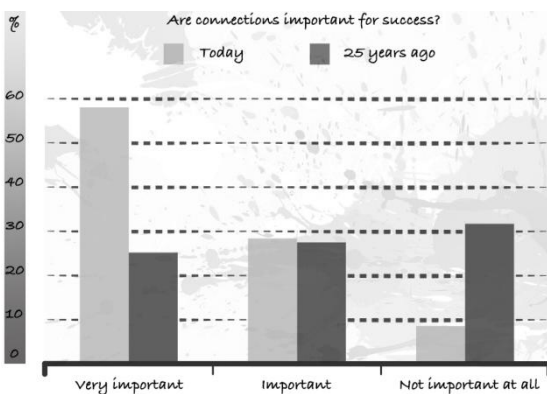
Unemployment has been one of the major factors for social exclusion in Macedonia. The unemployment rate today is over 30%, and high proportion of the population (over40%) is at risk of social exclusion. After the unsuccessful privatization process in the 1990s, the unemployment was due to the mishandled government policy for privatization in which the ones that lost the most were the so called "working class", in contrary the ones that benefit the most were people in favorable positions in that period of the society. Also the research conducted from the survey, (as we can see from Graph A) is showing that the citizen's perception of gaining and losing from transition is following, the workers are the ones that lost the most and in contrary the ones that gained are the politicians and businessmen.



Source: UNDP Macedonia (2009)

Graph A

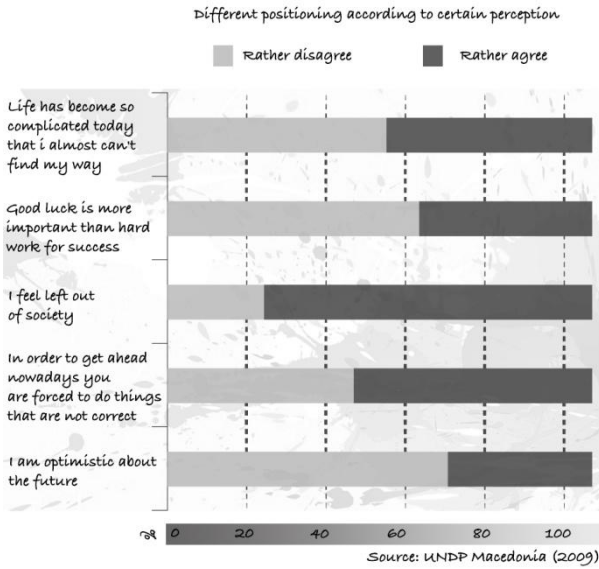
Except high rate of unemployment and certain inequalities that arise from the process of privatization, what concerns today Macedonian society is the strong identification towards nationality. The nationalism has been significantly present since Macedonia gain independence in 1991. The conflict between Albanians guerillas and Macedonian that occurred 2011 made the situation even more radical, the division by ethnicity is emphasized not only in people's private life, but has been used as one of the main mechanisms for political mobilization.



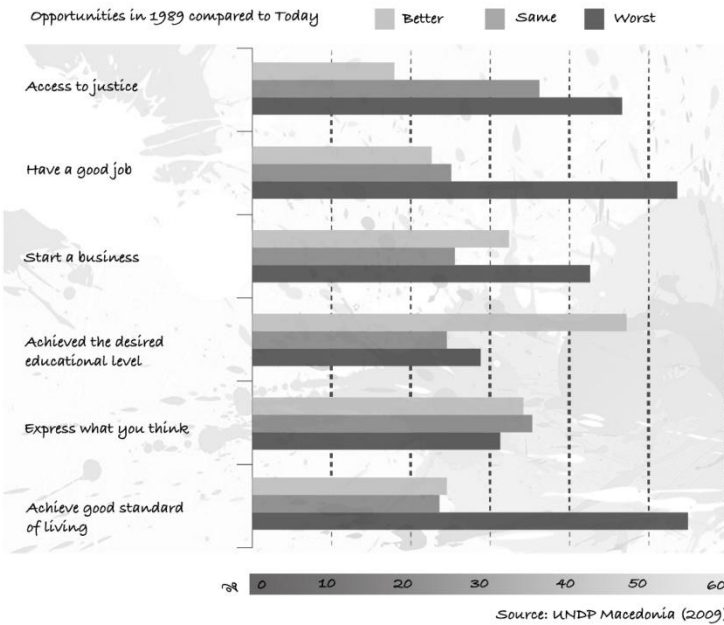
Source: UNDP Macedonia (2009)

Except the ethnicity, the politicization and party alienation are serious problems in Macedonia. The political party and the state is dominating in social and civil relations. In order to fulfill obligations many companies and individuals alienated to the ruling political parties and government in order to sustain in the society. The party alienation created a sort of a division between “us and them”, it spread in every segment of people’s life, starting with professional life, institutions, the media, to personal life and friendship. Due to the political party alliances in the professional fields there is a lack of expertise provided by the institutions, because many professionals are usually rejected in order to be replaced by unskilled party members which are lacking expertise for the following working places. Policy making are inadequate, characterized with a lack of experience for democratic decisions, political and social practices, without any pre evaluation and reduction. The civic society was also present during socialism but, in that time the role was not nongovernmental, it was basically promoted by the state policy defined by The League of Communists. Today the membership in civil society is twice less (14%), then the membership in political parties (33%).

One explanation for this situation can be the inherited political culture from the previous system, because many people in Macedonia have different values from the Western countries when it comes to politics, they refer to politicians as authorities for control over different issues. As it is point out in the survey research, the main perception of the citizens is distrust towards the authorities, or relying among them for a particular reason in order to be able to function in the society. It is not surprising that the data from the survey indicates that the situation is even more radical, in 2009 participants stated that political figures nowadays have stronger influence than under the socialist regime, so as we can see from the data above, citizens think that the easiest way to solve professional or personal problems is through connections. Except party alienation, we can see from the survey that one of the main problems is social exclusion. Citizens feel that they are excluded from the society with really small enthusiasm for a better life in the future.



Graph C



Graph D

The exclusion is due to the limited access to justice, standards of living, job opportunities, all of them considerable lower than in the pre-transitional period in 1989. So, we can conclude that the research based on the survey is complimenting the general situation in Macedonia. People feel deep dissatisfaction for the system in comparison with the socialist period in 1989, which resulted into general mistrust for the authorities, institutions and among citizens.

3.6 The Spatial transition in Western Balkan cities

The post-socialist cities and societies have experienced dramatic economic, social, and political changes. Inequality and poverty have increased, with significant implications for cities (TSENKOVA, 2012, page 1). The process of transition is crucial here, because it was exactly the process of transition that influences the urban landscapes of these cities. These are related to patterns of spatial transformation in three principal domains: (1) spaces of production and consumption, reflecting the economic transition; (2) differentiation in residential spaces, associated with the social transition; and (3) new approaches to planning and service delivery, resulting from the transition in government (TSENKOVA, 2012, page 1). Likewise, state socialism, with its emphasis on industrialization under the control of a centralized one-party state, created cities and ruled from them. Therefore, the cities of capitalism and socialism both shape and are shaped by their respective forms of economic organization, class formation and political structures (HARLOE, 1996, page 2).

If we are willing to understand more clearly the ideology behind, I think that it is significantly important to understand the spatial - political organization of the post – socialist cities because not by any coincidence the problems that arise in the process of the transition in these cities are actually bond tightly to the origins of the spatial organization during socialism.

When we are discussing about some aspects of the spatial organization of the socialist cities, I will refer to some reflections from David. M Smith in the chapter “The socialist city”, from the book *Cities after Socialism*. Behind the ideology of the spatial formation of the socialist cities, he is emphasizing the importance of the collective identity, which is strongly preferable rather than the individual identity. The internal structure of the socialist city was supposed to be planned to facilitate the delivery of a wide range of social services as means of collective consumption, in addition to facilitating the planned development of the productive forces in the interests of the efficient operation of the economy (SMITH, 1996, page 72). Based on the ideology of collectivity, the post socialist cities were spatially organized in districts or regions, not following the characteristics of the Western model of cities which follow the market principles of planning, where the position of the public space is usually allocated around the urban core with different kinds of services and facilities clustered around the centre. Turning to the process whereby socio-economic differentiation or inequality arises in the socialist city, this will clearly be different from what occurs under capitalism (SMITH, 1996, page 97).

The ideology of the collectivity was also quite visible in the land policies and land governance in the cities. Although the first two phases are characterized by the classical socialist process of land governance, followed by top down procedures of nationalization of the land, I can point that that the last phase was concentrated more towards “bottom up planning” with underling the self management processes and social ownership of land.

The Nationalization of the land started in 1946 with introducing of the law of Nationalization, settled according to the economy development in which the individual or private property was not formally excepted by the system, it was owned by the state, and by default considered as public. The nationalization was characterized with appropriation of majority of urban parcels of industries, parks, squares, historic places,

recreation areas, and also residential districts. The private ownership of the land was limited up to 10ha, or even not possible in most cases.

The next phase of moving towards new urban policy legislation started after the 1960s, where the self management system was also introduced in the spatial field in which the main purpose was to converge the process of economic, social and urban planning in one single. The social ownership was created on the basis of the social management, in which in this case urban land was treated as social land, actually the owner of the land was the society, as whole. The system has the relation among two actors, the state (in this case the society) and the workers. Here the rights of the workers were imposed by the political party, enterprises were not allowed to own assets, and they only own the right to use the land by its purposes. The self management policy replaced the centralized system with decentralized one.

All cities were guided by the general policy which was generated and ruled by the federation, but localized thorough the republics, in which the responsible principle ministries were authorized to revision the following ministries for Spatial planning, Environment, Management and Forestry etc and the proletariat of the self management communities were managed by the state (bureaucracy proponents, the political representatives) and the organizations (technocracy proponents, the economic representatives and the self managing communities. The Socialist land policy was characterized without participation of the citizens, excluding the public in general.

In order to explicitly address the important issues here, I will come back to the elaboration by Smith in which he is explaining that, socialist society was supposed to be relatively egalitarian, particularly in comparison with capitalist society (SMITH, 1996, page 77). The “to each according to the need”, actually created new different elites (actors) which were taking higher positions, and advantages in the spatial field, therefore the spatial organization in the cities resulted into monoliths blocks and areas of the cities differing according to the ones preferable

from the society. What is important to notice here is that, he points, the socio- economic conditions created segregation, not in extend to the one in the Western world, but presently for sure, and actually this division became even more visible in the process of the further transition in the cities(SMITH, 1996, page 96).

Moving back to the context, the self management system managed to transform Yugoslavian cities from underdeveloped agricultural cities to industrialized cities, although it's important to mention that the economic development in the cities was quite different, the northern part developed more rapidly (Slovenia, Vojvodina and Croatia), contrary to the other part, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro remained underdeveloped.

Due to the external influences and crises the self management system has been reformed, in 1989, the reforms started with transition towards a full market economy. The privatization programme was restricted due to the ethnic conflicts and the civil wars that occurred in Yugoslavia, so the process of privatization has been left now to the success countries independently, where each state adopt a new law of privatization.

The new process of privatization was marked by an intensive growth, where the parcels of the land of the factories, industries, different natural resources, and public land were sold and replaced with small service and information based facilities and banks which resulted in considerable spatial changes which followed the standard concept of organization of central activities. The urbanization trends also resulted in property development, contrary to the one of the Yugoslavian period with significant effects on rent prices, the commodification of public goods was a process due to the attraction of external investors, because of the low taxes and the cheap working labor, it resulted in rapidly increasing rent prices for the most attractive locations. The rent differential had impacts on socio-spatial structure of the cities, where the poor move towards the periphery of the city, this resulted into residential segregation base on ethnicity in some of the cities, especially

in Bosnia and Herzegovina where most of the cities are divided by ethnicity.

The process of transition over the last decades was faced with serious problems and also other issues followed, now the cities were facing problem to adjust the old system to the new global trends of space production and consumption. Due to the previously ruled system, now the institutions were lacking expertise, mechanism, experiences and cooperation to deal with the upcoming solution between the old socialist trends and new reforms. The process of decentralization and increased urban rents resulted in mishandled governance, all factories and most of the parts of the public land was governed in a non-transparent, informal manner and transformed into manipulative mechanism for accumulation of new capital, where most of the land was transferred to the ruling elites and the ongoing following parties in that time. The transition resulted in pressuring the process of transformations on even more institutions like the health care, the education system and even more conventional institutions like the defense and the police. As Markus Harloe is pointing, privatization will not necessarily lead to the establishment of a Western-style free market economy in these countries. This is because of the ability of powerful social groups and their networks to impede marketization and capture the assets released by privatization for themselves (HARLOE, 1996, page8).

Except the common existing issues that rise from the transition like, privatization, commercialization of public spaces, liberalization of the urban policy, increase of the rent, gentrification, conflicts and controversy from restitution of property, inadequate state policies for urban planning, recently the cities had been influenced by the economic and financial crisis from 2008 which had economic and political implications. Another important factor was the candidacy for the membership of European Union which had important consequences for post socialist cities, because all of these countries proclaimed full EU membership as a main objective of their foreign policy. The European

policy was a starting point for a further reorganizing and transforming the social, economic and political system in these cities.

3.7 The spatial transition in Macedonia

During the transition period like the other Yugoslavian countries, Macedonia was facing with several challenges in the spatial planning field. The challenge was due to the transformation of right to state property (social property) in the Yugoslavian system and bringing back the right to private property due to the market system. One of the crucial moments of transformation was the land restitution and privatization.

After the transition the country faced with several crucial problems that influenced the spatial configuration of the cities. Due to the expansion of the market economy, the biggest cities in Macedonia emerged as cores for economic growth and investments, in contrary the rural areas were left without any basic service and conditions for living. The imbalance of the flow of people, especially workers created overcrowding, demand for new housing and rent prices differentiation in the biggest cities.

The main change was made in restructuring the old system inherited during Yugoslavia. Although the process of decentralization in Macedonia began since the Yugoslavian period, once the country gain its independence the restructure and reorganization of the mechanism of governance occurred. The reconstruction of the governance mostly occurred as transformation or redirecting the competences to municipality structures.

The governance of the country has been followed by two main divisions, central and municipal. The new spatial planning system in Macedonia is regulated by the law of physical planning, construction and housing. The transfer of competence to local level has not been finished, the process is still ongoing. At this time only several municipalities have full responsibility of land governance.

The administrative framework is divided into: National legislation, which is divided into Law of spatial and urban planning and Law on construction. There are two main levels of government: Central level divided among: Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Agency for Spatial Planning and Ministry of Transport and Communications NALAS. The Local level is divided among: City of Skopje, Municipalities (84 and City of Skopje), Municipal Assemblies. The country is also divided into eight statically regions.

The central level, the spatial plan of Macedonia is elaborated upon by the spatial plan of the region, spatial plan of special interest of the country, spatial plan of the municipality, spatial plan of the city of Skopje, state urban planning documentation and architectural urban planning project. The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and its agency for spatial planning manages the spatial planning process on behalf of the government.

The local level urban plans are adopted at the local level as General Urban Plan (GUP), Detailed Urban Plan (DUP), and Urban Plan for Villages (UPV), Urban Plan Outside of Populated Places (UPOPP), Local urban planning documentation and architectural urban planning project. The preparation of the GUP, UPV and UPOPP requires conditions for spatial planning, which are linked with the spatial plan of the Republic of Macedonia. These plans are issued by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP) through the Agency for Spatial Planning. DUP is subjected to an extract of the GUP at the local level. Urban plans at the local level are the responsibility of the municipalities; the city of Skopje is responsible only for the GUP for the city of Skopje.

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia is responsible for the spatial plan at the central level through the MoEPP. The urban planning process is managed and governed by the municipalities through their sector or department for urban planning where the technical work is performed by the municipal staff (municipal administration) in the sector for urban planning. The required planning analyses are performed

by the municipality in accordance with the law. The urban plans are developed by a licensed company. The content of the urban plans is prescribed by the law on spatial and urban planning and by the rulebook on the content of the urban plans. The law is adopted by the Parliament and the Rulebooks by the government through its line ministries. The content is a legal obligation and must be applied. Plans are adopted in two phases: Draft of the urban plan and Proposal of the urban plan. The urban plans are valid in accordance with the laws and regulations. These laws and regulations limit the possibilities for simplifying the implementation and adoption procedure.

3.8 Introduction - The wave of urban struggles in the Western Balkan cities

The process of transition created a common ground between the activists in the success Yugoslavian countries, explicitly reflected in restructuring the economic, political and social life of citizens. That's why, it's not surprising that it started from the common resistance against usurpation of public goods such as parks, hills, forest, urban plots and defending the rights of workers, students, intellectuals which are against commercialization and commodification of institutions.

The movements that arise in the Balkans are a cry and demand for transformation and change of the Balkan society, struggle for appropriating the public spaces by social interest goals, not by capital need, and deleting the nationalism that raised after the collapse of Yugoslavia, in order to bring back the lost "brotherhood and solidarity".

The activist movements in the Balkan cities, although they differ in their strategies, methods of struggle, they share a common ground, and that is, the inherited weak civil tradition from the socialism focused towards services production not politics articulation, politicization influences in almost all level in civic society.

3.9 Right to the city movements in the Western Balkan city

The Macedonian struggle is certainly related and influenced by the movements that appeared in the other success Yugoslavian cities. The birth of the urban struggle in Skopje emerged as a continuation of the events that occurred in Zagreb in 2009. The origins of the urban resistance started in Croatia with forming the initiative “Right to the city”, and afterwards spread across Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The “Right to the city” initiative emerged in Zagreb in 2006, it was self organized in order to defend the Flower Square in downtown in Zagreb and the defending of Varšavska Street in Zagreb. The project of reconstruction of the Flower Square was a decision of the ruling party to change the urban plan according to the demands of a private developer. The Initiative tried to oppose the decision by writing a petition which afterwards resulted into protesting, and creation of forums. With all the effort “Right to the city” initiative did not manage to stop the construction of the project but it succeeded into encouraging other civic initiatives to articulate and defend their common interests.

Subsequently after the protests in Zagreb similar situation occurred in Dubrovnik, a huge tourist attraction project was planned in the park at the hill above the old town of Dubrovnik, it was supported by the political structure as an excuse for economic development and opening possibilities for employment. The decision of the authorities resulted into opposition and organization of the initiative “Srdž is ours” which reacted in several protests and holding a referendum. Although the referendum did not succeed, the initiative succeed to transform from a social change association to “Srdž is the city”, a platform for political articulation for defending the commons.

The initiatives, “Srdž is the city” and the “Right to the city” encouraged other people into building more serious political and social articulated society. This was a basis for developing the struggle for the right to the city and bringing back the spaces in other neighbors’ countries, like Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia.

The defending of urban spaces in Serbia was inspired by the past events in Zagreb. The more significant urban struggle event was organized in 2011, where an old abandoned factory site in the historic center of the city at Kalemegdan Fortress was planned for a complex of hotel, shopping center and sports facilities. The initiative struggled to stress the importance of the park at Kalemegdan fortress and also raise the question of transparency, media coverage and participation in the planning processes.

An even more controversial project has been realized in the media this year in Belgrade, Serbia, introducing the new waterfront project called Belgrade Waterfront, promoted by the Serbian government and funded by an external investor from the United Emirates. The project will completely change the urban landscape of Sava Riverbank, in which instead of a space for common needs will be converted into a space for private, political and economic interests of the elites. Activist from the initiative "Drowning Belgrade" is advocating against the project and the struggle is still ongoing.

The resistance against usurpation of public spaces expanded in Bosnia and Herzegovina, when in 2012, a protest organized by the initiative "Parks is ours", was organized in Banja Luka, the second largest city in the country. The movement was the first kind of a collective gathering against the authorities, which the main goal was preventing the illegal destruction of the park due to a construction project in which the developer received permits to demolish the existing structures in order to build a complex containing businesses and residences buildings without any public usage. The protest started with a peaceful occupation of the park, marching on the street and collecting of a petition followed, with around 6000 signature. The situation got even more complicated when due to the construction of the project the nearby owner, Zelko Vulic was left without access to his home and working place and he was arrested during protesting and defending its own property.

Although the initiative “ Park is ours” did not succeed in preservation of the historic park, it transformed from a park defending initiative to a wider collective initiative dealing with issues such as transparency of projects and participation for decision making, nowadays with more than a thousands of supporters on the social networks.

3.10 The wave of “Plenumisation” in the Western Balkan cities

The student’s plenums in Skopje were initiated from the student’s movements for free higher education that appeared in many cities in the Balkans. The series of movements resulted into creation of “Plenumisation” wave in the Balkans, recruiting people with different social backgrounds, from artist, intellectuals and citizens. The events created a sort of domino effect, starting with the occupation of the Faculty in Croatia in 2009 to the creation of the “Social Uprising” in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with expansion of plenum wave in Macedonia and some other ex Yugoslavian countries.

For the creation of the wave I am going to focus on three important points, the origin of the plenums (which happened in Zagreb, Croatia), extending and the wave (which happened in Bosnia and Herzegovina).

The Plenum wave in Croatia started in the spring 2009, when a student initiative right for free education occupied the Faculty of Humanities and Sciences in Zagreb. The peaceful occupation of students was an outcome of the movement in 2008 in which students were struggling against the problems caused by the introduction of the Bologna reforms in the education system in Croatia (introduction of fees for graduate courses). It was very obvious that one of the main goals was struggle against the commercialization of the universities, in which students were demanding fully government – funded education in all levels. The students organized the first largest protest since the independence of Croatia which was followed with a creation of student plenums (assemblies).

During the first wave of university occupations in Croatia, the students succeeded in recomposing the first serious public critique and during the next wave of the movement they managed to widen their prospective and directly cooperate with other social groups, primarily workers(farmer's plenums), which now play an important role in the movement. The collaboration played an important role into diversification of the movement and spreading the platform on a much wider level. The Protests on the University of Zagreb and the self organized movement called "Facebook protests" opened a space for massive civic protests where citizens with different political opinions united to protest against the Croatian government and their supporters, raising the so called "Croatian Spring".

As a result of the previous flow, the most significant and influential plenum movement emerged in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2013 and 2014 as adopting the already skilled plenum practices in the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences by the Croatian students in Zagreb in 2009. I can say that there are two explicit waves of protest or movements that resulted into the creation of the so called "Social Uprising" in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The first wave of protests happened in early June 2013, regarding the failure of the government to adopt the law on possessing a personal identification number; the protests were a result of the death of a baby girl that due to impossibility to get the ID number could not get the documents in order to be treated outside the country. The resistance happened spontaneously when thousands of people blocked the BiH Parliament and other institutions. Although the character of the protests was peaceful, it caused turbulent political reaction and a threat to the security institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The second wave of protest happened next year in February 2014 in Tuzla, a city 130 kilometers north of the capital Sarajevo, where workers from five bankrupted factories started the labor peaceful gathering in front of the government and other institutions in Tuzla in order to get

back their unpaid pensions, salaries and health insurances. Shortly after the peaceful gathering the protest expanded into the biggest protest wave that the country ever witnessed since the war in the 90's. The protest wave spread in all the major cities like Sarajevo, Mostar, Bihač, Bugojno, Meadow, Gorazde, Tesanj, etc, and resulted into a creation of organized plenums as a bottom up mechanism for exercising direct democracy.

The origins of the birth of the “plenumisation” in the Bosnian context appeared even earlier, when an informal small group of young students called “Student Movement Tuzla”, occupied the Faculty of Philosophy in Tuzla, in which more than four hundred student were struggling against the privatization of part of the barracks from the university and the constant increase of the students fees. The group was influenced by the Croatian practices of the students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb which at that point were struggling with the same issue, and the movement had already affected in other cities in Croatia. Originated by the youngest, the significance of the plenum structure became more evident after the explicit protest that occurred in February 2014, by the workers, when right after the protests, the “plenumisation” has popularized in more than 22 places across the country, most of them concentrated in the two semi – autonomous parts. The creation of the plenums resulted into creation of other movements, like “Independent Union of Solidarity” and “Movement for Social Justice”.

Besides the Solidarity trade union and the Movement for Social Justice, other initiatives have been organized to reflect the events that occurred in February in Tuzla, one of the most important is the “Open University Platform” that shares collectivity and participation in order to elaborate resistance and direct democracy, consisting of variety of people with different ethnic and social backgrounds, organized in the capital city Sarajevo since November 2013. The Platform manage to debate (discuss) certain issues and developed more rational, thoughtful and educational manner structure.

The creation of the “plenumisation” in Bosnia and Herzegovina for sure change the social and political life in the country, moreover it created a foundation for a further flow of the wave also in Macedonia, Serbia and other countries in the region. Although the events in Serbia and Macedonia happened in the same time, (the Serbian students were struggling with the new proposed law of higher education, and self organized in so called student’s parliaments), the protests in Serbia didn’t extended more than a student initiative.

The creation of the plenums and defending the urban common spaces initiatives are the first kind of a processes for articulating politics since the existence of Yugoslavia. The plenum wave influenced not only students, but all citizens to start reasoning in a different way in order to create a different future, using the same mechanism for decision making processes. They succeed to open up a new way of articulation, firstly among the Balkans cities, and secondly they gave an opportunity for citizens to express their accumulated anger in a different way, through the citizens’ activism which is the essence of civil society.

3.11 The main elements for emergence of the activist wave in Skopje

Following the traditional based theory of emphasizing the dynamics of revolution, I can say that social movements in Skopje although are appearing in contemporary context they rather follow a classical scheme of resistance with some particular elements of revolutionary based goals. As Branimir is saying, first of all the activist movements in Skopje are anti-regime, it is against the way the current government is ruling the country (INT16, JOVANOVIČ), but what is interesting that they are moving further towards reforms oriented goals.

The activist wave in Skopje can be characterized as what Tarrow calls multiform movements. According to Tarrow, social movements are not limited to particular types of action but have access to a variety of forms, either alone or in combination (TARROW, 1998, page 103). The

“paradigmatic” change for the forms that people use to express their claims (TARROW, 1998, page 102), more flexibility in their tactics (TARROW, 1998, page 104) is what makes the shift towards the creation of contemporary movements in Skopje. The activist wave in Skopje is composed by a diversity of movements and initiatives, using different strategies, motives and tactics, acting alone and together in diversity of combinations. Due to its multiform structure, the main reason for initiation of the activist wave in Skopje can be traced into considering an interdisciplinary approach, elaborating both political processes and other important elements into creation of the frame of contention.

Primary as one of the elements for emergence of the activist wave in Skopje can be traced in the political opportunities. As Tarrow refers, in order to answer why people mobilize, it would be necessary to trace how underlying social structure and mobilization potential are transformed into action. In such a transformation, the role of political opportunities and constraints is crucial (TARROW, 1998, page 72). Contention increases when people gain the external resources to escape their compliance and find opportunities in which to use them (TARROW, 1998, page 71). Political opportunities are seized and transformed by a variety of challenges under many different conditions (TARROW, 1998, page 73).

Tarrow argue that when the access to a political system is open even partially people have more incentives to act. One of the first important features for collective action is the access to participation. Following Tarrow explanation, one of the main reasons for collective action in Skopje was exactly opening of the political system which in Macedonia is tightly connected to the context of the Yugoslavian system and the mode of transition. The transition created a shift from centralized system to liberalized system. So, one of the main outcomes of the transition was opening the system and creation of a political pluralism. The contention in Skopje emerged as a result of a diffusion of the political structure and the present external and internal events in Macedonia that created what Tarrow refers as , political instability,

moreover electoral instability. The threat as one among many other reasons was important element for emergence of the Colorful Revolution.

Moreover, one of the most important elements for enlargement of the activist wave in Skopje is the dynamics of opportunities. Tarrow explains how movements can create opportunities for themselves or others. The opportunities that can be created through widening the social network, forming coalition and creating political space. The diffusion of opportunities in Skopje resulted into creation of urban issues initiatives, student's plenum movements, LGBT rights movements etc.

Not only political opportunities and resources are important in order to detect the main elements of emergence of the activist wave in Skopje. The culture, identity, emotionality and values that people share are crucial. Movements not only develop rational and strategic actions, they continuously draw from cultural memories and repertoires, from values and moral principles to redefine situations (PAMELA, 2003, page 12). Values will influence how actors define specific goals, and identify strategies which are both efficient and morally acceptable. The characteristics of a given system of values will shape the components of action (DELLA PORTA, 2006, page 67). The transformation of inherited values, mentality and culture that people possess is one important element for emergence of the contention in Skopje.

Whether it is a question of conformism – I think it is. I even call it apathetic conformism, in my opinion, it means that we have an alibi for apathy and dissatisfaction, which actually provides a comfortable position, I am dissatisfied, but I don't know what to do, and that has been following us till today. That is one of the key issues... I also believe that we are a servile culture... it means to always be silent, now I am not well, but I might be well if I keep my mouth shut, if I survive. It seems that the tolerance threshold has been moved (INT12, GEŠOSKA).

Moreover the mentioned threshold of tolerance is tightly connected with the re composition of the so called “middle class”. In Macedonia, the conceptualization of the previous generation was based on a certain principles that were inherited from the socialistic ideology base on brotherhood and equality. Starting from the post socialistic transition period the “middle class” was somehow repressed due to the consequences of the transition.

..the middle class was somehow kept in the dark in relation to everything that was happening and now they have started to wake up and develop a new conscience and courage. By middle class I mean educated people in different fields like lawyers, artists, architects etc (INT17, PROKOPIEV).

Furthermore, the creation of the new generation in Skopje was an outcome of the student’s protests. The Student’s Plenum was one of the main driving forces for restructuring the old values, defending issues beyond the ideology, moving towards a creation of new types of resilience.

The Students movement, with their skills and dedication they surprised many, even among opposition circles and showed greater determination and political maturity (INT15, JANČEVSKI).

The diffusion of opportunities gave incentive and solidarity among activist. The wave spread among different fields of interests. Naturally citizens came across identification towards “other” differentiations, not ethical, race etc. The diffusion of opportunities created different combination of approaches in acting, the roll of culture and art were significantly present in the social movements performances. Due to the interdisciplinary approach the notion for the right to the city started to be discussed, the movements in Skopje started following different patterns.

4. SPATIALITY AND CONTENTIOUS POLITICS; AN INTRODUCTION TO SKOPJE

4.1 The relationship between space and contentious politics

The importance of spatiality into the theory of contentious politics is relevant in order to understand space as active agent for reshaping social relation (LEFEBVRE 2011, HARVEY 2000, MILLER 2000, MASSEY 1994). Spatial perspective can produce more illuminating understandings of how people perceive, shape, and act upon grievances and opportunities (MARTIN and MILLER, 2003, page 143).

Charles Tilly has coined the research with focusing on more effective mechanisms how to study the relation between space and contention, emphasizing the importance and the specificities of the context involved. In his article Space of Contentious, Tilly is focusing on several important points in order to explain why space is important to understand contentions politics and vice versa. Some of the most important reasons are, contention always takes place in occupied space, built environments; mobilization is affected by the spatial distribution, proximities, and routine of political participation; government organize at least some of their power around places and spatial routines; routine political life endows different places; spatial routines contention itself transforms the significance of spatial routines (TILLY, 2000, page 138).

Considering Tilly's elaboration of how space relates with contentious politics, can be very useful in order to unveil the peculiarities between space and contention in Skopje. The main reason for contention in Skopje is exactly a spatial manifestation, the project SK2014, shaped in order to express the power of the ruling government. The project SK2014, a top down planning manifestation was a common ground for mobilization challenged by a diversity of bottom up attempts and actions that followed different processes and use different mechanism in order to confront diversity of issues. The context in Skopje is referring to what Tilly is explaining as a challenge to examine the confrontations

between the top down power and bottom up power; both identify spatially (TILLY, 2000, page 139).

4.2 Why space and place is important?

Space generally not considered to be static and “fixed” in contemporary human geography, spatial concepts are themselves far from fixed (MILLER, 2000, page 7). Space is important for contentious politics. Socio – political contradictions are realized spatially. In other words, spatial contradictions “express” conflicts between socio- political interests and forces; it is only in space that such conflicts come effectively into play, and in so doing they became contradictions of space (LEFEBVRE, 1991, page 365).

In this context Lefebvre’s space theory is important in order to understand the relation between space and contentious politics. The production of space by Henry Lefebvre is coined on a dialectical dimension of space, in which Lefebvre rejected the static notion of space and focused on explaining its dynamic nature, space is relative to its social processes. His theory is based on three types of space, a conceived space, a perceived and a representational space. Conceived space or representation of space is constructed by a top down manner, it is characterized by its physical characteristics, space that is shaped by a dominant power. In contrary, a perceived space is characterized by immaterial matters, constructed by spatial practices, a space where interactions occur, physical and material flow, space where certain meanings and signs are attached.

Representational or lived space is actually the product of the interaction of both, conceived space and perceived space, it’s the ground where the counterpace is creating, the new space, the alternative, the imaginary. As Lefebvre says, representational space is alive: it speaks. It has an affective kernel or centre: Ego, bed, bedroom, dwelling, house; or: square, church, graveyard, it embraces the loci of passion, of action and

of lived situations, and thus immediately implies time (LEFEBVRE, 1991, page 50).

Lefebvre's conception of space implies that space is relational to processes and associated with one important dimension of space, its identity. Thus, representational space is as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users' (LEFEBVRE, 1991, page 33-34). It may be qualified in various ways: it may be directional, situational or relational, because it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic (LEFEBVRE, 1991, page 50). Social space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelations in their coexistence and simultaneity – their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder (LEFEBVRE, 1991, page 73). Therefore, space represents, a dialectically defined component of the general relations of production, relations which are simultaneously social and spatial (SOJA, 1980, page 208).

Massey argues that space is not a result of spatial process but in contrary spatial distribution and geographical differentiation may be the result of social process, but they also affect how the process works (MASSEY, 1984, page 5). As Massey says, spatial includes a whole range of aspects of social world...it includes movement, it includes geographical differentiation, the notion of place and specificity, and of differences between places (MASSEY, 1984, page 5). The spatial dimension of context, how key actors, organizations, and institutions relate to and affect other actors, organizations, and institutions across space—plays a crucial role in shaping the operation of mechanisms and processes, spatiality is both context for and constitutive of dynamic processes of contention (MARTIN and MILLER, 2003, page 149). Space provides the context for places but derives its meaning from particular places (RELPH, 1976, page 8). Place provides the means of understanding the spirit of movement agency, that which inspires and motivates people, the articulation of the experiences of everyday life (Ibid. P. 21; MILLER, 2000, page 37).

When discussing about Skopje, all the initiatives are tight to a certain location, sites that have certain characteristics, but at the same they are result of one spatial manifestation, the project SK2014. Place is important in order to understand the peculiarities of social movements in Skopje.

Places can be conceptualized in terms of the social interactions which they tie together, then it is also the case that these interactions themselves are not motionless things, frozen in time. They are processes (MASSEY, 2004, page 155). Place is a crucial concept, above all, because it calls our attention to the spatial or contextual “situatedness” (Agnew 1996) of all human action and institutions (MILLER, 2000, page 16). Following this, place gives the intersection between high priority agendas in contentious politics (TILLY, 2000, page 142). Place must be a site of negotiation, and that often this will be conflictual negotiation (MASSEY, 2004, page 7). It may indeed, further, be a crucial political stake to challenge and change the hegemonic identity of place and the way in which the denizens of a particular locality imagine it and thereby avail themselves of the imaginative resources to reconstruct it (MASSEY, 2004, page 7).

What Lefebvre refers to a space of experience, is what Edward W. Soja is referring to third space, it goes beyond physical dimension of space. Third Place... constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances, and meanings (SOJA, 1996, page 2). Third place can be described as a creative decomposition and extension. Focused on the “real” material world and a second place those interpret this reality through “imagined” representation of spatiality (SOJA, 1996, page 6). Repertoires of contention, are forged in the context of place-specific social norms, e.g., notions of place-appropriate social behaviour (to be violated), and place-based symbolism to appeal to (MARTIN and MILLER, 2003, page 148). Understanding the dynamics of “place” is crucial to the analysis of social movement..not only because it directs us to geographically specific social relations, but also because place can be a powerful basis for collective identity construction—a crucial

component of virtually all forms of collective action(MILLER, 2000, page 14).

Holistic approach into understanding the peculiarities of place with the physical, social, cultural, economic, historic and political influences as well as collective and personal attachments and senses is important. In Skopje context this is crucial.

4.3 Introduction to Skopje transformation; Skopje before 2014

Skopje is very interesting city, a sort of a collage with different layers with very specific spatial dynamics. What is interesting about Skopje is that as consequences of different contexts the city faced many differential spatial manifestations. As Minas Bakalčev said, the history of the city Skopje is seen as a series switch- labile attempts, resulting in a complex contradictory fragmented basis: traditional town XIX-XX; city of late introduction of theories and practices of European capital in the first half of XX; functionalist city from the second half of the XX; city of functionalism review of earthquake reconstruction; capital of post-socialist transition XX-XXI (BAKALČEV, 2014, page 62).

Today's territory of Skopje has been inhabited since around 4000 BC. The Neolithic settlements have been placed at the old Kale Fortress. In the 3rd century, as part of the Roman province in Macedonia, the ancient city Skupi was situated in the Northern part of the city. When the Roman Empire was divided into western and eastern part, Skupi was under Byzantine emperor Justinian. In 1018, the city was under the first Bulgarian empire. It has been concurred by the Ottoman Empery in 1392, the Turks named the town Uskub.

During the ottoman period, due to the domination of the Muslims, the landscape of the city changed drastically. The main owner of the land was the sultan and the empire was divided into several districts, according to religion, Muslims and Non - Muslims. The architecture and planning system changed accordingly, from this period we have a lot of

ottoman architecture like mosques, Turkish baths, covered bazaar (bezisten) settled in the Old Bazaar etc.

After 500 years of ruling of the ottomans, Skopje was under the Serbian Kingdom. At that time in Skopje, the landscape changed again. The mosques and the ottoman planning system were replaced by the new ideology, focusing on the dominance of the state as a main mechanism for planning, so accordingly different public buildings appeared in the center the city, The Army house, The National Theater, The Bank etc.

Not long after the communist took place, Skopje joined Yugoslavia in 1944 and became the capital of the new established Republic of Macedonia. This kind of planning was in the favor of the socialistic context and the social and political beliefs in that time to make Skopje modernist city with the newest architecture and urban planning trends.

The biggest reconstruction of the city was actually due to the devastating earthquake that took place in 1963 where most of the city center and surrounding was destroyed. As being part of Yugoslavia, in that time, a new reconstruction was announced, the master plan was made by the famous Japanese architect Kenzo Tange together with the Town Planning Institute of Zagreb in close collaboration with the Yugoslav government under the president Tito, renaming Skopje as the "City of Solidarity". The plan was to rebuild the city, especially the center core by a configuration of a modern city, following the open ideology of planning.

After the breakup of Yugoslavia, Skopje as others post socialistic cities experienced changes and transition in the planning system in which the capital and market economy were central points in the development process. After 1991 the urban planning system was not regulated, the urban plan of the city was confronted with the influences of the transition period, increased fragmentation, privatization and commercialization of public spaces. The first official plan after the independence has been made in 1997. Nowadays, the city expanded a

MAP SKOPJE

SMALL RING CENTRE

OLD BAZAAR

FORTRESS KALE

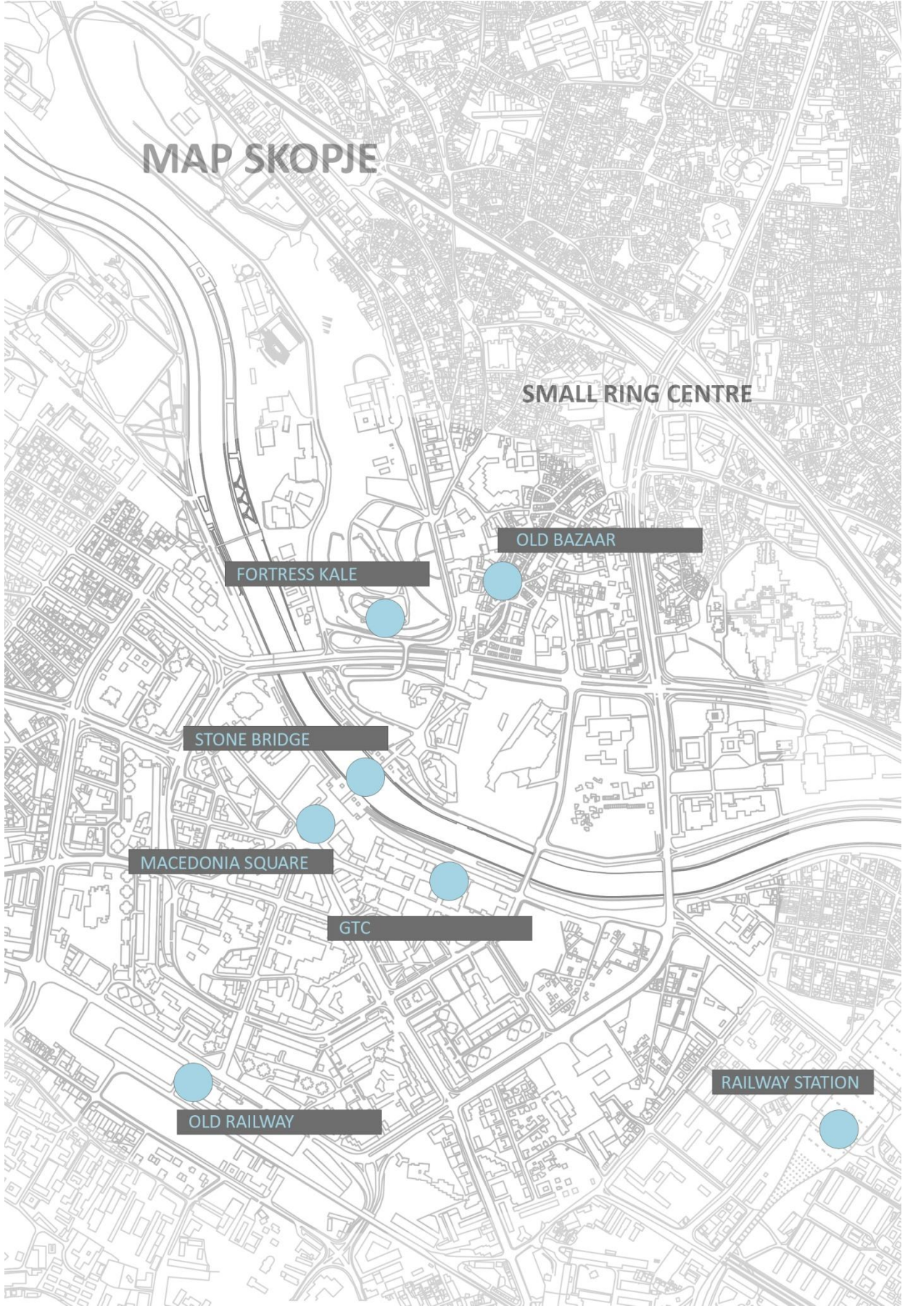
STONE BRIDGE

MACEDONIA SQUARE

GTC

OLD RAILWAY

RAILWAY STATION





lot, growing more than three times, and reaching a number of more than 600 000 citizens.

Moreover, the next huge radical social and political transformation started in 2010, due to the governmental reconstruction project, SKOPJE 2014.

4.4 Governmental policies for “beautification” the city, the project SK2014

SK014 must be seen primarily as a political and ideological construct aimed at endorsing the nationalist populist tendencies of the ruling party. By forcefully applying a narrative that would appeal to the semi-literate masses, its intention is to suffocate and suppress any rational or liberal thought (INT9, TOŠEVSKI).

The project SK2014 is one of the biggest construction projects in Macedonia, or further in Balkan area. It was promoted in 2010, through a video how the city Skopje should look like in 2014 that appeared suddenly in all the media and YouTube by the name “Macedonian Timeless Capital”. The main creator of the project SK2014 is the government of the Republic of Macedonia. The project was developed and announced without any pre consultation, without involving prominent architects, urban planners and artists from the country.

Until today, the project SK2014 resulted into construction of more than twenty seven public buildings, ranging from a new theatre, archeological museum, court, national archive , triumphal arch, all resembling in “neo-classical or neo-baroque” architectural styles, which is the main recognizable element of the project. In addition to the buildings, numerous number of monuments and statues of historical and religious figures were positioned in the center of the city, three additional bridges over the river Vardar, connecting the old Muslim quarter with the center of the city. As part of the sculptures and monuments the most recognizable is the twenty eight meters tall statue

of Alexander the Great, positioned in the center of the city, the main square in Skopje, surrounded with additional sculptures and fountains from ancient history figures. Moreover additionally to the project, more than one hundred facades have been reconstructed in the characteristic “neoclassical and baroque” style of the project, among them the reconstruction of the building of the government, and the assembly building. Additionally two galleys were position in the river Vardar, one serving as a restaurant and a hotel. Further plans for the projects are the following ongoing wheel near the river Vardar in the city centre “copied” from the London Eye construction.

The project SK2014 was followed with a traditional dominant top down approach accompanied with a lot of controversy and irregularities concerning the spatial law, together with the non participatory dimension of the project. Discussing about the legislative dimension of the project SK2014, constant changes in the planning legislations occurred over the last years in favor of the project. The law for spatial and urban planning has been constructed just for adjustment and realization of the project SK2014.

Moreover, the aesthetic, cultural, ideological, political and economic point of view were the main reason for tremendous counter public reactions, the project was subject of discussions among the expert’s circles and the among citizens. But I must say that the citizens’ opinions were sharply divided about the project, some were supporting the new reconstruction of the city and others were strongly against the project. Until today the project is still not final, several plots are still waiting to be reconstructed.

The multisided meaning of the project SK2014 can be seen as a material manifestation of certain governmental policies. The question of Macedonian identity and branding the city is taking central point into the creation of the project SK2014. One of the main reasons for imposing the policies can be seen as a consequences of the political and economic

instability of the country, and promotion of the city as a touristic destination.

When discussing about the “nation building” policy it is very interesting to point that it started far before launching the project, so the government used a sort of pre strategies of positioning ethno markers in the spatial configuration of the city. The implications of the “nation building” policy through spatial manifestation started with positioning a 77 meters high cross in the hills of Vodno as a result of the 2011 conflict between the Macedonian and Albanian guerillas. As Janev is describing, the so called contrasting different narratives—those materialized in space by the ruling elites, and those of the immaterial spatial practices of Skopje citizens—I disclose the dangerous imposition of a divisive spatial order (JANEV, 2011, page 19). The other dimension of the pre - launch “nation building” policy was an expression of political and ideological change, accompanied with erasing the names of public buildings and street named by the victims and figures of the communist regime. Important buildings and streets were substituted with names of antique figures like Amynta 3, Phillip 2 Macedonian or founders of VMRO. The strategy of remaining streets was conducted without any pre consultation of the public and it caused a lot of controversy.

Furthermore, the “nation building” policy with launching the project was going towards erasing the collective memory spots and consequently elimination of the socialistic architecture in Skopje. As Sestic describes, the cultural heritage, the identity marks from the past and the distinctiveness of the communities, especially in relation, to the multiethnic character of the country was subject to re-thinking and re-shaping within the current memory politics (DRAGIĆEVIĆ – ŠEŠIĆ 2011, page 35). The covering of this kind of architecture was made with emphasize and domination of symbols, emphasizing the religion and historic figures from the past which even more excluded the other nationalities in the city. For that reason a lot of significant buildings from this period have been covered in “baroque” and “neoclassical” style, or

the other way, they were covered with bigger structure in order to be invisible.

It is very interesting the theory about the project, made by the archeologist Nikos Čausidis, where in his book, "The project SKOPJE 2014, Sketches for one further research", he points out that Skopje has always been a symbol city, built "ex nihilo", a media of a individual dominance which has been materialized through architecture where everyone throughout history has torn down and re-built it for himself and for the benefit of its citizens, including the Romans, Byzantines, Ottomans, Socialists and Communists. So, the project SK2014 is only a continuation of the tradition of the tactics in the past. But, the interesting point that he emphasize is that the project SK2014 differs from the past re-makeovers of Skopje, firstly, it is not expressing the courage to torn apart the buildings, but rather leaving them and destroying their authentic identity and main point of existence (ČAUSIDIS, 2013).

The project SK2014 was also followed by "nation branding" policy, which was simply imposed in order to make the city more attractive to tourists. As the "nation building" policy, the "nation branding" policy was lunched before the realization of the project SK2014. The pre – policy started, as Graan is explaining, since the beginning of 2001 when the government of the Republic of Macedonia started to promote Macedonia as a touristic and investment destination, with campaigns like Macedonia timeless etc. Skopje 2014's new construction and public art instalments were tethered to a campaign to strengthen and expand awareness of Macedonia outside the country's borders and especially among imagined, international business and tourist publics. Moreover, the sheer scale and ambition of the Skopje 2014 served as its own advertisement on Macedonia. (GRAAN, 2016, page S85). The "nation branding" policy is also represented in the spatial manifestation of the project SK2014, where it is more than visible the strategy of coping elements from other European cities, like the Cupola on the parliament,

MAP SKOPJE 2014



WATERMENAGMENT B.

NATIONAL THEATRE

VMRO MUSEUM

CRIMINAL COURT B.

PHILHARMONIC HALL

FINANCIAL POLICE B.

A. MUSEUM

THE WARRIOR

TRIUMPHAL GATE

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

CASTING COUNCIL

CHURCH SS.CONSTANTINE AND ELENA



the wheel in Vardar etc, in order to create a national promotion, branding of the city.

Since 2009, the multifaceted project SK2014 influences the social, cultural and political life of Skopjans, it is one of the main reasons for emergence of different forms of struggles and discussions in the form of debates, books, columns, art exhibitions. In addition, its influence on the urban configuration of the city is more than obvious.

4.5 The emergence of urban social movements in Skopje; Chronology of events

It was in 2009, when the architectural student's initiative called "The First Architectural Arch brigade", peacefully gathered with the paroles "Do not rape Skopje", in the square in the center of Skopje in order to express their revolt in order to oppose the building of the church Sts. Constantine and Helena (1). The peaceful protest was named "The First Architectural Uprising".

(We are the first Arch Brigade, a spontaneously gathered informal group of students of architecture and others who share the same ideas, generated from the need to express our opinions - both the positive and the negative - regarding already existing and yet planned architectural and urban works in our city. We were formed guided by the inclination to take a proactive role in the designing of the architectural reality of today, which, as the future generation of architects in Macedonia, will become our architectural heritage). Part of the proclamation!

The First Architectural Uprising was faced with counter protesters that physically and aggressively prevented the students to express their opinion. The counter protest was initiated by supporters of the church which claimed that they gathered spontaneously on the location, simply to defend the church. On the other hand, Arch brigade stated that the protest does not have any religious or political dimension and that is simple against the repression of the architecture which is happening in the last years in Skopje.

Meanwhile another important incident that was not directly connected to the location of the church occurred when the government announced that it will cut all the trees at Ilindenska Street, which was particularly recognized by the chain of old trees in order to widen the street. The decision for cutting involved into several incidents, the citizens following the similar strategies of the Croatian and Serbian activist protested with hugging the trees at the street, they also collected signatures against the decision for cutting, but the results were not successful, all the trees were secretly cut during the night.

Following the incident with the trees at Ilindenska Street, as a reaction of the protest on the 28th of March, counter force of self organized initiatives started to emerge. The following important post event was the protest in the same square in Skopje, organized by the NGO “Square Freedom” and other 30 ties organizations, together with the paroles “Skopje Metropolis not Necropolis”. The protest was not about the reconstruction of the church, but about a violation of the constitutional right to freedom of opinion, speech and freedom of public protest.

We expand our voice. The voice of the city and the voice of freedom. We raise our voice today, to defend the right to speech and think, the right to the city perceived as freedom! Part of the proclamation!

The protest attracted even more attention, following various human rights NGO’s and organizations started to commented and interested about the event that occurred on 28th of March, not only citizens started to organize, but also some of the media changed the way they presented the issues.

Meanwhile happening in the same period, another crucial event connected to the controversy of the church occurred due to the governmental decision to construct a hotel, near the location of the planed Sts. Constantine and Helena church, a location in which previously a mosque has been situated dating from the 20ties. In order to oppose the decision of the government, a protest was organized by

the Muslim Council, together with Ramadan Ramadani where few people peacefully gathered on the same Square in Skopje, asking for rebuilding the Burmanli mosque**(2)**. The protest was accompanied with reading songs and brief history of Burmanli mosque and its meaning for the city of Skopje, in all minority languages spoken in Macedonia.

(1) The church Sts. Constantine and Helena has been build before the First World War. After the devastating earthquake in Skopje 1963, the church has been damaged and it has been demolished in 1970, at the same location of the church a shopping mall (GTC) has been build.

A couple of months after the protests, the location of the church Sts. Constantine and Helena was questioned again. As part of the project territories, exactly on the same location, the artist and co founder of the art initiative Kooperacija, Igor Toševski draw a yellow cross marking actually the controversial location where the church supposed to be built. The cross was part of the project Territories, aiming to “declare free territories” that subsequently appeared across the city, marking them with yellow outline in order to question their undefined status in the city. Although the artist already took permission from the city authorities, again the situation brought a lot of controversy, so the city government immediately reacted into covering the cross with gray colour. With this reaction the city government censored and criticized the project and did not allow the artist to redraw the line, in which he stated that it was his obligation towards the citizens in Skopje to do so.

Finally due to the protests and irregularities of the building legislations of the church, it has been decided that the church Sts. Constantine and Elena should be placed in another location, in the center of the city, the street Macedonia. Right after the series of incidents involved around the church location, at the begging of 2010 the government released a public video with a statement that the church Sts. Constantine and Elena is only one part of a huge reconstruction project SKOPJE2014.

The conflict that occurred on the 28th of March was very significant, by its controversy, recruiting initiatives and attracting public attention.

What is important that “The First Architectural Uprising” supported by the paroles “Do not Rape Skopje” it was certainly about confrontation of space, which has significant importance beyond a public space defending. Following the events in this particular issue, I can say that without any knowing, The First Architectural Uprising created sort of a trace of influence which was crucial for creating and widening the civic, social and cultural scene in Skopje.

(2)Burmali Mosque (Turkish: Burmalı Cami) – It was built on the foundations of the former church Mehmedbeg Carly-Zadeh in 1495 on the right side of the river Vardar, the Stone Bridge. The church was demolished in 1925, and in its place has been built the officer house.

Although Arch brigade were just opposing the governmental decision of simply constructing a building, not actually a church, the protest initiated by the Muslim Council created even more ambiguities. As from the conducted interviews some of the interviewees, among them Iskra Gesoska and also participant from Arch brigade stated that exactly the Muslim Council was one the main reason that the church was removed from the location.

I think that particularly with the protest we have raised the question of the location and the church, even though we only gave incentive (motive) , we were not the main reason for shifting the building to another location, it was the religious community. Still, I think that we have raised the question, perhaps if we did not raised it, the religious community would not have responded (INT4, DOMAZETOVSKA).

Nevertheless, it is very interesting how the First Architectural Uprising post event was developing, going beyond defending a public space, attempt to unveil the “politics” of space and to stand against the nationalism constructed through space. Arch brigade did not influenced directly , they were not aware of the effects that the protest manifested, but for sure it effected into creation of a series of many other struggles in Skopje, and in Macedonia.

Following the practices of the First Architectural Uprising, many different urban struggles started suddenly to appear in the city, initiatives like Park defenders, I love GTC, Skopje is not Disneyland were organized in order to preserve or defend public spaces and buildings. Furthermore, among the activist wave creation, the art was taking important roll, initiatives like Singing Skopjans, Kooperacija, Kontrapunkt, Press to exit Gallery, autonomous art guerilla actions and emergence of autonomous centers followed. The wave spread into a creation of important movements, among the most important, the student's plenum movement.

The movement firstly started in early 2009 with a creation of the student association "Free Index" as a result of the state restriction of the freedom of expression in the closure of a student radio. A group of students got together and decided to organize a horizontal structured initiative for student movement that will fight against injustice in the educational system and advocate for a better and more accessible education. The whole situation evolved when a massive protest was organized due to the extremely worsening conditions in the dormitories over Macedonia. The revolt got even more explicit when in the autumn 2014 the government decided to implement a new law of a centralized higher education system, introducing mandatory externally supervised exams. The situation resulted into occupation of the universities where more than thousands of students were demanding immediately suspension of the new Law on Higher Education. The students occupied the Faculties of Philosophy, Philology, Law and the Economy, proclaiming them an "autonomous students' territory", where by the neighbors influence they organized an informal movement called the "Student's Plenum". The Plenum was supported by many professors, organized in the so-called Professor's Plenums. Around more than 12000 students were marching in Skopje and very soon the protests spread in other towns in Macedonia, it was the first citizen mobilization since the independence of the country. The movement in Macedonia managed to recruit different structures of the society and different activist initiatives,

which resulted into creation of not only Professors Plenums, but High School Students Plenums, Parents Plenums etc.

Continually, the creation of the activist wave resulted into emergence of the Colorful Revolution. The movement is a sublimite of all previously active initiatives and citizens. It is one of the biggest and significant movements that occurred in Macedonia. For a very short period the movement managed to spread not only across Macedonia, but also in other cities where Macedonians are currently living.

The creation of the movement was initiated in May 2016, when the movement “I protest” was formed as an explicit reaction of the so called “bombs” released in the public. What is important to mention that the spontaneous gathering of the movement I protest was continuation of the massive protests and marches organized against the policy brutality, in 2011, when a young man, Marin Neškovski was killed. So, as a continuation of these events, the explicit appearance of The Colorful Revolution movement started at 12th April in Skopje, where protests and marches were happening for almost four months. The main reasons for the protests and starting the movement was the announcement of the president Gorgi Ivanov to pardon many politicians that were accused of crime due to a wiretapping scandal. The main goal of the protests was to force the president and his cabinet to resign and to postpone the following early parliamentary elections due to the irregularities.

The Colorful Revolution managed to recruit different initiatives like LGBT community, Freedom Square, First Arch brigade, Park defenders; I love GTC, The Student’s Plenum and many others joining the Revolution just as citizens, which resulted into gathering of a huge mass of people.

The Colorful Revolution can’t be seen separately from other civic activism in Macedonia. The Colorful Revolution is a product, but also a peak of everything that has been happening throughout the years, literally there hasn’t been one initiative or movement from which we haven’t learnt

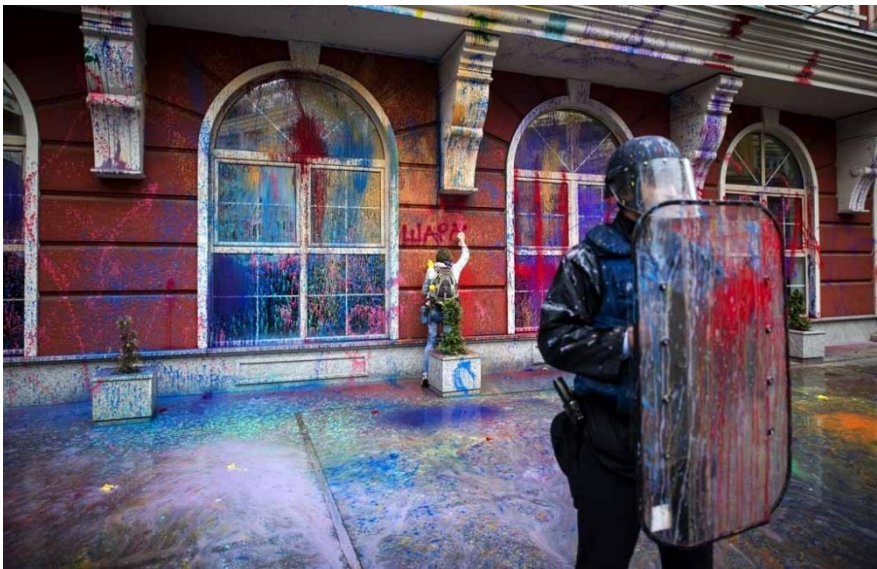
something that is now being put into use in the Colorful Revolution (INT3, BOGOEVSKI).

The movement is characterized with a particular way of protesting, expressing the revolt through color. The Colorful is about unifying, diverse, it gathered all nationalities, ethnicities and people with different orientations.

Colour has many symbols, first of all, let's not forget the legal aspect.. Throwing paint is one of the methods that is on the ideal borderline of a criminal act and offence, on the ideal borderline for the police not to act violently, and not on the ideal borderline of what would have been accepted by the larger social group as a form of revolt (INT3, BOGOEVSKI).

The protests started with pouring paint on the institutions and symbols of the project SK2014. There were several colorings of the Triumphal Gate, and almost all representative buildings from the project SK2014 were colored. Not only buildings were colored, but also the new sculptures and fountains from SK2014 have been colored with different colors. The biggest fountain in the Macedonia Square, which resembles Alexander the Great, was red for a day to symbolize the victims of the regime.

Although the Colorful Revolution is a battle for other goals, the act of revolt and coloring different buildings of SK2014, unveils that the spatial manifestation of the project SK2014, itself is an issue.

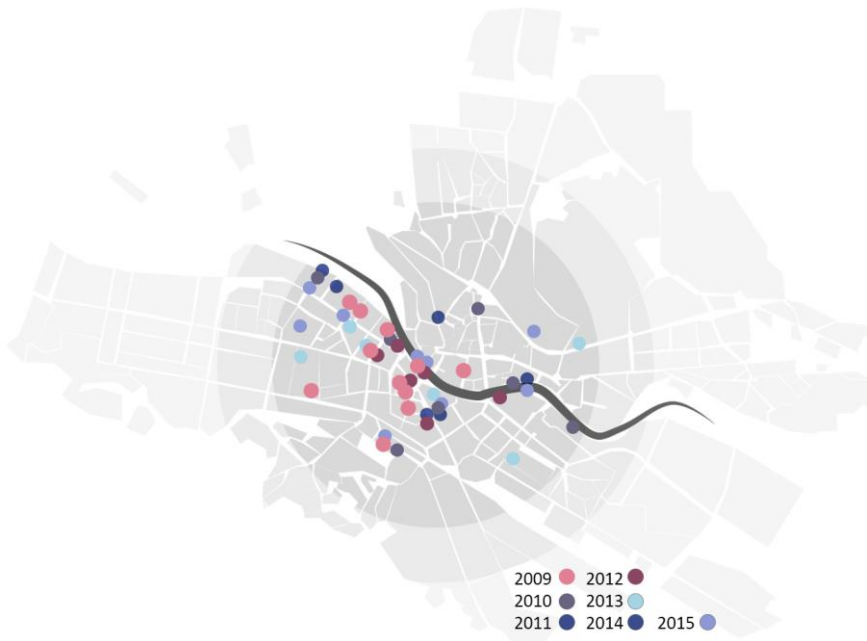


A protester writes on the facade of the Ministry of Justice building with spray paint in Skopje, Macedonia, during an anti-government protest dubbed the Colorful Revolution. *Robert Atanasovski / AFP / Getty Images*



Protesters light flares after they spray paint on the facade of the Ministry of Justice building, during an anti-government protest in Skopje in a series of protests dubbed 'Colorful Revolution'.





MAP OF MOVEMENTS SKOPJE

28.03.2009 – The First Architectural Uprising
 11.04.2009 – Protest Square Freedom
 07.07.2009 – Protest against cutting trees in Ilindenska street
 17.10.2009 – Territories, Igor Toshevski



2009

06.07.2011 - Protests against police brutality



2012

04.2013 KULA Opening
 03.08.2013 – Occupying Bristol Park
 03.10.2013 – Protest with art performance and installation in front of GTC
 11.2013 – Opening AKSC



2013

14.06.2013 – Go out for GTC (the first protest)



2014

17.11.2014 – The first protest March (Student's Plenum)
 10.12.2014 – The second protest March (Student's Plenum)
 26.12.2014 – The third protest March (Student's Plenum)
 28.12.2014 – Protest - The New Year with the old GTC



2015

11-24.02.2015 Occupation of faculties
 06.04.2015 – I love GTC - Starting of the campaign (first gathering)
 20.04.2015 – 15.05.2015 - Occupations in front of Ministry
 17.04.2015 – let's all go for dancing. Korzo in front of GTC
 23.04.2015 – Go out for GTC
 26.04.2015 – Referendum for GTC
 16.07.2015 - Sharks in Vardar River (unknown)
 28.07.2015 - The timetable for the

2016

04.2016 Colorful Revolution

TIMELINE PROTEST AND MOVEMENTS SKOPJE

INTRODUCTION

The catalogue is a selection of initiatives and case studies in Skopje which have a certain relation with the project SK2014.

They are divided into two categories, initiatives dealing with urban issues, preserving and defending public spaces and buildings as a result of the construction of the project SK2014, and art initiatives dealing with different strategies to criticize or oppose the project SK2014. Among the selected initiatives there are some initiatives that are not dealing only with urban or art issues, but are tackling some issues of the project SK 2014 in their performances.

The varieties of the initiatives differ by strategies, goals, and performances. They have not been considered or analyzed in a common manner. All of the particular cases and initiatives are recent, several of the events are happening right now.

INITIATIVES

THE FIRST ARCHBRIGADE

FREEDOM SQUARE

PARKDEFENDERS

I LOVE GTC

SKOPJE IS NOT DISNEYLAND

SINGING SKOPJANS

ANONYMOUS ART “GUERRILLA” ACTIONS



THE CHURCH CASE

The Church Ss. Constantine and Elena was the first pre starting controversial project part of the bigger development SK2014. Since the original church of Ss. Constantine and Elena has been built on the plot where now the Shopping mall (GTC) is situated, it was decided the location to be moved, positioning the church on the main square Macedonia.

Starting with the decision of constructing the church on the square controversies concerning the legacy of the location were put into questions. A lot of different opponents were opposing in their positions about the location of the church and the legitimacy of the process.

Due to the temporal dimension and the following controversy the church was among many other reasons, important reason for recruiting initiatives and emergence of the seeds of the activist wave in Skopje.

THE FIRST ARCHBRIGADE



WHERE

WHO

Arch brigade is informal initiative consist mainly of young architects and students from the faculty of Architecture. The initiative self organized in 2009 in order to express the revolt towards the architectural and urban development in Skopje, particularly against the decision of the government of illogically positioning the church Sts. Constantine and Elena in the square Macedonia as part of the project SK2014.

WHY

The main goal of the initiative was preserving a public space, the plot that was planned for building a church.

HOW

The approach of Arch brigade was very spontaneous, a group of architectural students gathered in order to express their opinion peacefully. Since then, the initiative collaborated with many NGOs and managed to publish info catalogue for Skopje. Arch brigade is not currently active, most of the members transferred to other initiatives like I love GTC, Skopje on bicycle etc.

PERFORMANCES

The first protest was organized on the 28.03.2009 called as The First Architectural Uprising on the main square Macedonia against building a church. The protest was totally self financed by the students who gave 100 denars to buy 100 Hummers and 2 sprays, a total of about 2,300 denars for making the of banners “ Do not rape Skopje”.

The second action was organized on the 28.01.2010 against the adoption of new amendments for the Detailed Urban Plan for small ring that predicted setting marks for building state institutions on the left bank of Vardar in front of the plateau of MOB and the new Philharmonic building as part of the project SK2014. Part of the decision were some improper storey garages that will close the façade and views of some significant buildings in Skopje like the Telecommunications centre and Holiday Inn.

FREEDOM SQUARE



WHERE

WHO

Freedom Square was formed in 2009, at the beginning the initiative worked with a broader context as an association for theory, activism and art. Today it is an NGO that mainly deals with green policies, taking different directions, focusing mainly on the science field research. Freedom Square worked on criticizing different perspectives of the project SK2014.

WHY

The first explicit reason for Freedom Square to self-organize was the construction of a church on the square Macedonia, but the main reason for self-organization was strongly related to the manifestation of the project SK2014.

HOW

They have prepared many projects concerning urban issues and green policies. What is interesting that Freedom Square is in mutual cooperation with Singing Skopjans, actually members from Square Freedom are both active members of Singing Skopjans. Freedom Square is active today, working and opening issues like the removal of the project SK2014.

PERFORMANCES

The protest 11.04.2013 - Freedom Square together with the Fist Arch brigade were participants on the First Architectural Uprising that occurred on the 28th of March. The second protest was organized by Freedom Square as a post reaction of the events that occurred on the First Architectural Uprising, the event ended with an organized concert in the main park in Skopje.

At 16.04.2013, as part of the project civil activator Freedom Square started the Festival of worthlessly spend money, by the parole, "With your money – Skopje is building". The central point of the festival was criticizing the project SK2014. The festival was organized in particular manner, where people were walking across the city, visiting several locations, manly buildings and monuments from the project SK2014. The walks were accompanied with speeches of activists and professionals from different fields, elaborating the negative implications of the project SK2014.

In 2013, Freedom Square worked on the project "We are running out of trees", an Inventory of trees and green spaces in Skopje, specifically made for the Centre municipality - Small ring and Karpoš 4 neighbourhood. Freedom Square announced that due to the results of the research it is visible that starting from 2002 the green areas in the city are significantly diminishing, moreover due to the massive urbanization and constructing buildings from SK2014, it is expected that in 2017 the green spaces will decline even more. After publishing the results of the study a public presentation and consultation was provided for every citizen interested about the issue and also a Guide for Inventory of trees was published. The main proposal by Freedom Square was introducing a green cadastre in Skopje.

THE BRISTOL PARK CASE

Consequently due to the construction of several buildings part of the project SK2014 spaces like small parks with trees have been replaced with buildings. In this context, the park near Bristol was planned for constructing a new building of the Broad Casting Council. The decision of the government to place the building in the park led to a lot of controversy and revolt and resulted into several protests organized by different groups. The main action was organized by the initiative "Park defenders" and other supporters. The whole incident finished with preventing the activists to defend the park and ended with constructing the Broad Casting Council building.

The initiative Park defenders is not currently active, but the occupation of Park Bristol is very significant event in terms of influence and recruiting many other local initiatives fighting against usurpation of green spaces and parks in Skopje. Right after the incident of Bristol Park different initiatives dealing with preserving parks suddenly started to pop up in the city. The most significant were the incident that occurred in Municipality Chair, where Macedonians and Albanians gather together and protested in front of the municipality against the decision to hand over part of their park to private investors for building a collective apartment blocks. Similar situation occurred in 2015, where the initiative We are Karpoš 4 was organized in order to defend a local park from constructing a high story building.

PARKDEFENDERS



WHERE

WHO

The Park defenders is an informal ad hoc initiative. The initiative consists of many individuals that previously attended various formal and informal initiatives involved in completely different issues. The initiative firstly self organized in 2003 and it recruits itself only when there is a threat of urban greenery in Skopje.

WHY

The main goal of the initiative was to prevent and preserve the park Bristol in the center of the city and at the same time to raise the public awareness, especially for the citizens living in the neighborhood near the park.

HOW

In order to defend the park the initiative Park defenders organized a “summer camp” and they occupy the park for almost forty days. In addition of the occupation different activists from other initiatives and citizens living in the neighborhood gave support and protested against constructing the Council in the park. The occupation of the park was followed with other inventive activities like projecting a film, concerts, debates etc. This kind of occupation of public space for the first time appeared in Macedonia. In terms of organization the initiative spontaneously organized with diversity of supporters which helped during the occupation.

THE GTC CASE

One year after the occupation of Bristol park, another important initiative was organized, named “I love GTC”. This time it was against the decision of the government to give new “baroque” appearance of the main shopping mall – GTC (3) in the centre of the city which was also part of the ongoing project SK2014. The controversy concerning the reconstructing of GTC started when the initial winning proposal from a young group of architects SKARS was rejected by the main management of GTC, with the reason that this concept is not fitting in the environment. So after this statement, the next competition was announced with a new commission and another project in “baroque” style of SK2014 was chosen.

Starting from 2013, I love GTC started the campaign “Go out for GTC” and let’s preserve the authentic appearance of the mall. There were several protests together with public speeches, interviews and collecting signatures. The campaign ended with a municipality referendum which took place at 26.04.2015. The referendum was held by the initiative I love GTC and the municipality of Centre. This was the first local (municipality) referendum held in Macedonia, which unfortunately did not succeed due to the failure to provide more than 50% present voters. What was important that from the people that voted, more than 95 % give support for the authentic look of GTC. The whole situation attracted a lot of public attention. The campaigns managed to raise people’s awareness and change the perception of citizen involvement in the city into more participative and open decision making. The campaign for GTC was very significant in terms of influencing other initiatives in the city, as Danica is mentioning in the interview the self organization of the initiative marked the establishment of the front of a dozen NGOs and citizen’s initiatives, among them, Centre for Contemporary Art - CAC (Nikola Pisarev) Let (Vladimir Vangelov), Centre for Cultural Heritage (Donka Bardžieva etc.), concerning and working with other issues (Blagica Pavlovska – I love GTC (INT8, PAVLOVSKA).

After a lot of pressure and conflicts concerning the new appearance of GTC, the project has been postponed for a while, but the management of GTC announced that the project will be restarted after the government elections this year. Today the initiative I love GTC again restarted the campaign after the government decided to restart the reconstruction of GTC. The struggle for GTC is still ongoing right now.

(3) GTC- the Skopje shopping mall, which is known as GTC is located just a few meters from the main square Macedonia in the centre of the city. It was built in the 70’s by an influential Macedonian Architect Živko Popovski in modernist style. GTC is an exceptional example of public space that symbolizes the city. The inspiration for the mall comes from covered bazaars, where most of its area is open as an agora as and for more than decades a place sharing the public life of its citizens.

I LOVE GTC



WHERE

WHO

I love GTC is a citizen initiative organized by the Association of Architects; it consists of activists, architects and artists. It was organized in 2013, after the decision of the government to give new “baroque” appearance of the main shopping mall (GTC) in the centre of the city which was also part of the ongoing project SK 2014.

WHY

The main goals of the initiative were legal protection of the City Shopping Centre (GTC) as a cultural heritage of national importance, creating opportunities for restoration of GTC by a competent institution.

HOW

The protests were organized as a massive “hugging” of GTC, where people made a life chain surrounding the mall. Other activities took place in between the protests, like educational lectures about GTC organized by the students of the faculty of architecture. Each week at the signature info different guests were discussing about GTC and several exhibitions were organized in front of the mall.

PERFORMANCES

- 14.06.2013 – Go out for GTC(the first protest)
- 03.10.2013 – Protest with art performance and installation in front of GTC.
- 28.12.2014 – The new year with the old GTC.
- 06.04.2015 – Starting of the campaign (first gathering)
- 23.04.2015 – Go out for GTC (protest and concert)
- 16.04.2015 – Open forum for GTC
- 17.04.2015 – Lovelies love GTC; let's all go for dancing in front of GTC (people from different groups were dancing surrounding GTC.)
- 26.04.2015 – Referendum for GTC



POP UP PROTESTS

The bridge Freedom case

In 2012, the initiative Life Fence which consists of activists from Freedom Square, Singing Skopjans and others gathered spontaneously in a symbolic protest against the reconstruction of a new fence upgraded with sculptures in the style of those already built on the footbridges of the project SK2014. In order to express their revolt for the money that will be spend for the fence , the activists surrounded the bridge with life chain and glued the old fence with printed one hundred euro banknotes.

The panoramic wheel case

In 2014, when the project SK2014 was at the last phase of construction the government announced a construction of a panoramic wheel which supposed to be situated on a new bridge that will be built between the old Stone Bridge and Goce Delčev Bridge in the center of the city. The Panoramic wheel supposed to be one of the last interventions that will change the Detailed Plan for Small Ring in the Centre of Skopje. As a revolt of this situation a protest was organized by the initiative Skopje is not Disneyland. In order to express their revolt people gathered between the two bridges, dressed with masks with the parole "Our city is not a Disneyland". Today, the struggle for the panoramic wheel is still ongoing as the government decided to restart the construction of the project.



ART INITIATIVES

Art, on the other hand, has the duty to resist, respond and fight back in such circumstances. There is no other way. So yes, SK014 had an immense influence in the appearance of this kind of resistance (INT9, TOŠEVSKI).

Art as such has a transformative potential, there is no doubt that. However, it would be foolish to think that it alone can instantly bring visible change. Activism is a different matter. It is interesting that it is often activism that borrows the tools provided by art (INT9, TOŠEVSKI).

The art activism is taking influential part in “opposing” the project SK2014. The wave of activism also expanded in the art spheres where significant number of artist started to criticize the multisided meaning of the project. The appearances of anonymous guerilla actions, and pop upping of cultural initiatives like Kooperacija, many NGO’s like Kontrapunkt, and Press to Exit Gallery now became part of the activism scene in Skopje. This kind of cultural movements resulted into appropriation of certain spaces, serving as autonomous zones which support the activism through art and debate. It is very interesting how art is used as a tool in order to attract the citizen’s participation in Skopje.



SINGING SKOPJANS



WHERE

WHO

The initiative Singing Skopjans is an activist ad hock choir which first appeared as a reaction of the incident that happened in Skopje during the self organised protest by Arch brigade, the First Architectural Uprising on 28th March 2009. Singing Skopjans were actually some of the activists which were involved in the same protests.

WHY

Singing Skopjans is one of the most interesting initiatives in Skopje. They cover a wide variety of topics: political, social, environmental and urban issues, both on local and global level. Among the variety of topics, the spatial, political and economic reflections of the project SK2014, is taking central position in their actions.

HOW

In order to support, criticize or celebrate current social and political issues they use singing , record their performances and afterwards uploading them on you tube channel .The songs usually are remixed in order to express the specific ironic characteristic which usually afterwards are resulting into a wider curiosity and media discussions.They just pop up unannounced usually in a suitable spatial dimension, politically marked and closely connected to the current issue (the building, the square, the railway, from the basement lab, in front of monuments etc).

The initiative is collaborating with different initiatives like, The First Arch brigade, Park defenders, I love GTC, etc. The initiative is the first alternative, very significant in terms of influencing other initiatives. Singing Skopjans are not active in the moment, but they do not exclude the possibility

PERFORMANCES

- 30.09.2009 – Skopje joy you will be
22.11.2009 - The Lumberjack Song (Ilindenska Street)
10.01.2010 – Koce, The father (In front of the mayor office)
09.02.2010 – We are from Skopje (Macedonia Square)
31.03.2010 – Guns of Brixton (Macedonia Square)
18.06.2010 – Antique(The old Bazaar, Suli An)
14.11.2011 – Skopje city kind
29.03.2012 –The ugly city (Macedonia Square)
14.05.2012 – Skopje kind city (Goce Delčev Bridge)
11.07.2012 – The last goodbye
15.06.2013 - The beautiful city will sprout again (GTC protests)
31.12.2013 – The Architect (In front of Ministry of Culture)



SAMPLES

11.07.2012 – The last goodbye

The Excavators cannot break down our memories and the memories of our parents, friends, acquaintances. The investor cannot build a nicer experience than those related to Skopje, as city of solidarity, with our first concert with the guests Horkestar from Belgrade, hundreds of private stories of Skopjans from different places and times...

As we have not forgotten that on the square once stood a Christmas tree, the park opposite the assembly was dedicated to the woman - fighter , so we will never forget about this space, quote which called for a new and open city of solidarity, corners and concrete platforms on which we sat until late hours, the graffiti , the gatherings , the clubs .

Goodbye Quote, goodbye space, welcome memories. Skopje has experienced a disaster!

31.12.2013 – The Architect

Who would say that it will really come? We were really hoping that it will not. According to the yellowed of the colonnades, it seems that is already 2017! But, like all the previous defeats over the mind, and this one we will accept with open minds and hands and we will try to do something about it .At least a new song. And now a dose of self-righteousness that every activist is making a special right:

2014 – what are you doing?

And how is in your city?

Architects Built with love!!!

ART “GUERRILLA” ACTIONS



WHERE

WHO

It is anonymous group of two or three artists. They use an incognito type of performance because they think that in that way their actions will be more fruitful.

WHY

The initiative thinks that thought this way of acting they can solve some urban problems in the city and at the same time can influence how citizens experience the city and the project SK2014.

HOW

They use spontaneous way of acting usually tackling topical issues in the city, moreover the so called by the media” guerrilla actions” appeared suddenly across particular locations in the city in order to draw attention and ironically criticize the project SK2014 and its manifestation. The anonymous artists install without permission and fund from their own self organization.

PERFORMANCES

The timetable for the baroque galleys (28.07.2015) in Vardar was one of the several guerrilla actions. They were put in order to ironically criticize the galleys in the river Vardar, part of the project SK2014.

For similar reasons, shark fins were floating in the Vardar River (16.07.2015), the fire service trudged through the water to pull them out, but in most cases the pieces seem to disappear as anonymously as they appear. In addition to the trend of cutting trees in Skopje, "eyes" on trees appeared in several locations in Skopje.

AUTONOMOUS CENTRES

AKSC (Autonomous Cultural Social Centre Skopje, a Free zone for critical thinking, debate and activism) - This is the first autonomous, non commercial social centre in Skopje. Situated in old building near the centre AKSC is a creative resistance for the system and other shapes of economic and political power. It has been open since November 2011, managed by a group of activists and artist which completely volunteered in order to organize the space. It is functioning without any hierarchy and it is completely open for any citizen. The place offer variety of different events like, art exhibitions and performance, debates and activism events.

KULA (Independent cultural centre) - The centre was organized in 2013 by a collective of artists and activists who firstly occupied and transformed a space in the old Bazaar in Skopje. After their moving they have decided to create the independent cultural centre KULA. The collective is open for cooperation with any individual and also encourages, supports and organizes many citizens' initiatives in Skopje.



4.7 Links between the initiatives

The case studies show that links do exist between the initiatives in Skopje. The links are usually based on collaboration, mutual learning and influence. However without any structured network, the initiatives showed solidarity towards each other which obviously was reflected in several events like, I love GTC campaign, Bristol park occupation and the Colorful Revolution.

As it was the case in March 28th, the students of the First Architectural Uprising arose spontaneously, no leader or particular programme was applied for the action.

The approach was very spontaneous, we probably felt that there is enough dissatisfaction among the people about what is happening in the city..I cannot say that we had some meaningful approach; we had the idea, without any special preparations (INT4, DOMAZETOVSKA).

Most of the following repertoires of action continued to emerge peacefully, very spontaneously as the interviewees called them ad hoc actions. This type of emergence was considerably present in the initiatives like Park defenders, Singing Skopjans, Skopje is not Disneyland and especially in the art guerilla actions.

Utterly spontaneous. In general, it's about two-three people who cooperate with each other, so, all those conversations that we have everyday are basically the topics of our interest and the issues that we want to deal with. It is an extremely natural process, we respond to everything that happens to us, it surrounds us, it bothered us (INT2, ANONIMOUS).

Some of the movements and initiatives emerged as a continuation of a formation of previous movements, like in the case of the Colorful Revolution which emerged from the movement I protest that spontaneously appeared as a result of a previous set of events.

All of the initiatives are following horizontal type of organization, without any formal hierarchical structure. The interviewees stated that this type of organization can contribute much into developing a diverse structure within the initiative. The Colorful revolution managed to recruit different citizens and initiatives which have strong identification with the movement.

The main issue with the Colourful Revolution is that there is no type of potential that has not been included exactly because of the way we are organized. Since our organization is horizontal, it means that there is

no leader and anyone who is the Colourful Revolution – if they feel they should, they could transform... (INT3, BOGOEVSKI).

Some of the initiatives identify their actions and goals exactly because of the horizontal type of organization. The horizontal way of organizing and participating is important way to resist against the imposed nationalism in Skopje.

I don not think that anybody of Singing Skopjans wants to be a leader, if they had leaders the concept of Singing Skopjans would be lost. That is not the point, actually, the point is to show that leadership is not necessary to raise people's consciousness (INT10, TRAJKOVA).

The collaboration between the initiatives is based on personal contacts and connections, most of the interviewees mention that during the period of emergence of the activist wave, starting from 2009 few initiatives and activists were active in that period and they were participants in different activist actions concerning different issues. Therefore some initiatives have the same members involved in different collectives, like the mutual collaboration between Singing Skopjans and Square Freedom. For some of the initiatives like The First Archi Brigade and Singing Skopjans there is a collaboration with other initiatives from the Balkan region , mainly based on participation in seminars and concerts . The First Arch brigade had some collaboration with the initiative for Varšavska Street (Zagreb) and also they are part of the Eastern European Network (SEE Network). Singing Skopjans had some collaboration with the activist choir Lezbos from Croatia and Horkester band in Serbia(Belgrade), where they have several mutual performances.

In the words of the interviewees, the initiatives developed certain collaboration with the citizens, the possibility of transferring citizen's needs and ideas into action in different levels and dimensions was significantly present.

The most interesting part is the operational level, the way in which we use the ideas of people from the streets. Every time we go to a protest a lot of people approach us and tell us their ideas, and they also write to us on facebook. We try to use everything that can be made use of, that is in the context of the message, and that is logistically feasible. ...We try to picture the present situation of the people that protest and to translate it in the protests' organization, and I believe we are doing it well (INT3, BOGOEVSKI).

The use of different strategies of transferring or expressing citizen's opinion

is more that visible in different dimensions and typologies of resistance.

We are anonymous in this process, but as Iskra Gešoska said, it does not actually matter who the author is of these actions, because like this, in more symbolic way, the voice of many people can be articulated. In that way, it manages to capture that moment of a common cry. (INT2, ANONIMOUS).

There is a tendency of using art in the performances of some of the movements. The involvement of art as a tool for activist action started with the appearance of Territories by Igor Toševski; the work of Kooperacija etc. Since then initiatives that use arty expression started to appear in the city. Many initiatives borrowed elements from other initiatives and use them in order to express their demands in non conventional way. The activism took a different dimension, the initiatives change the way of performing.

Many protests that we organized after that had that component of performance, for instance, on April Fools' Day, the Ajde Initiative organized a protest in which everyone was masked as the politician one likes the least – that was a performance/show done in that manner (INT10, TRAJKOVA).

As a main consideration I can say that the relation between the initiatives is based on mutual learning and influencing each others, achieving awareness, raising participation among the activists. Most of the initiatives like Arch brigade, Park defenders, Singing Skopjans are not currently active but they are not excluding the possibility to self organize again. Today, all of them refer as part of the Colorful Revolution.

5. THE SPATIAL DIMENSION OF THE ACTIIVIST WAVE IN SKOPJE

5.1 Why space is important in the case of Skopje?

Social movements struggle over the construction of geographies. All social movement processes involve interaction over space, place-specific milieus give rise to synergistic effects and particular circumstances, and scale defines the extent of relevant processes (MILLER, 2000, page xii).

The research in Skopje is indicating that, the spatial manifestation, the project SK2014 is taking central point upon which the resilience emerged.

It's about the reaction and the destruction of the social tissue of Skopje, its symbolic / ritual places that instead of merging now divide, on political and national basis. At the same time, this has not a connection only with Skopje, but also with the general narrative of Macedonian history and national "mythology" promoted and constructed through the monuments and the buildings in the project Skopje 2014 (INT14, JAKIMOVSKA).

Following the chronological cycles of protests, primary the struggle started over defending a public space, the location was actually the stake of the struggle. The First Architectural Uprising is about defending the city, the square. The first cycles of protest followed one scale of spatial manifestation; the events evolve in the square in the center of the city.

At that time when we organized the First Architectural Uprising, we were not informed about the project SK2014 because the official video was released several months later, but I think we have recognized the seeds of SK2014 , however it is interesting that no one imagined that the project will developed in such a scale. (INT4, DOMAZETOVSKA).

Following the cycles of protests and the release of the project SK2014 in public, the transformation of the city was taking more radical and fast pace. The emergence of the project initiated diversity of initiatives to react, dispersed among many locations in the city, they primary were concerned about the physical and visual point of the manifestation of SK2014.

It is like when an earthquake strikes, you start worrying about the statics of the building, so when the project SK2014 strikes, you start worrying about the public spaces (INT7, NAUMOVSKI).

During the cycles of protest, actions by many different initiatives managed to recruit and to influence different initiatives. How the activist wave was developing, the diversity of citizen's initiatives managed to unveil the complex and multisided meaning of the project SK2014.

The project SK2014 is questioning the borders or shifting the borders of ethnos, nationalism, religion into more delicate matters (INT9, TOŠEVSKI).

Different locations within the city, become sites for social, political and urban issues conflicts. The urban planning issues were accompanied with many other issues like ethnicity, gender, identity, etc.

The narratives of the diversity of protests and the enlargement of the contention wave in Skopje show that the interaction between the social movements and the project SK2014 is complex and heterogenic, the initiatives relate with the project SK2014 in different levels and dimensions.

5.2 How the initiatives and the movements interact with the projects SK2014

When discussing in this context, John Agnew's elaboration about place can offer some aspects that will be useful in order to analyze the

complex relation between the initiatives and social movements with the project SK2014.

According to Agnew, the specificity of place possesses location, locale and sense of place. The Location has materialistic characteristics, a site where a certain object or activity is located and relates to other locations or sites; the second dimension of place is Locale, it is actually a setting for a certain processes, actions, and practices, it's the ground for social relations; the last dimension is sense of place, characterized with subjective and collective emotional attachment and belonging, a meaning produced by a certain beliefs, values, etc (AGNEW, 1987).

Agnew's conceptualization of place can be interesting for further analyses of the multisided relation between the social movements and SK2014. The locale will analyze SK2014 as setting for different claims and performances, thus it will contribute into understanding the diversity of approaches that the initiatives have towards the project. In the second part SK2014 will be analyzed as context, what Agnew refers to Locale, this will give a wider perspective of the context of space, the relations and the diffusion of the activist wave, it will answer the question, to what extent the movements are concerned with urban issues, and also will explain what Massey and Soja argue, social processes can also affect in space creation, actually is mutual relation. The part SK2014 will be elaborated as a counter space creation, the analyses refers to the immaterial transformation of space, going further into creation and transformation of what Agnew calls sense of place (creating meaningful places, bringing back the authenticity of places, and changing the way people think and feel about certain issues).

5.3 SK2014 as a setting for different claims and performances

Different social groups endow space with an amalgam of different meanings and values, particular places frequently become sites of conflict where the social structures and relations of power, domination

and resistance intersect (ibid, p. 519; DELLA PORTA & FABBRI, 2016, page189).

The spatial manifestation SK2014 became a setting for protests, social interactions, performances, site where social movements and initiatives use the space differently. In the case of Skopje we have a diversity of claim performances by different initiatives that use the project Sk2014 as a setting for their actions.

The initiatives and the movements in Skopje represent articulation of different topics but they operate or act in different physical scales concerning the project SK2014. Some of the initiatives are tightly connected to only one particular location or place. The initiative Park defenders are only operating in Bristol Park, I love GTC is focused on the shopping mall building, We are not Disneyland is acting on the plot where the Panoramic Wheel should be placed. Some initiatives like Freedom Square, Singing Skopjans, and anonymous guerilla actions are characterized with more dynamic approach of acting, using several locations of the project SK2014, simultaneously as a setting for their performances.

Except the different scales of physical dimension, although the initiatives use the project as a main resource for mobilization, the claim performances differ significantly. What is interesting that not all the claims are political, some of them are not even target directly to government, some target local actors, and some use SK2014 as a setting for participation performances.

As Tilly argues, most contention occurs outside of politics, we enter a realm of politics when we interact with agents of government (TILLY, 2008, page 6). Park Defenders use the park Bristol as a setting for negotiations, what Tilly refers to expanding the situation of a public outdoor meeting. Activists were holding meetings with locals and once a public meeting was organized among the activists, representatives of the municipality Center and the local neighbors. I love GTC use SK2014

as a setting for claim of petitioning, moreover, in this case SK2014 is also a site for participating and educating the citizens about the city heritage. The Colorful revolution can be analyzed as what Tilly refers to contentious performances. Contentious performances consist of individual actions and interactions, they compound into repertoires, each characterizing some set of political relations (TILLY, 2008, page 201). The claims in this case were strictly target to the government. The Colorful Revolution use the space in order to claim political right, actually the project SK2014 is one of the dominant visual symbols of the ruling elites.

..we use Skopje 2014 in a predominant manner, as a target for our paint attacks, and by doing that we do not just express our revolt but we also paint the face of the regime, we turn their propaganda upside down and we tell them loud and clear that they shall not pass easily(INT3, BOGOEVSKI).

Some initiatives use SK2014 as a setting for participating and informing the citizens in different dimension. Among them, Freedom Square use the project SK2014 as a setting for democratic claims, expressing opinions for the project in several locations in the city contested by the project. In this situation the focus instead of emphasizing the performance, is put towards freedom of speech.

Political performance which involves representation in dramatic form, as movements engage emotions inside and outside their bounds attempting to communicate their message(EYERMAN,2006, page 193).Performance necessarily involves a *mise-en-sc`ene*, a vision, a setting, and a physical environment, which may itself be laden with symbolic meaning, thus influencing both performance and reception(EYERMAN, 2006, page199).

The initiative Singing Skopjans is focused on the whole set of performance which actually gives attention to the importance of the physical context of the setting and the symbolic meaning of the action.

The city was a scene in which Singing Skopjans performed. So, key locations were selected (in a previously prepared context) in which our performance was added up. The irony of Singing Skopjans actually transmits the loathing of the city, how the city has been estranged, how it is not your city any longer. That is a scene that has been pushed on you, and with the performance we have pushed on an urban scene that has become a new reality in the city (INT10, TRAJKOVA).

Although not using political performance claims, similar kind of activist actions were used by the anonymous artists, putting emphasize on the physical context of the setting, the visual impact and the message behind was important in this context.

Our actions.. they hold a certain irony, as a setting in the environment, it seems as another contribution to the environment, in a symbolic way, and they open the actualization of this project SK2014, and reflect its madness (INT2, ANONIMOUS).

5.4 SK2014 as context of the activist wave in Skopje

In the case of Skopje different initiatives use SK2014 as a common resource, but they mobilized in a different way. The dimension of the mobilization spread from urban issues initiatives like, Arch brigade, Park defenders, to environmental and political issues, initiatives like Square Freedom, movements like the Colorful Revolution and cultural and art issues, initiatives like Kooperacija, and anonymous guerilla actions etc.

The specificities of space are product of interrelations – connections and disconnections, and their combinatory effects (MASSEY, 2004, page 67). Space, constitutes and structures relationships and networks (including the processes that produce gender, race, and class identities); situates social and cultural life including repertoires of contention; (MARTIN and MILLER, 2003, page 144). Space is socially produced and constituted as it, in turn, dialectically constitutes social production and reproduction (MARTIN and MILLER, 2003, page 147).

The struggle for park Bristol was exactly a specific place struggle that spontaneously firstly emphasized the location of the park Bristol, but more over it was connected to wider issues, like relating the place Bristol with other green areas in the city that are diminishing due to several constructions of buildings, wider global environmental issues and also associated and influenced by the occupy culture movement.

... when something happens in your house, you react first and then it triggers the reaction of the other citizens not living in your environment (INT5, GOČEV).

The GTC case struggle was more complex than just defending a building, it is symbolic and identity struggle. People felt strong belonging to this place, for Skopjans GTC is more than a mall. The identity of the place is what is crucial, the korzo (kopzo)(2) is important element connected to social and cultural practice that only citizens from Skopje can identify with. In this case we have struggle for both, material and immaterial aspect for space.

The protest for GTC, for the first time spread a mass of people; a lot of generations have mixed. Here it 's very interesting from an civic point of view, because civility is fighting against incivility , the refinement and education against the kitsch , craftiness against amateurishness (INT17, PROKOPIEV).

(2) Korzo (Kopzo) – Starting from the 30s until the 70s, the so called promenade (Kopzo) has been one of the most recognizable marks in the city of Skopje. One of the main Kopzo area has been exactly the area near GTC. The general image of the promenade (Kopzo) is diversity of walkers - young , old and children and people who sell various products, mainly food .It was more than a ritual for the people in Skopje, the police in that time even issued an ordinance how people should behave on Kopzo.

What is interesting that in the case of Park defenders and I love GTC, place is the focus of a distinct mixture of wider and more local social relations. There is the fact that this very mixture together in one place may produce effects which would not have happened otherwise (MASSEY, 1994, page 156).

Moreover, the selected initiatives managed to influence many other initiatives and enlarge the scope of the wave of activism to many different issues, like LGBT human rights, social issues, inequality issues etc. Movements like LGBT rights, environmental movements like Skopje Alarm, autonomous centers started to appear in the city. The social processes facilitate other social processes.

Bringing together many different initiatives, movements and citizens was significantly present in the recruitment of the Colorful Revolution. The movement managed to gather people by different ethnic backgrounds, so it influenced into breaking down the division by nationality among citizens and creating multicultural frame of the movement.

To identify with a movement also entails feelings of solidarity towards people to whom one is not usually linked by direct personal contacts, but with whom one nonetheless shares aspirations and values (DELLA PORTA and DIANI, 2006, page 95). The Colorful Revolution is what Della Porta refers to polycentric identity. Process of multiplies of identities belonging to several different collectives, they all refer to the Colorful Revolution as the main generator. Some of them they do not refer to belonging to some group but they felt individual attachment to the movement. It is with reference to “protagonists, antagonists, and audiences” (Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994) that movement identities are formed and come to life (DELLA PORTA and DIANI, 2006, page 94). What is interesting about the Colorful Revolution is that at the same time we have citizens that can be identified as antagonist, protagonist and audience. The strong identification with the movement was important element for creation and reconstruction of the space in Skopje.

5.5 SK2014 and creating counterpace, a sense of place

Ruddick (1996, 135) shows that “public spaces serve not simply to surface particular pre-given behaviours, but become an active medium

through which new identities are created or contested ...new social identities and new meanings of public space are seen to be constructed together.”(MILLER, 2000, page 34).Identities are forged in and through relations (which include non-relations, absences and hiatuses). In consequence they are not rooted or static, but mutable ongoing productions (MASSEY, 2004, page 5). They are process by which social actors recognize themselves – and are recognized by other actors – as part of broader groupings, and develop emotional attachments to them (Melucci 1989, 1996; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Goodwin et al. 2001: 8–9 – in (DELLA PORTA and DIANI, 2006, page 91).

SKO14 and Its aggressive vulgarity has literally changed not only the city’s physiognomy, but also our own perception about us as citizens. As I mentioned earlier, public space had been usurped to an unbearable degree, leaving us full of frustration and disgust (INT9, TOŠEVSKI).

Social movement activity largely consists of practices more or less directly linked to symbolic production; and that this element is not a precondition for conflict but, rather, one of its constituent parts (DELLA PORTA and DIANI, 2006, page 74). Value and experience established with the protest have a bond with the space (DELLA PORTA and FABRI, 2016, page 188). Tilly argues that although space affects the patterns of contention, contention it self transforms the political significance of particular sites and spatial routines (TILLY, 2000, page 139).

In recent Colorful Revolution events, the result was exactly what Tilly is arguing, transformation of a place with giving new meaning of the core of the city, changing the symbolic meaning of space, creation of representational place, a third place. The Colorful Revolution managed to reshape the visual point of the project with color and change how citizens perceive the city.

... the city belongs to those who live in it, the citizens, it does not belong to the elites that should govern the city as it is the main room in their home. I think that The Colourful Revolution does exactly that thing, it

governs the city to match the tastes for the "others" also (INT6, KOTESKA).

The Colorful Revolution reconstructed the space and created counter space by immaterial means. Social movements are also space producers: first, by contesting the use of (public and private) spaces; and second, by directly manipulating spaces, and producing new ones in action (DELLA PORTA and FABRI, 2016, page 188). Cognition always occurs in a socio-spatial context in which symbolic frameworks, values, and ideologies guide recognition, interpretation, and understanding. Cognitive mechanisms shape people's perceptions and understandings and are grounded in individual cognition (MARTIN and MILLER, 2003, page 150).

...the city has reclaimed the light which was lost...(INT3, BOGOEVSKI)

...Even the discourse has been changed now, for example the Triumphal Arch would be for real Triumph of the victory, when this regime will fall... I think that the Triumphal Arch will stay as a monument of victory of the citizens over the regime (INT18, SAVESKI).

Moreover, it recomposes the identification of the citizens with the city. Place, in other words does – as many argue – change us, not through some visceral belonging, but through practicing a place, the negotiation of interesting trajectories; place as an arena where negotiation is forced upon us (MASSEY, 2005, page 154). The evolution of collective action produces and encourages continuous redefinitions of identity (Fantasia 1988; Hirsch 1990; Melucci 1995; Bernstein 1997; Goodwin et al. 2001; Drury et al. 2003 in DELLA PORTA and FABRI, 2016, page 93).

...I personally as a citizen of Skopje can freely say that I feel at home again when I walk past those buildings. I get a similar impression from the people I talk to (INT3, BOGOEVSKI).

The transformation of space in Skopje goes beyond physical appearance, furthermore into recomposing citizen's perception and changing how

people feel about the city Place, then, refers to the ways in which social activity and thought are geographically constituted in discrete settings, and how this constitution affects that activity and thought. It includes not only processes of material reproduction, but also the meaningful shaping of life worlds (MILLER, 2000, page 16). Meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation and experience (SOJA, 1980, page 210).

I actually think that it is in the fact that more citizens today realize that democracy is not something that we can take for granted which will exist in spite of our acting or the lack of it (INT3, BOGOEVSKI).

...It influence the conscience for the need of urbanity (when I say urbanity I don't mean merely the visual center, I understand it as a way of behaving, talking and articulating your opinion), especially for the new generations that grow up with highlighted activism, it sets them free, urbanity has got to do with freedom, I mean if there is no sense of freedom, I will even use another word – nonchalance, then there is no urbanity, you have to be open-minded (INT12, GEŠOSKA).

5.6 Transformative power as a result of the activist wave in Skopje

Space is not simply a reflection, or "mere occasion for the deployment," of social structure, but a concrete expression of a combination, an "historical ensemble," of interacting material elements and structures (SOJA, 1980, page 212). The operation of specific mechanisms or processes—or variables, for that matter—will not always result in the same outcomes. How mechanisms and processes engage each other, and the outcomes such relations produce, is a spatially and historically contingent matter (MARTIN and MILLER, 2003, page 145).

In Skopje, space reconstruction plays important role into building identity during the cycles of the protests, and identity composition in the future. The process of social relations managed to create new

meaningful places, citizens felt that they are bringing back the city. It is interesting how space contributed for re composition of the identity in Skopje, which afterwards created a wave of encouragement among citizens.

My impression is that although the effects are not yet visible in that extent in which we would have expected, but yet in long-term this is very important period in building democracy and reducing the fear to express an opinion (INT14, JAKIMOVSKA).

What is interesting that the public opinion about the project SK2014 has significantly changed after the protests in Skopje, the number of citizens that supported the project has decreased. Public discussion has radically changed after the wave of activism, many public debates were opened, questions about right to the city started to emerge among citizens. The performances of significant art initiatives like Kooperacija and organizations like Kontraunkt, Press to exit Gallery etc, manage to influence the culture and activist scene in Skopje. New platforms about critical thinking, acting and other issues connected to citizens' activism and art are even more present today in Skopje.

I think activist /civil society groups offer a channel for political and cultural discussion, debate and analysis that it sorely lacking in mainstream Macedonian politics and in its government-controlled media outlets (INT11, BLACKWOOD).

The movements contributed for creating a healthy ground for further development of the activisms and culture in Skopje. The process of redefinition of identity can be seen as base for creation of new, confident and conscious citizenship, thus the activist wave certainly reflected the concepts of solidarity. This was more than apparent in the recent Colorful Revolution, when citizens managed to overcome the ethnic boundaries and to create a common ground for developing of a multicultural environment in Skopje.

I can mention two important benefits, among them antinationalism that is promoting among the people and the understanding that all of us in Macedonia have to live together (INT18, SAVESKI).

Many actors refer to solidarity as a concept, starting with the movement Lenka, the tendency for providing new possibility appeared as an establishment of new parties with horizontal organization and following civic concepts in their programmes.

5.7 Conclusions

In conclusion, the thesis explores the processes of spatiality in shaping the contention in Skopje, focusing on interdisciplinary and comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the activist wave in Skopje and possible transformative power. The study manages to display a diversity of selected initiatives and movements that contributed into understanding the scope of activism in Skopje starting from 2009 until 2016.

Due to the complexity of the scope of activism in Skopje, I focused my study on three important dimensions. The three dimensions elaborated the reasons, the dynamics and possible effects of the activist wave in Skopje. Moreover the study concluded that space is important agent for detecting the main elements for creation and discussing the possible transformative power in the activist wave in Skopje.

The first and the second dimension of the study exposed the main elements of emergence of the activist wave in Skopje. The elaboration confirms that context is important criteria in order to study social movements. In the case of Skopje we saw from the analyses that the context is useful in order to pick the important elements of the emergence of the activist wave. The first dimension displays the wide range of variety of initiatives and movements that emerged in the Western Balkan cites, and concluded that the activist wave in Skopje is actually part of broader region phenomena, but although Macedonia and Skopje developed in certain post Yugoslavian context, the city has

its own peculiar and specific elements for emergence of the contention. The results from the research showed that the main reasons for emergence of the activist wave in Skopje cannot be traced only in the openness of the political opportunities, but furthermore, the culture, the identity formation and the emotionality play important role. As a basis, the analyses of broader political, social, economic and spatial transition of the Western Balkan cities contributed in explaining how the political opportunities and consequently how culture and values were transforming in the case of Skopje. The study also reflected interesting results which suggested that opportunities diffusion or expanding opportunities is important element for development of the activist wave in Skopje

The third dimension of the research was focused on the spatial dimension of the social movements in Skopje. The question imposed at the beginning of the thesis, how space can be facilitator and reproduced through social movements was elaborated through three main scales of space importance. The three scales of the spatial dimension were elaborated through the analyses of the relations between the initiatives and movements and the project SK2014.

The first scale analyzed how the project SK2014 became facilitator for different initiatives and movements, but what is interesting that the variety of initiatives and movements use the project SK2014 in different ways, so SK2014 became a facilitator for urban, architectural, environmental, political issues etc. In conclusion, the study produces reflections that indicate that social movements in Skopje cannot be elaborated without taking into account the relation with space. Space is the main facilitator for different social movements and initiatives in Skopje.

The second scale analyzed SK2014 as context of the social movements. The analyses elaborated to what extent the social movements are concerning urban issues and contributed to understanding how space and place can become context and reproduced during the wave of

activism in the case of Skopje. This study also reflected upon the importance of understanding space processes, it contributed into understanding how the activism processes facilitate other processes, how relations are important for enlargement of the wave of activism, not only in physical matters but immaterial, tackling many other issues. In conclusion, it justifies how space constitutes structures, relations, networks and processes.

The last dimension of the study analyzed even deeper the question, how space can be reproduce through the activist wave. It shows that space can be transformed as a result of the activist wave, not only in physical sense but actually the processes that occurred can transform immaterial dimensions of space, like restructuring people believes values, and how they feel about the city. The last scale of the spatial elaboration also showed that the effects and the transformative power from the social movements are not constant, rather they are very dynamic. Thus understanding space, its relations and peculiarities can contribute of understanding the transformative power that the activist's wave has in Skopje.

Following these observations, I can conclude that space can be facilitator of different social movements and initiatives in different ways and can be significantly reproduce during the cycles of protests. What is the most important is that we understand that deeper analyses of space relation and how space is reproduce can explain how activists mobilize and how opportunities are created and defused during the cycles of protests in Skopje. Finally, the spatial dimension analyses showed that space can be important agent that will contribute into discovering possible results, further reflections and restructures in the future.

Summarizing the three dimensions, I can conclude that opportunities cannot be analyzed in static manner because as it was elaborated in the case of Skopje opportunities can be constructed and recreated during the cycles of protests. A deeper understanding of space relation and social processes can explain how certain opportunities defuse and in

what way activists mobilize. The research in Skopje contributed into deeper understanding of the importance of spatiality in contentious politics, it proved that in general contentions politics can benefit from deeper analyses of place specificity.

Due to the observations above, the activist wave transformative power in Skopje cannot be observed as a physical outcome, but it can be traced into elaborating the dynamics and processes of the wave of resilience. So, as I said at the beginning, the aim of the thesis was not to point peculiar results. In my opinion when elaborating social movements we need to take into account very dynamic and interdisciplinary approach, because by its nature space and social processes are very complex and full of certain peculiarities and ideologies, so consequently the results will be fluid and dynamic. Anyway, the different scales and perspectives of research in Skopje unveiled very interesting, progressive, and original insides that can be further discussed and elaborated.

Moving in further direction, focusing on the state of the problem that I have imposed at the begging of the thesis, the question is still present. I am even more involved into trying to understand how we can put together different contexts of studies, with different geographies and ideologies and observe them in common ground?; What kind of mechanisms and tools we need in order to bring together all the empirical observations and relate them to a broader range of contentious politics?; Is it possible?

I think that some important elements and mechanisms that can be apply for one study context can sometimes be less relevant for another one. Anyway, in my opinion as a starting point we need to find common tools for conducting field research and find a way how to formulate the diversity of theories into more comprehensive common ground, moreover many different disciplines should be taken into account. Anyway, what can I say from this perspective is only to observe how the further development of this theory will evolve.

Additionally, my interest is focused towards my city, Skopje. I am very curious what kind of transformative power will have the activist wave in Skopje, in the future, so that's why I think that from a further distance the dissertation will be even more interesting.

6. APPENDIX

6.1 List of interviewees

Directly involved

(INT1) **AHMETI**, Safet (Ахмети Сафет); I protest; 25.06.2016

(INT2) **ANONYMOUS**; Anonymous” guerilla “actions; 30.06.2016

(INT3) **BOGOEVSKI**, Pavle(Богоевски Павле); Colorful Revolution; 27.06.2016

(INT4) **DOMAZETOVSKA**, Snežana(Домазетовска Снежана); First Arch brigade; 22.06.2016

(INT5) **GOČEV**, Aleksandar (Гочев Александар); Park defenders; 23.06.2016

(INT6) **KOTESKA**, Jasna(Котеска, Јасна); Professors Plenum; 26.06.2016

(INT7) **NAUMOVSKI**, Nikola (Наумовски Никола); Freedom Square; 28.06.2016

(INT8) **PAVLOVSKA**, Danica (Павловска Даница);I love GTC; 08.07.2016

(INT9)**TOŠEVSKI**, Igor (Тошевски Игор); Кооперација; 22.06.2016

(INT10)**TRAJKOVA**, Marina (Трајкова Марина);Singing Skopjans; 27.06.2016

Others

(INT11) **BLACKWOOD**, John; Curator, Researcher; 14.07.2016

(INT12) **GEŠOSKA**, Iskra (Гешоска Искра); President of Kontrapunkt and Independent scene of MK; 27.06.2016

(INT13) **GRČEV**, Miroslav (Мирослав Грчев);Architect and Urban Planner; 13.07.2016

(INT14) **JAKIMOVSKA**, Iliina(Јакимовска Илина); Ethnologist and Writer;
09.07.2016

(INT15) **JANČEVSKI**, Vladimir(Јанчевски Владимир); Researcher in
contemporary art; 11.07.2016

(INT16) **JOVANOVIĆ**, Branimir(Јовановиќ Бранимир); Economist
Researcher; 14.07.2016

(INT17) **PROKOPIEV**, Aleksandar(Прокопијев Александар); Novelist,
Essayist, Poet; 26.06.2016

(INT18) **SAVESKI**, Zdravko(Савески Здравко); Doctor of Political science;
30.06.2016

6.2 Interviews (directly involved)

INT1 AHMETI, Safet (Ахмети Сафер)(1967) was born in Makarska, Croatia. He is currently doing his PhD research on contemporary art and anthropology. From 2003 to 2008 he was lecturing “Visual Culture”, “Introduction to Modern Art” and “Culture and Communication” courses at the South-East European University in Tetovo, Macedonia. In May 2011 he established the Center for Visual Studies-Skopje (CVS) as an affiliation of the Zagreb (Croatia) based organization.

THE INITIATIVE - I PROTEST

1. What is the essence of your activist action? De-criminalization and de-partization of the society.

2. What is the main reason for organizing your activist action? (Could you explain the emergence of your initiative in the context of Skopje/Macedonia?) The extremely high level of corruption and criminalization of the society overall, and the unsought leveling of the political party with the state.

3. Have you been inspired by other initiatives outside Macedonia? On a micro level, it might seem like it is about the overthrowing of the Government in Macedonia, about the education system in Mexico, about the labor rights in France, or about the climate changes in Australia. Yet, on a larger scale what we are witnessing is the fall of capitalism in its last neo-liberal stage. Of course, it is a process,

and it is going to last for some undefined time, thus deepening the societal agony. The main inspiration, thus, is the possibility of getting worldwide united against the common enemy.

4. What is the role and approach in the work of your initiative? Since I am not among the organizers of the struggle, I simply take advantage of the possibility to express my thoughts and opinions on the street, to the people who are in charge.

5. Which are the goals (objectives) that you struggle for? Nonpartisan democracy and corruption-free society

ORGANISATION AND NETWORK

6. Is your initiative a part from a wider association or movement? If so, can you explain the emergence of your initiative in a wider Balkan context? No.

7. Do you have any links or collaboration with local initiatives and NGOs? If so, what are the links? No.

8. How you would comment your self-organization and the appearance of the SK2014 project? The project SK2014 is an attempt to symbolize several things: The final break with the socialist (usually misinterpreted as a communist) past; To establish a connection with the ancient Macedonian heritage through the 'antiquization' – political-marketing campaign; Claiming the continuity of the democratic values as established in

ancient Greece; The desire to re-connect to the European early modern period of nations formation, sensed as a gap produced by the Ottoman Empire rule since the medieval period.

All of those symbolizations are being built upon a false attempt to re-invent the tradition, thus producing an angst and intellectual problematization.

URBAN DIMENSION

9. Do you think that your activities (performances) can influence people's opinion in terms of the SK2014 project, or more generally, in reference to the right to the city in the Skopje context? Since being declared, in several different occasions, as civic versus popular activities, I strongly believe that more and more people are getting influenced, at least by acknowledging, if not yet participating, the positive approach to the context of the city and the falseness of the project SK2014.

10. How does your initiative/NGO perceive the city of Skopje? Skopje is a city in a continual transition and transformation influenced by political processes, except for the operations undertaken due to the earthquake emergency. Yet neither of the introduced developing models (since 1914) has ever been accomplished in their totality, thus leaving space to be opposed by the subsequent models. This is one of the main reasons for the city to look more like a mosaic created out of various incompatible parts, than to have a defined vista.

11. How does your initiative influence the urban dimension in Skopje? Firstly, by promoting democratic values through embracing the majority of more or less marginalized groups of people (Gypsy people, autistic kids, LGBT community, etc.), and giving a space for their voice to be heard and secondly by being involved in the organization of (Paratisima – festival of young artists; recently finished), or just actively supporting different kind of manifestations (Skopje Pride Weekend - ongoing) with an urban dimension.

12. Can you tell me what the right to the city means in the context of your activities? A space and an opportunity for everyone to express oneself, thus bringing the extra value to the community. This is to be achieved through more professional activities (conferences, debates, exhibitions, concerts etc.) which would include a wider public.

RESULTS AND FUTURE

13. Do you think that your activist action has transformative potential to others? If so, can you briefly explain in what way? Regarding my personal activity, I am here to help and support the initiative of the young people in their effort to make significant societal changes.

14. What is your next step? To be there for the initiatives next step, whatever it might be.

15. What do you gain from being part of the initiative, from your performing? Not any personal

achievements, but an opportunity for my children to get more fair possibilities during their lifetime.

16. What results have you achieved so far? Political destabilization, which is of a basic importance in order to recognize and then to correct the faults.

17. What results do you expect to achieve and which of them do you think will be reachable? I see this initiative as an opportunity to change the non-democratic political atmosphere. It cannot be done overnight, and therefore, expectations should be set on a very low level, meaning that changes should and may be accomplished only if one step at a time is taken. It is a fight to last.

18. Do you think it is possible that future leaders emerge from your initiative? Yes, and this is not a pure wish, but an ongoing situation.

INT2 ANONYMOUS “GUERRILLA ACTIONS” - Is an incognito group of 2 or people. One of them is also a member of Kooperacija.

THE INITIATIVE – ANONONIMOUS GROUP

1. What is the essence of your activist action? The essence of this type of actions is to comment, through a creative approach, the various problems that the city is facing or to criticize certain processes and actions that will help to solve different communal problems in the city. Some of these actions are criticizing, mocking

and parodying the project SK2014 as one of the most scandalous architectural and ideological projects recently in Macedonia.

2. What is the main reason for organizing your activist action? The main reason for this kind of actions is that we believed and still believe that the creative approach and what we are getting as a product at the end, due to its 'oddity', can articulate specific issues in a much more powerful way. Since these problems are solved in a classic bureaucratic way, they can get stuck in these procedures of designing, commissions etc quite often.

3. Have you been inspired by other initiatives outside Macedonia? Initially, we didn't have specific benchmarks, but through the implementation of the first actions we were inspired by different issues. Since we work within the local context we believe that these events are authentic.

4. What is the role and approach in the work of your initiative? Utterly spontaneous. In general, it's about two-three people who cooperate with each other, so, all those conversations that we have everyday are basically the topics of our interest and the issues that we want to deal with. It is an extremely natural process, we respond to everything that happens to us, it surrounds us, it bothered us.

5. Which are the goals (objectives) that you struggle for? The main objective is to criticize, ridicule, identify

and possibly resolve certain problems that the city is facing through a creative and visual way.

ORGANIZATION AND NETWORK

6. Is your initiative a part of a wider association or movement? If so, can you explain the emergence of your initiative in a wider Balkan context?

No. In this case it is something that is authentic here, and it was a model for abroad. In other countries of the former Yugoslavia this type of activist action does not exist.

7. Do you have any links or collaboration with local initiatives and NGOs? If so, what are the links?

In terms of the art actions, people who know that we are involved, they just approach us with their individual proposals of what could be the next topic that we can deal with. In terms of links with initiatives, there is no such thing.

8. How you would comment your self-organization and the appearance of the SK2014 project?

In a broader context SK2014 is understood as a symbolic materialization of the ideology of VMRO (deletion, non-systematic and brutal revision of history). SK2014 – the totality of the visual, in a negative sense, was the point of culmination, although there were a few other things.

9. Do you think that your activities (performances) can influence people's opinion in terms of the SK2014

project, or more generally, in reference to the right to the city in the Skopje context? I think so, but the actions are recent in Skopje, they have existed for only two years and until now only twenty actions have been made. They hold a certain irony, as a setting in the environment, it seems as another contribution to the environment, in a symbolic way, and they open the actualization of this project SK2014, and reflect its madness. At the end, how realistically they managed to change people's opinion, I do not know, but I can say that such a principle of work through art, at least, can encourage people to react.

10. How does your initiative/NGO perceive the city of Skopje? It's a complicated question. Skopje is a very interesting example of something that unfortunately did not turn out as it should have.

11. How does your initiative influence the urban dimension in Skopje? They influence it directly and indirectly. The issues that we treat are from recent topics and recent timing, and just because of that the effect is greater.

12. Can you tell me what the right to the city means in the context of your activities? I do not think that we are starting from that, we are responding more intuitively. The right to the city is a very broad topic, in a collective and individual connotation, it is difficult to put it in a few sentences. The right to the city is democracy, openness,

inclusiveness, tolerance, structuring, and equal sharing for everyone.

RESULTS AND FUTURE

13. Do you think that your activist action has transformative potential to others? If so, can you briefly explain in what way? People respond to these actions. We are anonymous in this process, but as Iskra Geshoska said, it does not actually matter who the author is of these actions, because like this, in more symbolic way, the voice of many people can be articulated. In that way, it manages to capture that moment of a common cry.

14. What is your next step? We are continuing. We do not have any specific plan in what directions we will proceed. It is important that this is a new form in our city and that is why we think we have a lot of open space for various types of actions.

15. What do you gain from being part of the initiative, from your performing? For me it is a satisfaction that I can change some processes at the micro level through my work.

16. What results have you achieved so far? The power of art is really great, after these actions some things were really changing. For example, the action using Guinness was a specific request that had specific results – the sign that said ‘Guinness world record for the time period of the nonconstruction of a street’ resulted into the actual making a street. On the

other hand, the action with monkeys and attaching eyes to trees did not give specific results, but, rather, we managed to open up a space for people to respond.

17. What results do you expect to achieve and which of them do you think will be reachable? I have already stated this in a different form. To make changes in terms of the perception of people and, of course, to try to solve specific problems that the city is facing.

18. Do you think it is possible that future leaders emerge from your initiative?

INT3 BOGOEVSKI, Pavle(Богоевски Павле); BA in Criminology, works in the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and the LGBTI Support Centre. Part of his work is dedicated to the right to a protest, public gathering and police conduct during protests. Outside his work place, he has been a human rights activist for a few years now.) He is one of the main leaders and founders of the ongoing Colorful Revolution in Macedonia.

THE INITIATIVE - THE COLORFUL REVOLUTION

1. What is the essence of your activist action? I wouldn't call it an activist activity, nor a movement, nor a mere revolution, but much more. The essence is a change of people's conscience about what it means to be a citizen, what politics and democracy

mean, and what the connection is between the three.

2. What is the main reason for organizing your activist action? (Could you explain the emergence of your initiative in the context of Skopje/Macedonia?) Two reasons were the dominant trigger for the beginning of the Colourful Revolution. The first one was the one-sided proclaiming of elections by VMRO and DUI, and the second one was the decision of the person calling himself the President for the pardon of 56 suspected politicians.

The Colourful Revolution can't be seen separately from other civic activism in Macedonia. The Colourful Revolution is a product, but also a peak of everything that has been happening throughout the years, literally there hasn't been one initiative or movement from which we haven't learnt something that is now being put into use in the Colourful Revolution. Every one of us, if they follow the principles of the struggle, and those principles are: struggle against the regime that has been personified in the figure of Nikola Gruevski. That means that everyone in Macedonia, if they follow these principles, may regard themselves as a part of I Protest and as participant in the Colourful Revolution, and this is the sheer beauty in our colours.

3. Have you been inspired by other initiatives outside Macedonia? I think that civic activism is not a phenomenon that is geographically limited. If I tell

you that the Colourful Revolution is a peak and product of civic activism in Macedonia, it is also true that it is a product of civic activism on the Balkans. However, there hasn't been a direct link, for example, using already established methods or communicating with people that were involved in other initiatives on the Balkans. That doesn't mean that we aren't using the lessons learnt in those initiatives.

However, in a wider context, there has been inspiration, such as elements from the internet and direct communication. For example, the idea of the countdown we did, the number nine and when we drove in circles, has been taken from a much larger action in Berlin; however, our scope wasn't nearly as big as theirs, and it was adapted to our context. The concept of the balloons and the usage of paint is authentically ours, that I can tell, and it has already been taken over by other movements, such as the one in Paris, if you recall.

4. What is the role and approach in the work of your initiative? Horizontal organization. By communicating with people we have tried and were able to identify common goals that we have transformed into a movement of articulated political demands and we have been working on achieving them for two months now, and that is not easy to do, still it is a question of many different voices that don't necessarily have to agree on the same issues.

The most interesting part is the operational level, the way in which we use the ideas of people from the streets. Every time we go to a protest a lot of people approach us and tell us their ideas, and they also write to us on facebook. We try to use everything that can be made use of, that is in the context of the message, and that is logistically feasible. In a few cases, we communicate with the people that came up with the idea and so we ask them for help in the organization etc. We try to picture the present situation of the people that protest and to translate it in the protests' organization, and I believe we are doing it well.

5. Which are the goals (objectives) that you struggle for? So, first of all, the two met demands. Postponing the elections with conditions, revoking the pardons (they have been met); the Constitutional Court to give its legal opinion on the Special Public Prosecutor (we are still waiting for this one); a direct participation of the citizens into the political process (we are still working on it and we'll see how it develops); establishing a special department of the Criminal Court that will deal with the cases of the Special Public Prosecutor (we still don't have specific activists in that direction). Also, to stop pursuing people that protest, we know that two people that were taken into custody have been released, however, the pursue of the protesters continues. So far a lot of criminal charges have been filed.

ORGANIZATION AND NETWORK

6. Is your initiative a part from a wider association or movement? If so, can you explain the emergence of your initiative in a wider Balkan context? It is too early to talk about a wider Balkan context. There is one difference we should take into consideration. These protests are the Colourful Revolution, what is happening now, while I Protest is a civic initiative i.e. the movement behind it. I Protest was established last year during the May 5 protests, back then it was a specific movement with specific political demands, and now it represents a part of a completely different process, the demands are different, and so is the perception of what I Protest is, now our attitudes are firm. That is the story we tell, I Protest is first person singular, I have the same right to speak about these protests as any other person who has been on the streets at least a couple of times these past two months.

There is still no formal organization of the initiative. I hold that the problem of the previous movements is that when it is put within an organizational framework the approach becomes too formal. And one of the most beautiful traits of the Colourful Revolution and I Protest is that up until now we have at least managed to preserve the genuine horizontal organization in which there are no structures and I think that there is no need to implement higher formalization. The number of the Colourful Revolution keeps changing, there are new people all the time.

7. Do you have any links or collaboration with local initiatives and NGOs? If so, what are the links? There is no official cooperation of the Colourful Revolution with other local initiatives; there may be a certain support for some. We have supported the protest in Karpos, before that we supported the May 1 protests for political rights etc. That doesn't mean cooperation on the initiative level, but cooperation due to a specific goal. A lot of people from many initiatives join us every day and they participate in the creation of what is called the Colourful Revolution.

So the cooperation is as follows: the leaders of those initiatives communicate with us on a daily basis regarding ideas of implementation, strategic and political questions, and exchange of information.

8. How you would comment your self-organization and the appearance of the SK2014 project? There is a connection, and it functions on a few levels. When we speak of causality – whether Skopje 2014 has directly triggered the Colourful Revolution, we can't say it is exclusive. Skopje 2014 is not just one of the basic visual symbols of this government and the way it governs but it is also one of the basic criminal projects, so it is definitely the item into which this government has invested the largest amount of financial means since it came to power). I can say that Skopje 2014 is directly responsible for many conditions that

made the citizens finally wake up and realize that something must be changed, and that it won't be changed until they personally do something about that.

The other level of connection is perhaps the most beautiful one i.e. we use Skopje 2014 in a predominant manner, as a target for our paint attacks, and by doing that we do not just express our revolt but we also paint the face of the regime, we turn their propaganda upside down and we tell them loud and clear that they shall not pass easily. It is useless to build a violently imposed history, it is useless to force patriotism (something that he feels is patriotism) because we already have history and patriotism, and they are different from what he sells as patriotism. I believe that this way of connecting, how we use his image of what national identity and patriotism mean, belonging to a country, party and leader, I believe that it is exactly this connection of SK2014 with the Colourful Revolution that is crucial.

URBAN DIMENSION

9. Do you think that your activities (performances) can influence people's opinion in terms of the SK2014 project, or more generally, in reference to the right to the city in the Skopje context? Not only that they can influence, but they already have. The Colourful Revolution has 62% from the public's support, which is perhaps the highest percentage of public opinion

support since the EU/NATO integration polls in 2005 (78%).

The citizens no longer perceive SK2014 as the symbol of the regime, but as the symbol of the Revolution. Literally there is no single person that sees the Triumph Arch as the symbol of triumph as Gruevski has represented it; now it is the symbol of the citizens and I think it will remain as such for much longer. In my opinion, it should never be repainted. The same applies to other buildings, they have a new life in a way, the city has reclaimed the light which was lost when VMRO started to shove it down in the throats of all the citizens of Skopje. I believe that its effects are already positive, I personally as a citizen of Skopje can freely say that I feel at home again when I walk past those buildings. I get a similar impression from the people I talk to.

10. How does your initiative/NGO perceive the city of Skopje? As the world's largest empty canvas.

11. How does your initiative influence the urban dimension in Skopje? Yes, with the symbol, the paint. As I said before, the change in the citizens' perception and the change in people's feelings towards those buildings.

Colour has many symbols, first of all, let's not forget the legal aspect. The Colourful Revolution since its beginning has been a target of propaganda in which we are a violently construed scenario, a replica of the Ukrainian one, where dark foreign services, Illuminates and Soros act so that they

directly destroy this biblical land. Thus, our protest method had to be something that clearly draws the distinction between a violent and non-violent fall of the regime; however, it must be something that would not be soft, in any case. Throwing paint is one of the methods that is on the ideal borderline of a criminal act and offence, on the ideal borderline for the police not to act violently, and not on the ideal borderline of what would have been accepted by the larger social group as a form of revolt. There was no need of breaking and destroying, which would not have been accepted by the larger social group and the European community, and so throwing paint has emerged as an ideal and ingenious method that does not provoke using police force, by law it is not an offence with violent elements and you can't be taken into custody for throwing paint.

On the one hand, that is the legal aspect. On the other hand, we speak of the cultural aspect of the colour, of changing the symbol. They proudly and pompously bragged about their achievements, which existed only in their party's programs, in the imagination of their executive committees. They were so proud that their achievements resulted in the improvement of this country, but the truth is completely different. The colouring method is the final and resolute I DON'T TRUST YOU of the citizens, the final and resolute YOU ARE NOT THE SYMBOL YOU SAY YOU ARE, the final and resolute – this symbol you

throw in my face is not my symbol and never will be.

12. Can you tell me what the right to the city means in the context of your activities? Unfortunately, the right to the city is a far-fetched concept on the Balkans. In my opinion, the right to the city means a clear division of authority that target the city between the central and local government, in a way that enables to really listen to the voice of the citizens. We are not speaking only of issues, such as whether a new playground, hospital or school will be built, but also of the citizens' participation in the city political process. Tell me how many citizens are aware of the taxes they pay to the city of Skopje, how many citizens are aware of the fact to what municipalities they pay taxes and what the purpose is of those initiatives, how they influence the conscience and thinking in the urban environment. Let's not mention architecture, to what extent the citizens are genuinely included in the detailed urban plans, how many people need an explanation what it means for their neighbourhoods and urban meeting places.

There is a concept that is implemented on a few levels, it's called suitable city, and in our city there is an initiative that is called city suitable for the child and has been implemented for a few years now. It targets a small part of the obligations of the local self-government, above all, in the area of labour and social politics i.e. social work centres, treatment of minors and

schools. However, suitable city is a much wider concept, it means something completely different, and there you can find the methods of participation and what they actually mean.

RESULTS AND FUTURE

13. Do you think that your activist action has transformative potential to others? If so, can you briefly explain in what way? The main issue with the Colourful Revolution is that there is no type of potential that has not been included exactly because of the way we are organized. Since our organization is horizontal, it means that there is no leader and anyone who is the Colourful Revolution – if they feel they should, they could transform, as long as it is within the three principles that I have mentioned. What we do is here in Skopje, but in these past two months, there have been protests in more than 24 cities, tens if not hundreds of people went to the streets, and they are the Colourful Revolution as much as we are.

14. What is your next step? I don't know, it will depend on the political situation.

15. What do you gain from being part of the initiative, from your performing? First of all, a possibility to develop my personal capacities, or plainly speaking, learning how to deal with different situations. This is something not one of us has been engaged with before and so we didn't

know what to expect. It was the human and professional capacity that developed first, however, the best part are (now we don't speak of the general gain, the cause for society's democratization, the first gain is always that one) the people you have had a chance to meet. Every one of us met people that hadn't known before, and the way we have cooperated (that in certain moments we should trust each other) is really inspiring. That gives us strength to continue.

16. What results have you achieved so far? The two main reasons of our gathering have already been met, the elections have been postponed and the pardons have been revoked, however, we still have a way to go. The most beautiful and the largest gain of this initiative is that it has transformed itself from a way to express revolt against the pardons and elections to an articulated civic demand for a political conscience and for a wider participation of the citizens into the political process.

17. What results do you expect to achieve and which of them do you think will be reachable? If we want to be serious, we can't believe that there are results that we want to achieve which are unattainable. I don't see the biggest accomplishment as something that has been put into one demand, I actually think that it is in the fact that more citizens today realize that democracy is not something that we can take for granted which will exist in spite of our acting or the lack of it.

Democracy is a product of the overall relation of each and every citizen towards organized society i.e. towards the country. If you don't feel democracy and freedom as something that will come as the result of our daily decisions (such as the decision to pay 1000 denars to the police officer to let us go without a fine, or to make a few phone calls in order to get to the doctor without queuing, the right to vote), this is exactly the largest gain from the Colourful Revolution.

To understand that we are the citizens and that we carry the sovereignty, and not a party, nor a leader, nor an institution, and if we can achieve that, all else is comes second.

18. Do you think it is possible that future leaders emerge from your initiative? I hope so. There are many people that have been working for years, and others have been included for the first time. People that have shown not just extraordinary potential for protest and street activities but they also possess extraordinary values, especially for articulated political thought and reason. I think it would be a shame not to use that potential.

INT4 DOMAZETOVSKA, Snežana (Снежана Домазетовска) – currently taking a Masters Degree at the Faculty of Architecture. She has some history in direct participation in several initiatives, as an active member or supporter, starting with Arch brigade and currently an active member of the Critical Mass - Skopje on bicycle.

THE INITIATIVE - FIRST ARCHIBRIGADE

1. What is the essence of your activist action?

When The First Architectural Uprising was organized, First Archibrigade was an informal initiative in which the main goal was to defend a particular public space.

2. What is the main reason for organizing your activist action? (Could you explain the emergence of your initiative in the context of Skopje/Macedonia?)

There were a lot of happenings in that period, strange buildings began to appear in the city, just at that time the competition for the construction of the house of Mother Teresa was topical. There were some reactions from the public. Intensively we began discussing at the university, and after classes students began to gather and we started talking to do something. The main reason was to defend a public space in Skopje, in which it was planned for constructing a church. According to us any building should not be placed on that space.

3. Have you been inspired by other initiatives outside Macedonia?

During that time, as I remember, there were some happenings in the region (Initiatives from Zagreb or protests about Varshavska street protection in which the authorities wanted the street to convert into a private access for a supermarket), but we were informed about them after the First Architectural Uprising. They contacted us, and we started to be

interested how they perform, we have exchanged information with them and also we were invited to several debates.

4. What is the role and approach in the work of your initiative?

The approach was very spontaneous, we probably felt that there is enough dissatisfaction among the people about what is happening in the city. Archibrigade gathered many supporters on the social networks, but when the protest happened only 100 to 200 people appeared. I cannot say that we had some meaningful approach, we had the idea, without any special preparations.

5. Which are the goals (objectives) that you struggle for?

As I said, we struggled towards a specific purpose, which was preserving the public space, the plot that was planned for building a church.

ORGANIZATION AND NETWORK

6. Is your initiative a part from a wider association or movement? If so, can you explain the emergence of your initiative in a wider Balkan context?

We were not directly part of a wider movement, although similar developments took place in other Balkan countries. Our initiative was part of the site SEE Network (Eastern European Network), along with other initiatives in the region in which we were invited for several events in the region.

7. Do you have any links or collaboration with local initiatives and NGOs? If so, what are the links? After our protest Freedom Square appeared, part of their members actually supported the First Architectural Uprising and they were part of the protest, with them we had collaboration. We had several collaborations with NGOs, Press to exit with Jane Chalovski, they have published our catalogue. Afterwards, when the GTC campaign began, some members of Archibrigade transferred to the initiative "I love GTC". Actually the first activists of "I love GTC" were members of the First Archibrigade together with the Association of Architects, or Blagica Pavlovska who initiated the initiative.

8. How you would comment your self-organization and the appearance of the SK2014 project? At that time when we organized the First Architectural Uprising, we were not informed about the project SK2014 because the official video was released several months later, but I think we have recognized the seeds of SK2014, however it is interesting that no one imagined that the project will developed in such a scale.

URBAN DIMENSION

9. Do you think that your activities (performances) can influence people's opinion in terms of the SK2014 project, or more generally, in reference to the right to the city in the Skopje context? Regarding the opinion

for the project SK2014 no, because after the protest occurred a few months later was released the video about the project. But, yes, I think we had an impact in terms of educating people as much as we could, primarily through social networks and through organizing events (architectural tours of Skopje).

10. How does your initiative/NGO perceive the city of Skopje? The city as a space built for the citizen's needs to be able to have qualitative and healthy life.

11. How does your initiative influence the urban dimension in Skopje? I think that particularly with the protest we have raised the question of the location and the church, even though we only gave incentive (motive), we were not the main reason for shifting the building to another location, it was the religious community. Still, I think that we have raised the question, perhaps if we did not raised it, the religious community would not have responded. Archibrigade did not influenced directly, but it raised the issue that afterwards was edited by other initiatives, they have developed it in a different way in order to shape the Skopje's urban tissue.

12. Can you tell me what the right to the city means in the context of your activities? We were not allowed to express our opinion in a public space, so right for an opinion was limited in this case. Therefore, the protests that were initiated after the First

Architectural Uprising were because It was not allowed to express an opinion in a public space, a right to protest.

RESULTS AND FUTURE

13. Do you think that your activist action has transformative potential to others? If so, can you briefly explain in what way? Not in a direct sense, but as an incentive and experience and lessons that can be drawn for the next initiatives, yes. Anyway, I think we lacked perseverance, that might be a lesson.

14. What is your next step? Arch brigade does not exist anymore, many of the members are active also today, but they are part of other initiatives.

15. What do you gain from being part of the initiative, from your performing? Great experience, awakening and awareness of where we live. We advocate for public space, but later we realized that we have much more serious problems.

16. What results have you achieved so far? A concrete result was that the construction of the church was not realized, but it was not by our merit. The results are more like an experience that other initiatives can draw.

17. What results do you expect to achieve and which of them do you think will be reachable? We do not expect any results, as I said Arch brigade does not exist.

18. Do you think it is possible that future leaders emerge from your initiative? I do not think that leaders have emerged, but perhaps only members who continued their activities in other initiatives, and are active now.

INT5 GOČEV, Aleksandar(Гочев Александар); holds a BA from the Faculty of Law; also, he is the president of the NGO Plan Four and civic activist, and one of the founders and directly involved in the initiative “Park defenders”. He is working on projects funded by foreign foundations, such as “Civica”. Furthermore, he has experience working on projects such as USAID and the Open Society Foundation. Meanwhile, he is actively participating in the protests “Colorful Revolution”.

THE INITIATIVE - PARKDEFENDERS

1. What is the essence of your activist action? I would say that the essence is the same as the purpose, which is to prevent cutting the lungs of Skopje. During that time in Skopje many constructions were built as part of the project SK2014 and almost all greenery was destroyed. Bristol Park was one of the few remaining green spaces in the city. So, the essence of the whole initiative was to prevent or to preserve the last foliage that is left in the city (in the central area). Now in the center of Skopje there aren't green areas apart from the city park.

2. What is the main reason for organizing your activist action? (Could you explain the emergence of your initiative in the context of Skopje/Macedonia?) The main reason for organizing our activist action was the construction of a building of SK2014 on the park of the downtown central area. Park defenders began as a story in the center of Skopje, but expanded to other Macedonian cities. So far, they have given support to all struggles for foliage or conservation of public spaces in Macedonia. The experience gained from this project continues to spread whenever we have the opportunity now, and in the future we will help local citizens or activists to preserve public space or protected green areas.

We had a case in Stip where the local government tried to usurp a green area to build some buildings, but the organized local citizens received formal support from “Park defenders”

3. Have you been inspired by other initiatives outside Macedonia? The event at Bristol Park was not something that we invented, because in this region as in the world there are many cases where citizens make effort to preserve public space by occupying it, which is also part of a massive movement. The idea of mass gathering was to introduce other inventive activities: projecting a film, concerts, etc., to attract many people who will be interested in the activity and, at the same time, give support. As much as I recall before our activity in Macedonia, occupying public space had never

happened. There were actions for protecting the foliage or to protect public space but not in that form of resistance. The Bristol Park boosted a new kind of activity.

4. What is the role and approach in the work of your initiative? Our intention was to try to awake nearby residents as much as we could and all those who live near the park, it was very important for them to be the first to oppose (because when something happens in your house, you react first and then it triggers the reaction of the other citizens not living in your environment). I think that we managed in that part because many of the citizens who live there gave support and opposed.

Bristol Park awakened many other citizens, starting with me. I am a resident of another municipality, but I spent my childhood in the center of Skopje and it truly hurts when you see that someone is destroying the town in which you have spent your childhood or you are projecting the future for you and your children.

5. Which are the goals (objectives) that you struggle for? The first aim as I already mentioned was to awake the citizens and raise public awareness, I think we succeeded in that, but if our first goal was to protect the park and public space it is more than clear that we failed. However, looking back from today's perspective, those protests and occupying had effect because now in Skopje such problems happen less. I

believe that our aim has been achieved partly.

ORGANISATION AND NETWORK

6. Is your initiative a part of a wider association or movement? If so, can you explain the emergence of your initiative in a wider Balkan context? I would describe our initiative in the wider Balkan context only as an initiative that received widespread support, not only in the Balkans but also in Europe. In the process of occupying, our initiative received support from many citizens throughout Europe, of which most striking was the message on social networks from the former Ambassador of Macedonia Erwan Fouere who gave strong support to our citizens for their actions.

7. Do you have any links or collaboration with local initiatives and NGOs? If so, what are the links? The initiative "Park defenders" involved many individuals who previously attended various formal and informal initiatives involved in completely different problems. During that period, unfortunately, only a few people were active in the city, they were the people who gave initiative for every new issue. The links were based on personal contacts and social networks, and they contributed for our fast organization. There were organizations that wanted to help during the occupation, official letters were sent in support, etc.

I can say that people who are part of political parties participate in Park

defenders. In that period, the party which was in power in the municipality of Center helped with its participation, it even held a session of Center Municipality in Bristol Park as a sign of support. Organizations that have contributed to this initiative are more motivated to support the same aims. My opinion is that this common aim united us all.

8. How you would comment your self-organization and the appearance of the SK2014 project? SK 2014 is the link to the occurrence of all initiatives, not only Park defenders. We are directly related to the project SK 2014. The destruction of Bristol Park was due to construction of administrative buildings that are part of the project SK2014. It was precisely the project SK2014 that was the main motivator for the establishment of the Park defenders initiative.

URBAN DIMENSION

9. Do you think that your activities (performances) can influence people's opinion in terms of the SK2014 project, or more generally, in reference to the right to the city in the Skopje context? If we compare the polls conducted in 2009 when the project SK2014 started, at that time, the project had the support of 70% of the population, but after all these actions of Park defenders, Freedom Square etc. support for the project SK2014 had fallen to 35%. In political context, even the creator of the project SK2014 has lost its position precisely

because of that project. Not only has their awareness risen, but also citizens will not let such unappealing constructions happen again in a city or public space.

With all these processes the awareness has raised among the people and the city rights. Citizens living near Bristol now understand what it means to have a right. Also citizens living near GTC understood what is to have a right to a city, so they did not allow GTC become transformed into baroque, so all these initiatives contributed for us to comprehend what it means to have a right to a city.

10. How does your initiative/NGO perceive the city of Skopje? Now very differently. I can no longer tell a beautiful thought or a nice message for Skopje, as Skopje is no longer the city where I have lived and grown up. Unfortunately to this moment, I hold a negative opinion of the city because of project SK2014. I try to avoid the city center, walk there less because I dislike it. I am sad that maybe my good thoughts for Skopje will not return, those objects unfortunately will probably stay where they are. I would say that I have a very negative opinion of the city at this point.

11. How does your initiative influence the urban dimension in Skopje? I think that the urban dimension stopped even before project SK2014.

12. Can you tell me what the right to the city means in the context of your

activities? The right to a city is not only to have a public area. The right to a city is to be asked when someone wants to change something in your street, in your neighborhood. The right to a city is to be allowed to decide for your city. In Macedonia, we do not have that, here no one asks for our opinion. In the Bristol case nobody asked the citizens if they wanted buildings. Maybe they might have wanted them and then this initiative would not have happened. I think that one of the main motives of this initiative was the fact that the citizens were neither asked nor consulted.

RESULTS AND FUTURE

13. Do you think that your activist action has transformative potential to others? If so, can you briefly explain in what way? Park defenders not only raise many initiatives, such as the occupying that happened at Bristol Park, but also teach citizens how to react in the future. Maybe we made a mistake - except for the camping in Bristol Park, we did not take more radical measures. In the municipality of Chair, when they tried to cut down trees, citizens formed human shields to protect the trees. That is something that we did not attempt but should have. We did have people 24 hours to guard the trees, but that was not enough, the police forced us out and then cut the trees.

However, I am glad that bad moments of our initiative contributed to good moments to happen in other initiatives to be successful in achieving the goal

which they aimed. The initiatives for the municipalities of Chair and Karposh were successful initiatives.

Not only do they encourage and awaken the citizen, but they are also educational.

14. What is your next step? The next step does not depend on us. The next step depends of whom and for what purpose needs to destroy green area or public space. We are not in a position to demand anything because we are always defending something, we still have not reached the moment to ask for more trees in Skopje.

So, I hope we will start this other phase where we will ask and will not defend, which will contribute to restore normality in the city, to bring back urban life, public space, green areas, and finally, to feel the city just as our city, not as an alien city in which we do not want to live.

15. What do you gain from being part of the initiative, from your performing? I believe my personal benefit is my intellectual upgrade (that I am a citizen of action, a citizen who is trying to prevent crime and who helps in raising public awareness with the people). For me there is no greater satisfaction than when I see smiling people who have succeeded in their purpose, that have succeed in a joint mission or idea they had, whether it is public space, green area or any other topic.

16. What results have you achieved so far? The results are, as I said earlier,

raising public awareness and participation, and also influence in the form of experience for other future initiatives.

17. What results do you expect to achieve and which of them do you think will be reachable? I hope that in the future, Park defenders and all other new future initiatives that will take place to protect the city, greenery and public space will demand something new, demand new public spaces, new foliage, the life Skopje once lived, something in which we all participated. We know that Skopje is a city of solidarity, so I think that Skopje does not belong only to the citizens of Skopje, but beyond. Many people and countries have participated in the construction of this city. I hope this will happen soon, that we will achieve the results to create new urban interventions and to stop building constructions which will suffocate Skopje.

18. Do you think it is possible that future leaders emerge from your initiative? I can say for myself that I have no such desire or intention. I intend to be active in the future for all initiatives if they consider that the citizens' rights have been violated but only from a pure civil aspect, I have no intention to become a part of a political party.

INT6 KOTESKA, Jasna (Котеска Јасна)(1970, Skopje); Professor at the University Sc. Cyril and Methodius, and Lecturer at the Center for Women

Studies in Skopje. She holds a master degree in literature and gender studies. Koteska has published five books and over two hundred papers on various topics, some of them translated in more than 12 languages.

So far, I have never been formally a member of citizen's initiative, because primarily I act in the field of higher education as a professor as well as in the theoretical sphere as a writer of books and studies, now called critical theory (theoretical psychoanalysis , literature , philosophy, gender studies , etc.). My civil activities can be summarized as : actively going to protest for the rights of LGBT community(2009); I was not part of the civic movement Archibrigade, except with writing theoretical analyzes for the project Skopje 2014;I was involved in the activities of Professors Plenum , from autumn 2014 until April 2015 ; I participate in the Colourful Revolution as a citizen. My work consists of writing theoretical studies and books in national and international magazines, as well as a weekly column for the Macedonian redaction of Deutsche Welle (May 2016).

THE INITIATIVE

1. What is the essence of your activist action? In the Professor's Plenum the activities consisted of two major action groups, support of the Student Plenum and working on stopping the harmful laws for Higher education.

2. What is the main reason for organizing your activist action? (Could

you explain the emergence of your initiative in the context of Skopje/Macedonia?) According to my understanding the Professor's Plenum was a direct response of three things: the formation of the Student Plenum, the introduction of external testing in the Higher Education, and numerous changes in the law which brought heavy damages in the process of the Higher Education in Macedonia.

3. Have you been inspired by other initiatives outside Macedonia? The Student's Plenum and the Professor's Plenum were partially motivated by similar initiatives in Croatia and Bosnia, but then they influenced on similar initiatives in the neighbor countries.

For the Colourful Revolution I cannot tell directly from where the inspiration comes from, but from my experience, I would say that the Colorful Revolution arose as a direct grass root movement inspired by the act of abolition of the president Ivanov. According to me, one possibility is that the first ideas for using color for protest came as a continuation of the student's protests this spring, in 2015 when for the first time after the "bombs" ,eggs were thrown towards the parliament. When the protests returned in April 2016, except eggs people started to bring colors in order to express their dissatisfaction, and somehow today's activities were shaped.

4. What is the role and approach in the work of your initiative? I do not know because I'm not really directly

involved , for me it goes like this, I read on the social networks and I go to protest.

5. Which are the goals (objectives) that you struggle for? For the Colorful revolution, their face book site is relevant source for following, but also you need to bear in mind that the goals are changing according to the situation.

ORGANIZATION AND NETWORK

6. Is your initiative a part from a wider association or movement? If so, can you explain the emergence of your initiative in a wider Balkan context? I don't have any information, maybe it is better to ask people which are actively involved.

7. Do you have any links or collaboration with local initiatives and NGOs? If so, what are the links?

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8. How you would comment your self-organization and the appearance of the SK2014 project? The Colorful Revolution originated as an instant reaction of the abolition of Ivanov, but the fact that the anger has been poured over the buildings of the project SK014 is saying that citizens recognize SK2014 as a corrupted project, something that they have not been asked for. The Professor's Plenum initiative is connected with the adoption of the law in autumn 2014.

URBAN DIMENSION

9. Do you think that your activities (performances) can influence people's opinion in terms of the SK2014 project, or more generally, in reference to the right to the city in the Skopje context? I think that the activities of The Colorful Revolution definitely reflect the attitude of participants in the protests, and also the general image of citizens towards the Project SK014. Not that before there have not been resistance against these buildings. Examine carefully the inquiry of public opinion over the years – (everything is on the net), from the beginning of the construction of the project and afterwards, you will see that from the beginning at least they have doubled , with up to or over 50 % of the citizens against the project , so the Colorful Revolution may only gave an opportunity to people visually " express " what they think.

If you ask me as a citizen, I would go to a variant Memento Park for most of the sculptures and uninstallation of many of the dangerous buildings which are made without architectural standards and are dangerous for the city residents.

10. How does your initiative/NGO perceive the city of Skopje?

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11. How does your initiative influence the urban dimension in Skopje? I think that The Colorful Revolution is actually saving the city in urban sense. If anything else, now it is not a shame to look at The Triumphal Gate.

12. Can you tell me what the right to the city means in the context of your activities? This is a thesis of Lefevre(1960s) and it means that the city belongs to those who live in it, the citizens, it does not belong to the elites that should govern the city as it is the main room in their home. I think that The Colorful Revolution does exactly that thing, it governs the city to match the tastes for the "others " also.

RESULTS AND FUTURE

13. Do you think that your activist action has transformative potential to others? If so, can you briefly explain in what way? The Colorful Revolution definitely has a transformative potential and in fact is quite fluid in the forms of action. For the analysts like me, it remains to observe how they change and interpret what that means in a broader sense.

The Professor's Plenum was with transformative and horizontal structure, all opinions were important and that means that the forms of the activities were changing frequently, but the goals remained the same.

14. What is your next step? For the Colorful Revolution, I do not know. The Professor's Plenum, as I follow, work on a new law for Higher Education.

15. What do you gain from being part of the initiative, from your performing? Not to be passive, not to look from home how they mistreat the

Higher education, the city and how they are protecting the corrupted politicians, but to participate in , at least to stop the madness within these processes.

16. What results have you achieved so far? The Professor's Plenum managed to temporarily hold the Law of Higher education and stop the external testing of Universities.

One of the results of the Colorful Revolution is that the abolition was withdrawn, and the negotiating positions in the government are not the same as they were a year and a half before. I also think that if the The Colorful Revolution did not existed half of this would not be even possible. The other is political pressures and foreign influences, but according to me, the citizens appeared to be crucial.

17. What results do you expect to achieve and which of them do you think will be reachable?

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18. Do you think it is possible that future leaders emerge from your initiative? I am sure that neither the Professor's Plenum nor the Colorful Revolution wants to convert into political parties. After the Student's protests, a new political party Levica has been formed, but I think that their idea is much older than the student's protests.

Leaders, is also a big question. In the Professor's Plenum there were no

leaders, we had something like representatives which we send to negotiate with the government, but with very little scope for acting, they were just transferring what we all agreed to. For the Colorful Revolution I do not know how it is. So far I do not know any leader of the Colorful Revolution, except that I saw yesterday they arrested and released Pavle Bogoevski.

INT 7 – NAUMOVSKI, Nikola (Наумовски Никола); one of the founders of Freedom Square and also active member and founder of Singing Skopjans.

THE INITIATIVE - FREEDOM SQUARE

1. What is the essence of your activist action? The essence and the goals have changed, and so have the nature and form of Freedom Square. Freedom Square began as an initiative with a broader context, something that appears to look like the Colorful Revolution, I Protest etc. Later on, from the core of this initiative, or the people who were close friends, an NGO was formed. Freedom Square was formed as an association for theory, activism and art, but, actually we are dealing with green politics. No one is dealing with green politics here, although there are ecologists, experts, who deal with national parks and natural resources, and they do not understand the city as life environment.

2. What is the main reason for organizing your activist action? (Could you explain the emergence of your

initiative in the context of Skopje/Macedonia?) The primary reason for self-organization was the construction of a church on the square; we were participants at the first protest organized by Archibrigade, although we were specifically for nonconstruction of a church on that parcel, in which Archibrigade fought only for the nonconstruction of any kind of building on the parcel. The main reason for which Freedom Square appeared was freezing the interest for the square and what was happening. We were the only ones who stayed and took care of such things and led every project related to SK2014 (of course, SK2014 was the main reason).

3. Have you been inspired by other initiatives outside Macedonia?

4. What is the role and approach in the work of your initiative? The approach of the work of Freedom Square was different in the first year and when the initiative became an NGO. In 2012 we took another direction, which was more focused on the science field. We have prepared many projects dealing with urban issues and green policies.

5. Which are the goals (objectives) that you struggle for? The goal that we are struggling for is to create an inclusive society, or just city.

ORGANIZATION AND NETWORK

6. Is your initiative a part from a wider association or movement? If so, can

you explain the emergence of your initiative in a wider Balkan context? I can say that the world's trend is public good. More and more news come out on this topic and more and more movements emerge in the region.

7. Do you have any links or collaboration with local initiatives and NGOs? If so, what are the links? We have been the organizers of many local initiatives. The cooperation is mainly based on sharing values, financial support that we have received from external donors and education. We have worked with Debarmaalo neighborhood and Karposh 4 (to protect the greenery), and we have also helped in providing some resources, both logistical and educational.

Square Freedom is in mutual cooperation with Singing Skopjans, actually, members of Freedom Square are also active members of Singing Skopjans, so I can say that Singing Skopjans is a part of Freedom Square.

8. How you would comment your self-organization and the appearance of the SK2014 project? I can even say that Freedom Square is a reactive movement of the appearance of the project SK2014, it was one of the main reasons for organizing Freedom Square. Maybe if SK2014 had not existed, Freedom Square would have been dealing with similar issues, but not with problems from the urban field.

9. Do you think that your activities (performances) can influence people's opinion in terms of the SK2014 project, or more generally, in reference to the right to the city in the Skopje context? We are changing the opinion, but this is not due to our merit – it is so because there is no one else. We have raised attention to those questions and people are now starting more and more to acknowledge that these issues are really important. It is like when an earthquake strikes, you start worrying about the statics of the building, so when the project SK2014 strikes, you start worrying about the public spaces. So, we can freely say we have influenced by inspiring other local initiatives.

10. How does your initiative/NGO perceive the city of Skopje? I had hated Skopje even before 2014, I think that it is an ugly city. I believe that Skopje has been continuously sinking because of its managers, because they did not care enough. I think that in Skopje there was not a single trimmed lawn or tree, or restored facade, and yet I would give everything to bring back that Skopje, not that I am nostalgic for my youth, but because back then I did not understand that everything around me had been mine, or to everyone. Now every institution is fenced off, so many trees and parks have been cut down, squares have been built, now when I am able to see the difference, I definitely would rather go back to the first Skopje.

URBAN DIMENSION

11. How does your initiative influence the urban dimension in Skopje? It is absolutely influential. We have been helping in every event in the city, events that open the city in every aspect; also we have been working on a project which is a presentation of the history of Skopje. I am particularly interested in the anti-fascist history of Skopje (all the minor museums, monuments and settings which have been disappearing on account of a history of Alexander the Great). That is why we have been organizing sightseeing tours. I believe this also influences the spirit and the urbanity of the city.

12. Can you tell me what the right to the city means in the context of your activities? A right to the city - a proper way to put it would be - a just city. A city that is open to everyone, the public spaces are for everyone, a city that is a city of solidarity and accepting of other nationalities.

RESULTS AND FUTURE

13. Do you think that your activist action has transformative potential to others? If so, can you briefly explain in what way? It has a transformative potential in terms of recruiting other initiatives, education, activities in terms of defending human rights, gay rights, feminine rights, anti-fascist struggle and protecting the heritage in Skopje.

14. What is your next step? Now we have organized an anti-fascist youth club together with the Veterans

Association (we want to systemize and digitalize this part of the history), and we are starting to deal with bicycle rights (which is also common goods and public issues).

15. What do you gain from being part of the initiative, from your performing?

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16. What results have you achieved so far? We have won the battle for the nonconstruction of the church on the square, from the immeasurable impact: educating people, turning awareness towards a just city, opening the question of green policies, public spaces and inspiring other local initiatives, all of this is some kind of success.

17. What results do you expect to achieve and which of them do you think will be reachable? We are hoping to be influential enough and to be able to argue and qualitatively raise the issue of demolition the project SK2014. We are the only ones who openly support the destruction of SK2014, others are Miroslav Grcev, who expresses his opinion in his columns, and Mirjana Najchevska. We are working now in arguing the demolition and we want to encourage more people to go out and say what they think. This fact together with the Colourful Revolution and demolition of monuments says that people are in the mood to despise the project, they have understood the clear link between Gruevski and every monument, that it

is not a monument for the name that it has, but a monument of Gruevski and no one else.

In my opinion, every monument should be removed and an analysis should be made about what we should do with the project SK2014 because SK2014 is much more than facades, concrete and monuments - it is also changing names of streets and much more.

18. Do you think it is possible that future leaders emerge from your initiative? Immodestly, I can say that I already consider myself a leader in something, let's say a leader in green politics and public issues. However, if you refer to a political leader with followers, then my answer is - not really.

INT8 PAVLOVSKA, Danica is an Architect, a founder of the initiative I love GTC, and a director of the Association of Architects in Macedonia.

THE INITIATIVE – I LOVE GTC

1. What is the essence of your activist action? The citizen initiative I love GTC represents a process of high culture of protesting, and steadiness in demonstrating the power of the urban spirit. The initiative requires preservation of the authenticity of one of the symbols of the City of Skopje, recognition of the values of one of the most important architectural works of the modern period, ending of the procedure of its protection as a cultural heritage of Macedonia. It also requires measures to improve the present state

of GTC. It requires GTC to remain to the city.

2. What is the main reason for organizing your activist action? It started with the emergence of a project to redesign the City Shopping Center (May 2013), which was one of a series of the so called "baroquesation" of the centre of the city. It was an indication for the embarrassing public intervention of GTC and it was necessary to rise in defense of its original value so consequently it was logical the formation of the Initiative I love GTC as a platform that protects and nurtures the values we believe in, it defends the attitudes based on knowledge, and nurtures the feelings stimulated from the collective memory of the city.

It is obvious that the spatial planning is a victim of business interests and corrupt persons, and the lack of intellectual thought, the interdisciplinarity and professionalism within is obvious exactly in the monstrous idea of Skopje 2014.

3. Have you been inspired by other initiatives outside Macedonia? The broad mindedness as an exercise in democracy is an inspiration no matter where it comes from..

4. What is the role and approach in the work of your initiative? The profile actions of the initiative are presented in the chronology of events and actions stated in the text that I will upload.

5. Which are the goals (objectives) that you struggle for? The legal protection of the City Shopping Centre (GTC) as a cultural heritage of national importance; Creating opportunities for restoration of GTC, by a competent institution for protection of cultural heritage ; Creating opportunities for strategic long-term care for cultural heritage.

ORGANIZATION AND NETWORK

6. Is your initiative a part from a wider association or movement? If so, can you explain the emergence of your initiative in a wider Balkan context? No, the initiative I love GTC was and will remain focused on the protection of GTC complex, but through actions it raises the self-awareness of the cultural dimension of urban living in Skopje. It can be therefore noticed that the appearance of this initiative was a forerunner of mass protests, social turbulent period and a political crisis that is still ongoing.

7. Do you have any links or collaboration with local initiatives and NGOs? If so, what are the links? Immediately after the emerging of the Initiative I love GTC it was marked the establishment and shaping of a front of a dozen NGOs , from which the most active were the Centre for Contemporary Art - CAC (Nikola Pisarev), Let (Vladimir Vangelov) , Centre for Cultural Heritage (Donka Bardzieva etc).

8. How you would comment your self-organization and the appearance of the SK2014 project? The worse is that still it is unknown what can appeared with the heaviness of a new cultural shock. The connection with the project " Skopje 2014" is obvious, because exactly from the clarity and loudness of the argument in the process of defence of GTC it can be confirmed the strength of the confronting sides, but the battle has grown in political, primarily social conflict and it is still ongoing.

URBAN DIMENSION

9. Do you think that your activities (performances) can influence people's opinion in terms of the SK2014 project, or more generally, in reference to the right to the city in the Skopje context? What is happening and ongoing in Skopje, it desecrates the dignity of the Citizen (and he is becoming more aware about that), offensively and arrogantly ignores the attitudes of the professionals and all the collective and individual statements made through numerous protests, forums, debates, articles...

10. How does your initiative/NGO perceive the city of Skopje? /

11. How does your initiative influence the urban dimension in Skopje? Through the interpretation of the enduring values of GTC we come to recognition of answers to the questions: What is a democratic space? What is a democratic city, democratic urbanism? GTC is a true example of an

analytical study of these modern needs.

The message has been sent to the decision makers that they need to operate only through participative process with the citizens, especially when it's a matter of public interest and that the responsibility is even greater when in the ethical context there is a strong delicate sense of belonging to a space.

12. Can you tell me what the right to the city means in the context of your activities? /

RESULTS AND FUTURE

13. Do you think that your activist action has transformative potential to others? If so, can you briefly explain in what way? Throughout our activist actions, the democratic public has upgraded and showed its capacity and still is trying to take part in restarting of the ruling system, to bring civic ideas and concepts, to be corrective, to indicate the thoughtlessness meaningful intervention of GTC, to underscore the absurdity of the current project "Skopje 2014", from which a new urban architectural tectonic shift has been originated, which at the same time is ideological, cultural etc.

14. What is your next step? I love GTC continues through various forms of creative expression, public speaking, continues to defend its position on protecting the authenticity of the complex GTC, but also in the same

time building an intellectual, philosophical, social integrity with a participation in all statements of civic will as it is the movement of "Citizens of Macedonia" or the current Colourful Revolution.

15. What do you gain from being part of the initiative, from your performing? A particular moment in the "story" is my successful display of freedom of behaviour according to the personal (and professional) conscience, deep belief in the truth and pleasant feeling of like-minded leader.

16. What results have you achieved so far? Stopping the realization of the intended intervention on GTC, recognition of the values of GTC, raising awareness about the power of the citizen, positive impact on the culture of protesting...

17. What results do you expect to achieve and which of them do you think will be reachable? /

18. Do you think it is possible that future leaders emerge from your initiative? Yes, the experiences of the participants are valuable and there are characters that are growing and maturing into leaders in our activist scene.

INT9 TOŠEVSKI, Igor (Тошевски Игор); (1963), Macedonian artist and founder of the initiative Kooperacija. In 1985, Toševski became one of the founding members of the artist group ZERO (1985 - 2000). He started

experimenting with video and photography in the early 1990s. Later, he adopted a more political approach to social issues with his conceptual works such as Dossier, Perfect Balance or Territories. His works constantly re-approach everyday topics while questioning their hidden meanings using a wide array of semiotics and visual materials, from photography to sculpture. Toshevski has participated in the After the Wall exhibition (1999 - 2000), the Cetinje Biennial Love It or Leave It (2004), and the first Balkan Biennial Cosmopolis: Microcosmos X Macrocosmos (2005) in Thessaloniki.

THE INITIATIVE - KOOPERACIJA

1. What is the essence of your activist action? Kooperacija was a proposal for an alternative way in the seeing and making of art that had something important to say. The idea was to establish an independent platform that would operate outside the mainstream culture programs, with the aim of developing a critical assertiveness in art, producing socio-politically engaged works, forms of institutional critique, etc. This initiative was self-financed and organized art events in collaboration with private owners by temporarily occupying empty office space, apartments and vacant stores, and turning them into pop-up galleries. We wanted to bring art professionals, people from the streets, students and workers together in the search for relevant ideas that would be implemented in a new art form.

2. What is the main reason for organizing your activist action? (Could you explain the emergence of your initiative in the context of Skopje/Macedonia?) The authoritative government had appropriated all of the institutions, including culture and public space, turning them into a netting of nationalist propaganda apparatuses. Those institutions soon became an obstacle in the communication between art and its audience. In the meantime, censorship in art had also become a serious problem and needed to be addressed. A more radical approach was necessary in order to revive a once vibrant artist network and provide a backbone for critically engaged art. So, basically, it was all about re-acclaiming space, be it public or personal. Stepping collectively outside the “safety zone” of the institutes was the only way to do it. Our “nomadic” strategy immediately got noticed. The audience reacted positively, and so did the press and social media. We were in for a ride!

3. Have you been inspired by other initiatives outside Macedonia? Not really. The context here (Skopje) became so unique that it needed specific actions. The closest comparison we could think of was the Soc-Art movement in Russia (1970s) when artists organized their shows in private apartments. Certainly, pop-up exhibitions were not a novelty, but this was something more: in a politically tense environment such as Macedonia’s, Kooperacija’s approach of temporarily occupying semi-public

space became defined as an open struggle - a protest if you wish. In other words, the very concept of exhibiting outside the official institutions had political connotations right from the beginning. It was a new routine for most of us, something worth investigating.

4. What was the role and approach in the work of your initiative? Even before we got together, most of the core members already inclined toward social critique or were engaged in a political or ideological sense. In our works, we all felt that it was important to address certain questions or problems that concerned us as a society. That is why the exhibition topics and debates we initiated later were very carefully chosen, even if they sometimes seemed only as conceptual propositions. In some ways, it was not even so much about the production of works or the technique, but more about the concepts behind them, the ideas that would point out to certain issues. Basically, we strongly believed that an open dialogue was desperately needed. One of our principles was that art would be produced as the fundamental medium, but with minimal means. Money was never a problem - we had none. Being self-financed, Kooperacija relied purely on guerilla tactics, inventive improvisations and self-resourcing. As far as criteria were involved, Kooperacija supported mostly politically conscious artists, or at least those who sought out such a direction. Formalism was out of the question, as

were any artists directly involved with SK014.

5. Which were the goals (objectives) that you struggle for? I guess the main point was to inspire critical thinking within the language of art, pointing out to various possibilities of applying theoretical views into art practice. This usually resulted in attempts to deconstruct and demystify the power system, which was probably the main reason why some misinterpreted Kooperacija as an activist group. We did support emancipation and resistance within the politically corrupt system, but our main weapon was art, and so was our primary field of interest. In fact, Kooperacija ceased to exist once some members chose a different path, leaning explicitly toward activism, which was a bit disappointing.

THE ORGANISATION AND NETWORK

6. Is your initiative a part from a wider association or movement? If so, can you explain the emergence of your initiative in a wider Balkan context? At the time, our main goal was to focus on burning issues within the prevailing milieu: art vs. politics, hegemonic propaganda, kitsch vs. high art, etc. Then, other independent groups and initiatives from the region showed support and a will to collaborate. This was probably due to the fact that by then, nationalist rhetoric and neoliberal populism has managed to contaminate almost every corner in the Balkans, in different forms of course. So, it came natural to cooperate on a

broader scale, by means of inviting artists and curators from abroad, and by presenting our work in independent galleries and workshops in the region. But we were never part of any association.

7. Do you have any links or collaboration with local initiatives and NGOs? If so, what are the links?

Some individuals did. Yet, as a collective, Kooperacija's relationship to most NGOs was based purely on empathy and friendship. One of the main principles of Kooperacija was to act truly independently, avoiding any specific political or financial implications. This included the NGO sector, either due to the explicitness of their objectives, or because of their financial sources, which seemed to taint and contradict their own agendas. The NGOs involved in culture were no better because of their compromised position (again, based on financial support).

Basically, Kooperacija's motto was simple: if art was to play out a crucial role in society, it must remain objective at every cost. I think this is why Kooperacija, to a certain degree, became intimidating to many (although not many will admit this). Still, we insisted on autonomy. It is also worth mentioning that Kooperacija managed to operate quite successfully based on horizontal organizing, which proved to be most effective despite its non-existing financial structure. This self-sufficiency and the principle of temporary occupation were its strongest points. None of the existing

organizations could cope like that (it's not easy), and I still can't see a similar example. Maybe the closest model was the Student Plenum...

8. How you would comment your self-organization and the appearance of the SK2014 project?

Although it employs aesthetical tools, SK014 must be seen primarily as a political and ideological construct aimed at endorsing the nationalist populist tendencies of the ruling party. By forcefully applying a narrative that would appeal to the semi-literate masses, its intention is to suffocate and suppress any rational or liberal thought. Unfortunately, so far they have pretty much succeeded in this. Art, on the other hand, has the duty to resist, respond and fight back in such circumstances. There is no other way. So yes, SK014 had an immense influence in the appearance of this kind of resistance. Being independent, we were free to publicly criticize anything we thought deserved to be put under scrutiny. We did not hide behind the group because we, as individuals, believed that the idea of Kooperacija was bigger than us. It still is.

URBAN DIMENSION

9. Do you think that your activities (performances) can influence people's opinion in terms of the SK2014 project, or more generally, in reference to the right to the city in the Skopje context? To some degree, they certainly did. Kooperacija became synonymous with independent thought within the culture scene, delivering

substantial concepts that actually worked. Our actions spoke loudly and openly about the false values being sold to the crowds, about the lack of freedom of speech and expression, against censorship, etc. This was important to us. There were even some pretty neat shows we did, which remain unparalleled to this day, like Kapital, Personal Politics, Reidentifications or Melting Point, most of them dealing with the subtle line between aesthetics and politics. But in fact, even the artworks were of somewhat secondary importance, as many saw Kooperacija as a social event; a free zone for exchanging subversive, yet creative ideas. This was also ok because it helped in gaining hope and trust among people, which is essential in opposing such grim circumstances.

10. How does your initiative/NGO perceive the city of Skopje?

Unfortunately, to answer this question today is almost impossible without mentioning SK014 as an integral part of the city's identity. Its aggressive vulgarity has literally changed not only the city's physiognomy, but also our own perception about us as citizens. As I mentioned earlier, public space had been usurped to an unbearable degree, leaving us full of frustration and disgust. Yet, we believed it might still be possible to work within these circumstances, deconstructing them in the process. Paradoxically, it could even be seen as the pre-required condition under which people would finally unite in revolt. We see part of

this happening now, as we speak. But ultimately, it's about the people - not the art, not the architecture. Kooperacija tried to say this the best way they could.

11. How does your initiative influence the urban dimension in Skopje?

In the manifesto, Kooperacija invited the public to discover the city, or specifically: "a unique way of reading the urban landscape". This was true in many ways. Each exhibition, action, presentation or public debate was set in a totally new environment. Sometimes the conditions were appalling, sometimes impeccable. Each time, this gave visitors the opportunity to perceive their own, private space from a different angle and connect in unpredictable circumstances. Kooperacija attracted students, artists, the passersby and acclaimed intellectuals alike, thus making an invigorating impact on the community, not only the art goes. It somehow gave people the opportunity, if only for a brief moment, to step out from the darkness and see a light.

12. Can you tell me what the right to the city means in the context of your activities?

With the newly built, strategically placed shopping malls, corporate advertising and public squares riddled with surveillance systems, today's public space, as Mouffe (Chantal Mouffe) eloquently put it, remains an arena of agonistic struggle, which is basically a never-ending story. Knowing this, no art can seriously claim that this is its primary

goal, nor truly believe it is an attainable one. On the other hand, if one was to propose new, different and constructive ways of perceiving reality by questioning the very essence of what constitutes our identity, then perhaps there might be a slim chance that this claim could be plausible. Kooperacija tried to do this but of course, it is not an easy task... I now honestly believe that the role of the institutions should not be underestimated, but first they must be redeemed and reformed.

Regarding Skopje, I fear this battle has already been lost. The sheer materiality and scale of SK014 reflects the ruling party's determination to hold on to power, disregarding consequences. But, this now also means that one has nothing else to lose but their own freedom, which is precisely one of the reasons why today's protests are directed against the materiality of the monuments and the fake architecture: it is an attempt not to regain control over public space, but to openly reject it. So far, the first important step has been achieved – losing the fear.

THE RESULTS AND FUTURE

13. Do you think that your activist action has transformative potential to others? If so, can you briefly explain in what way? Art as such has a transformative potential, there is no doubt that. However, it would be foolish to think that it alone can instantly bring visible change. Activism is a different matter. It is interesting that it is often activism that borrows the tools provided by art. Kooperacija,

for example, was such a provider. Hence, the connection. However, even if on some occasions it seemed to act that way, Kooperacija never was, nor did it ever intend to seriously take an activist approach. The reason behind this was our awareness (most of us, anyway) of the seductive danger of over-aestheticizing an already genuine political action. Because, it is a two-sided blade: if art becomes too dominant, the original cause of activism loses its own edge and becomes weaker in its action. It happened before and some fear the same is happening now, with the so-called Colorful Revolution.

To presume activist art is the only art worth making today, as some local intellectuals here have suggested, is pure nonsense. Personally, I even think that insisting on art in activism is the most vulgar way of perceiving the political potential in art. Nevertheless, I still believe that art can be employed as a powerful weapon (even the ruling party has realized this!), but it is much more multifaceted and works on so many different levels. (*a good example is my Free Territory in Skopje, 2009). That's why it must be handled with caution. Here, I would agree with Groys (Boris Groys) when he states that art can indeed function through political action, but only if this action has a revolutionary perspective. In other words, simply naming a protest a "revolution" doesn't necessarily mean it is one. Art cannot help here.

14. What is your next step? Kooperacija has played out its small but important part. The seeds have been

planted. Now we sit back and watch the roses grow. Meanwhile, there are other important agendas. Personally, I am still preoccupied with institutional critique and non-art.

15. What do you gain from being part of the initiative, from your performing? Kooperacija was a great way to explore new possibilities in artistic expression, to experiment collectively without the pressure and formal restrictions set by government institutions. It also helped us in getting to know each other better, as artists and people. I think we all learned valuable lessons. It was truly a great experience.

16. What results have you achieved so far? The results have actually surpassed our own expectations. In a local context, Kooperacija became a relevant vehicle for advocating art that matters. Over 50 artists and theoreticians from the country and abroad have been involved in the process, directly or implicitly. I believe Kooperacija inspired a few other art initiatives, some of them still operating today. It also helped some young artists in achieving their first steps in exposing themselves to the public. Although short-lived, Kooperacija remains a stepping-stone for upcoming artists who see themselves as socially responsive. There is a lot to learn from Kooperacija's unorthodox methods and experiences, its successes and failures; something future generations will surely discover as valuable in the

struggle to come, because it's going to be a long struggle.

INT10 TRAJKOVA, Marina (Трајкова Марина) I graduated from the Department of Gender Studies in Skopje. This is my seventh year working in the NGO sector. I currently work in the agency for monitoring medias. I have been a member of Singing Skopjans for approximately 5-6 years.

THE INITIATIVE – SINGING SKOPJANS

1. What is the essence of your activist action? The essence was to express a kind of protest, depending on what the specific situation asked for: if it was the polluted air in Veles we sang in Veles; if there were certain interests that were against the interests of the people we sang They Don't Really Care About Us in front of the Parliament etc.

2. What is the main reason for organizing your activist action? (Could you explain the emergence of your initiative in the context of Skopje/Macedonia?) The main reason is the dictatorship regime which has become what it is today. We were sure something was needed to be done, something that would cover all the different topics and issues.

3. Have you been inspired by other initiatives outside Macedonia? I think Lezbor from Zagreb and Horkestar Band from Belgrade inspired us, we even made several appearances together.

4. What is the role and approach in the work of your initiative?

The role of the initiative was primarily to provide an alternative and to develop people's critical thinking through that alternative. The best way to do it was through songs, because, on the one hand, it has an artistic component; on the other hand, it is more accepted by the people and the audience.

In general, there was nothing constant, everything happened when necessary, when we felt the need and then we had a performance. The only defined thing was that we would have a weekly or monthly rehearsal, in which everyone had the right to give their suggestions for the organization. After each rehearsal we had meetings about what would be our next performance and action.

5. Which are the goals (objectives) that you struggle for?

I think that Singing Skopjans had no specific aim. The main goal was to change people's awareness of what a city meant, the right to a city and critical thinking.

ORGANIZATION AND NETWORK

6. Is your initiative a part from a wider association or movement? If so, can you explain the emergence of your initiative in a wider Balkan context?

Later on we learned that we had results in a broader context, that was two years after our establishment when we were invited to a concert in Belgrade. Like the movement against police brutality, etc., these movements

somehow mixed and we often had performances at the protests.

7. Do you have any links or collaboration with local initiatives and NGOs? If so, what are the links?

The cooperation and contacts were not at organization level, they were personal. We connected with the freedom fighters, we often performed with them and they came to our performances. We cooperated with I Love GTC, Parkdefenders etc.

8. How you would comment your self-organization and the appearance of the SK2014 project?

Of course there is a connection between our initiative and the project SK2014. The project SK2014 caught us off guard. I think Singing Skopjans became more active after this project, we sang several times at the city square during the construction of SK2014. It got upgraded more and more. As SK2014 grew, the activity of Singing Skopjans and of other initiatives grew.

URBAN DIMENSION

9. Do you think that your activities (performances) can influence people's opinion in terms of the SK2014 project, or more generally, in reference to the right to the city in the Skopje context?

I think that we had a part in the creation of that attitude for SK2014 because there were many people that came to support us or wanted to join us at the performances, even though there were many citizens that held negative opinions of the irony

towards SK2014. I think it influenced both sides – people who were in favour of SK2014 and people who were against it.

10. How does your initiative/NGO perceive the city of Skopje?

The city was a scene in which Singing Skopjans performed. So, key locations were selected (in a previously prepared context) in which our performance was added up. The irony of Singing Skopjans actually transmits the loathing of the city, how the city has been estranged, how it is not your city any longer. That is a scene that has been pushed on you, and with the performance we have pushed on an urban scene that has become a new reality in the city.

11. How does your initiative influence the urban dimension in Skopje?

It absolutely has influenced it. Even the irony and defiance that Singing Skopjans have demonstrated in their performances is a part of the urbanity (this happens when you put on this façade onto baroque Skopje, i.e. the irony that comes as a reply to what we consider to be urban). The city has become urban because of these performances and the defiance that was shown.

12. Can you tell me what the right to the city means in the context of your activities?

The right to a city comprises the right to protest, which was denied to many of us. The right to protest means an expression of a culture that is slowly disappearing, the right to be

able to intervene in space and to have the right to do because that space is there because of you. Here, that is lost in this political system because the right to intervene in space is forbidden and subjected to punishment. We do not have that freedom and right to a city, nobody asked us what kind of a city we want to have, in short, the city was taken away from us.

RESULTS AND FUTURE

13. Do you think that your activist action has transformative potential to others? If so, can you briefly explain in what way?

I believe that Singing Skopjans were the first ones to show the alternative – that activism may have a different dimension. Many protests that we organized after that had that component of performance (for instance, on April Fools' Day, the Ajde Initiative organized a protest in which everyone was masked as the politician one likes the least – that was a performance/show done in that manner). I would even say that the Colourful Revolution has acquired a similar aspect of performance. Many initiatives were born out of the existence of Singing Skopjans and all of those initiatives realize that they can intervene in space.

14. What is your next step?

That is perhaps the most interesting question. What shall we do next? I think that anybody knows that. What is happening today with the Colourful Revolution is just like it happened with Singing Skopjans – the activities are

made on a daily basis in order to bring back Skopje to its citizens.

Singing Skopjans are not active at the moment. All of us who took part in it have started to participate in various other activities and there was no possibility to act independently since Singing Skopjans were independent in what they did. We were swallowed by the struggle and we were not physically ready to carry the burden, but I think that if we have the opportunity Singing Skopjans will unite again, we just need to wait for things to fall in its place.

15. What do you gain from being part of the initiative, from your performing? Firstly, the experience in civic activism, then the contacts and, most importantly, the inner fulfillment that you are actually doing something that affects the attempt to retrieve public policies for you as a citizen. When you feel all these small victories the satisfaction is very big.

16. What results have you achieved so far? I cannot say specifically as 'Singing Skopje', but as all the initiatives that emerged from it. I would point out the battle that we won with the protest for freelancers, then the joint struggle against plenum members, in which case after all that struggle and autonomy of the University, there was an intervention in the education law. I can say that Singing Skopjans as part of the Colourful Revolution managed to cancel elections and the abolition to be withdrawn.

17. What results do you expect to achieve and which of them do you

think will be reachable? Singing Skopjans are not active at the moment.

18. Do you think it is possible that future leaders emerge from your initiative? I don not think that anybody of Singing Skopjans wants to be a leader, if they had leaders the concept of Singing Skopjans would be lost. That is not the point, actually, the point is to show that leaders necessary to raise people's consciousness.

6.2 Interviews (others)

INT11 BLACKWOOD, Jon - I am from Scotland and work at Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen. I first visited Macedonia in 2008/9 and have been working on contemporary art there since that period. I lived in Skopje in 2012 and then in Sarajevo from 2012-14. During that time I curated an exhibition of contemporary Macedonian art at duplex gallery in the city. Since 2015 I have been working on a book on Critical Contemporary Art in Macedonia, which will be published in summer 2016; I am curating another exhibition of contemporary Macedonian art in Edinburgh, Scotland in 2017.

1. What important activist movements and practices can be detected in Skopje? Many, in politics, civil society and in contemporary culture. I am thinking particularly of organizations like Civil.MK, Plotsad Sloboda, LGBT Skopje Pride, and Kooperacija (2012-15). I am also aware of the Ohrid SOS campaign, trying via social media to

combat some ruinous development plans for the Ohrid and Prespa lakes.

2. When you think they started to appear? Independent groups and actions have been around in Skopje since before the earthquake. In Socialist times money was available, via the Socialist Alliance, for interest groups to meet and to produce literature or discussion programmes. But they have really risen to prominence since Macedonian independence in 1991, and specifically since the election of Nikola Gruevski in 2006.

3. Which is the reason for their appearance? These are far too many to list in a brief answer, to be honest. In terms of contemporary art; the appearance of activist organizations /collectives are maybe five-fold; i. The lack of functioning of official institutions of contemporary art ii. The lack of money in contemporary art iii. The need to grow an audience for contemporary art, to pool resources and work together for a better result iv. To offer a space of reflection, contemplation and debate for citizens; on important socio-political issues v. to work together with political and NGO organizations to grow civil society in Macedonia.

4. Can you comment their effects? We can't comment on effects in isolation; the foundation and development of activism and para-political organizations can only be understood as part of the very complex and

contingent reality currently in Skopje. I think they have raised debate and issues on public space, on the specific position in society of certain groups (single mothers; gay people; Roma; differing minority groups). They have illustrated the stark difference between the crude, manipulative cynicism of the ruling political elite and the idealism and developing thinking regarding possible future alternatives. They have also illustrated that divide by becoming a target of abuse from the regime (Sorosoids/ foreign spies / Communists). The effect of this abuse has been to undermine the government's credibility in the eyes of many people. I think activist /civil society groups offer a channel for political and cultural discussion, debate and analysis that it sorely lacking in mainstream Macedonian politics and in its government-controlled media outlets.

5. What might the project SK2014 mean in this context?(Is there any connection between the activist movements emergence and the projectSK2014) I think again it has shown up divisions and deep fissures in Macedonian society. I don't think you have to be part of a group to oppose Skopje 2014. There was a lot of hostile commentary and criticism from professional bodies when it was first announced (architects, artists, cultural writers, thinkers e.g. Jasna Koteska); of course there were the organized actions of the likes of Plostad Sloboda, Prvi Arhitektura Brigada, and so on.

However, in the context of the scheme itself; first envisaged as an 80 million euro revamp six years ago, now costing six hundred and forty million euros and rising, I think we have to say that the effect of the activist / civil society groups in stopping or altering the course of the scheme, has been nil. There has been some humorous commentary, some temporary interventions, some interesting discussions and texts written by scholars. Yet, still the scheme persists.

6. Do you think that the activist movements and practices influence the urban dimension (city landscape) in Skopje?

Well they have, spectacularly, during the Colorful Revolution. I see the Colorful Revolution as a symbolic attempt to take back control of political space that ordinary citizens have long been excluded from; and attempt to wrest back control of a stolen / hijacked political system. But until this point, these recent extraordinary months of civic movement activity, activists I think were too small in number, too low in profile, and too lacking in confidence /strategy /experience to make a decisive intervention in the urban space. This really is changing day by day, though.

7. Do you think that those movements influenced public opinion? If so, in what way?

There have been flashpoints of course; when Igor made his territory in Plotsad Sloboda in 2009, causing ripples not only amongst activists but also in the national media;

when OPA made a joke at the expense of the “fresco miracles” with their advertising billboard, which provoked furious and lengthy debate on social media and interventions from the Church and the government; I think they have made a sustained impact since the student uprising really began to pull together around a series of issues (the new law on higher education, the appalling conditions for students in university dormitories, the poor quality of staff and syllabi in some university courses, the dreadful poverty faced by many students trying to better themselves in Macedonia). In doing that, they made common cause with many ordinary working people facing similar problems in other sectors of the Macedonian economy.

8. Do you think that the activist movements have any kind of transformative power?

My answer might have been different this time last year. But we are seeing every night the transformative capacity of activism on the streets of Skopje, and in the fact that some activist movements and NGOs are now being taken seriously and forming dialogues with the representatives of supranational actors (EU / USA). Activism hasn't been the only reason, but people are much less afraid to express their opinion now than they were five years ago. Simply, many people have virtually nothing left to lose, and this gives activist groups quite a bit to work with, when people are at the end of their tolerance.

9. What do you think that will be the result of such activist movements?

I earnestly hope that the Macedonian activist movements will continue to grow and develop. On a national sense, I would like to see Macedonia go through a path of transformation away from simulated toward genuine democracy, and the rule of law. I am not a naïve idealist though; there are endemic problems of corruption, gangsterism and cronyism that cannot be wished away overnight, and which will only be dealt with over many years by a firm and fair and untainted judiciary and a ruthless and clear-sighted political class- that is not in place presently. Even if this ideal scenario does not come about, I am sure activist movements will continue to play as positive a role in society as they are allowed to.

I will say this; for activism really to have more profound effects, it needs to be much more visible as a credible strategy for future development outside of Skopje. In such a city one can always find well-educated, liberal sympathizers who gravitate towards the activist milieu. This is both a positive and a negative thing- in these circumstances activists can be content talking amongst themselves.

When activist /civil society /NGOs start making a big impact in provincial towns and villages, places such as Ohrid, Radoviš or Sveti Nikole, then they will be assured of success in Macedonia as a whole. Alternative and discursive approaches to politics and society are

much harder to develop and sustain in such places than in Skopje.

10. Could you tell me your story: What right to the city mean in the context of Skopje?

When I first visited Skopje it was quite a drab Yugoslav era city but with its own charm and a fantastic contemporary art /architectural history. The contemporary scene is a bit hidden but once you find it, the city really does open out to you. The Skopje 2014 scheme really has saddened me enormously. The city centre is now ruined; architecturally incoherent and politically and socially claustrophobic. I know many citizens feel that the scheme has gone so far that the city is now permanently vandalized. Others are already thinking of what will happen to all this stuff that has been jerry-built when Gruevski and VMRO are not as powerful as they are at present.

In general terms, I think that the right to the city means three or four things; 1. Open, publically owned spaces for all to enjoy (these have disappeared very rapidly in a series of dubious privatizations and developments in the last ten years; in breakneck-privatisation of public space, Macedonia is no different really to most other European cities) 2. Freedom to the city also means good conditions for enjoying it; specifically, tackling the appalling pollution problems exacerbated by the Skopje 2014 developments. 3. Freedom to the city also means rule of law and a focus by the police on public safety and

protection. People should be able to enjoy Skopje and associate with whomever they want without hindrance or harassment for who they are, what they believe or who they associate with 4. Freedom to the city means the existence and possibility of a multiple range of differing cultural, social and business experiences. Skopje has become a lot more monocultural in the last few years; the turbo folk culture that chokes many large Balkan cities is omnipresent here too. 5. Freedom to the city also means having the opportunity, of your wish, to take part in political and cultural debate and to try to launch initiatives to help the city grow and develop.

11. Are you part or supporter of some activist activities? If so, in what way you're involved? I am a foreigner, in Skopje for about one month per year presently, so I can only offer support by showing solidarity, raising awareness of the situation in Scotland and by writing texts. Of course I show support and go to events when I am in Macedonia, whenever I can, to lend my support and to continue to improve my knowledge of the differing Macedonian cultures, histories, society and politics. The activist interventions in Skopje are part of my forthcoming book, and of my exhibition planned for next year. I think this is as much as a foreign friend of Macedonia can /should do. Ultimately it is for the Macedonian people and Macedonian society itself to shape its future in the positive ways that some of the activist and civil

society groups have imagined, in the next two or three years.

INT12 GEŠOSKA, Iskra (Гешоска Искра); (1968), president of Civic Association Kontrapunkt and president of Association of Independent Cultural Scene of Macedonia, has been active in the field of cultural policies since 1994. She contributed to promotion of the scene, development of critical thinking and critical theory in the field of socio-cultural references. She was director of independent cultural centre Točka throughout its existence from 2002 to 2010. Gešoska developed more than 20 projects in the field of cultural policies, critical theory, critical debate, visual and performing arts. She created, organized and implemented more than 150 socio-cultural events, and participated in processes of advocating for independent culture sector's political relevance and encouragement of regional cooperation. Gešoska was also advisor for the Ministry of Culture from 2003 to 2006. As member of the Assembly of Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, she advocates for affirmation of cultural rights and rights to culture

1. What important activist movements and practices can be detected in Skopje?

2. When you think they started to appear? It is interesting that in Skopje, actually, there has never been a tradition or conscience to react to social abnormalities.

If I made a distinction between traditionally-defined activism and

general critical thinking and reacting, I would emphasize Tochka cultural centre (2002-2010) whose existence I feel is like an activist core exactly on the issue of critical thinking, reacting, problematizing and other influence of the citizens on socio-political and socio-cultural dynamics. Basically all individuals and initiatives, as Anastas Vangeli, Ploshtad Sloboda and many more emerged from Tochka, and their first protests were prepared there. Since 2008, and maybe a bit earlier, some articulations of critical reacting began (that could be labeled activist). I will mention Anastas Vangeli, he organized a few smaller anti-NATO protests, their scope is small, but still, I cannot exclude them, and maybe, Anastas Vangeli, even though he was young, I would say that he was one of the first that started to practically articulate activism around here, and then, of course, there are many more. Then, a drastic activist moment was the protest against building a church on the main square on March 28, 2009, organized by Prva Arhibrigada, it was the first time then that we saw the story of protest and counter-protest. Soon after the event of March 28, there was a post festum event that I believe was crucial in the decision not to build a church. That was the reaction of a group of Albanian citizens for Burmanli mosque, a group of five or six people, led by Ramadan Ramadani. During the protest they drew something, it was a kind of a mild performance, and they also read a text. The text they read was brilliant, the message was fantastic, and that is why

I think that activism does not constitute only in the numbers, but also in the well-articulated, precise things (knowledge, tactics).

Also we cannot forget the largest cathartic activist spontaneous gathering that took place on May 5 because of the bombs' content. It was a kind of a cry. It is very interesting, spontaneous, there was no organization, nor was it known who it was initiated by. Then I would emphasize the Student Plenum protests that mobilized a range of generations.

3. Which is the reason for their appearance?

There is something interesting that I would like to mention, in relation to the level of culture, mentality and identity.

Whether it is a question of conformism – I think it is. I even call it apathetic conformism, in my opinion, it means that we have an alibi for apathy and dissatisfaction, which actually provides a comfortable position, I am dissatisfied, but I don't know what to do, and that has been following us till today. That is one of the key issues.

Secondly, ignorance, I think that education is a major factor in courage boosting, to react, to confront, to know your rights as citizens. I believe that all those problems come from here, that servile culture is created at the University, ignorance is produced instead of knowledge, mediocre half-knowledge is produced, and all that contributes to the amorphous state here.

I also believe that we are a servile culture, apart from being comfortable culture, it means to always be silent, now I am not well, but I might be well if I keep my mouth shut, if I survive. It seems that the tolerance threshold has been moved.

So the reason for the more and more organized and articulated emergence is facing with many levels of dissatisfaction. Everyone, this way or that, I would say, started to feel, first on an intuitive level, that something has been taken away from them (I am not speaking about financial crime) and that is why it started with the story of the city, the story of buildings, the idea of the right to the city. It grew more and more, and it got free.

4. Could you comment their effects?

Whether we have succeeded till the end, we will probably analyze it when everything finishes, and in my opinion, if it finishes with the end of this government, then we have achieved nothing, so we must continue to be awake. (In one of my last speeches, my attitude was that everyone should be ready, everyone who comes to power will be faced with our critical thinking and reacting).

However, there is one thing that scares me. Since this happened in a covert, intuitive manner and it was not well developed in terms of strategy, tactics and organization, I see again emergence of our identity (small town mentality) and the education structure, some particular interests that people

are not aware that they are particular, asking for a reward. Now, if we don't manage to overcome these emergences, if we can't manage to overcome the small town mentality (everyone fighting for their own place under the sun, and not for our common interest), then we haven't done a thing. I can't predict what will happen, but I believe there is still a lot to be done so that we can say that we really are politically-articulated people.

5. What might the project SK2014 mean in this context? (Is there any connection between the activist movements emergence and the project SK2014)

On the issue of social justice and dissatisfaction there were a lot more protests than on the issue of SK2014. I believe that in the beginning there wasn't that much of an activist conscience for SK2014, I believe that there was more intellectual and theoretical-activist conscience (through writing). There was a small group of people that set the intellectual discourse for SK2014, among them myself, we held speeches on the bridge of arts, but we wrote more (although I believe that activism takes place through writing as well, it has different formats, it is not just going out in the streets and protesting).

Seven years later (i.e. after 2009) a lot of people came out of what used to be a small group of people that wrote on the subject, and now that larger group realizes that SK2014 is actually violence, the quintessence of the evil of this government's rule, which consists not only of financial crime, but also,

cultural, identity and all other different kinds of crime. Through the implementation of SK2014 laws were broken, institutions were disrespected – ministries and institutions that issues building permits. I believe that now the Colourful Revolution is focused on the revolt against those buildings.

6. Do you think that the activist movements and practices influence the urban dimension (city landscape) in Skopje? Of course they do. They influence the conscience for the need of urbanity (when I say urbanity I don't mean merely the visual center, I understand it as a way of behaving, talking and articulating your opinion), especially for the new generations that grow up with highlighted activism, it sets them free, urbanity has got to do with freedom, I mean if there is no sense of freedom, I will even use another word – nonchalance, then there is no urbanity, you have to be open-minded.

7. Do you think that those movements influenced public opinion? If so, in what way? In the conditions we have, and the people we are, with a highly problematic media context, in which facebook is the key medium in this context, that is also very interesting.

I believe that public opinion has been changing gradually; still, there is a minimal influence, more in relation to perception of the wider circle of citizens, because it is not only Skopje, there are other cities where, by seeing

what has been done in Skopje, people can do something there as well, etc.

8. Do you think that the activist movements have any kind of transformative power? I believe that they have no direct influence on what will happen now and whether tomorrow there will be a change of government, those are games that I don't understand. However, speaking in long terms, I think that they have an influence on the liberation and establishment of a new paradigm for civic responsibility.

9. What do you think that will be the result of such activist movements? I believe I mentioned it before. The results won't be spectacular, but, still, in the long run that paradigm has changed in terms of the responsibilities and rights of the citizen. I think that is important.

10. Could you tell me your story: What right to the city mean in the context of Skopje? We know what the right to the city is by all possible definitions. I think the syntagm is used here, but people don't understand what the right to the city means in detail and essence, and this has to do with education (the fight would be more profound and successful if we know what the right to the city mean by all definitions). I believe this is a serious problem.

In Macedonia the story is still not connected to the capital, in our case we can't speak of a capital the way it is spoken in the USA or the neighbouring

capitalist countries, instead, we have a post-transitional criminal story of debate on public space - public space entails not only the plazas, but also the way transition happened and the formation of all of those state buildings, so that is a part of the right to the city.

11. Are you part or supporter of some activist activities? If so, in what way you're involved? I am a member of most of them, I even support them with a direct participation, not just by passive participation, but also with holding speeches. I have taken a direct part in Ajde (Come on), Protestiram (I Protest), Gragjanite za Makedonija (Citizens for Macedonia) etc. I have participated in many protests and various activist actions, a few times I have participated in the actions of Ploshtad Sloboda (The Plaza of Freedom) when they referred to SK2014, mainly with holding speeches, I have supported actions of Solidarnost (Solidarity) (in my opinion Solidarnost is also a very important movement that has become a political party).

INT13 GRČEV, Miroslav (Грчев Мирослав); (1955), an Architect and Urban Planner. He is a professor at the Faculty of Architecture in Skopje (urban planning). He was mayor of Skopje municipality "Centar" in 1996-2000 from Social Democratic Union. He is one of the critics of the identity policy of "antiquization" and of the associated urban plan Skopje 2014, carried out by the Macedonian governments after 2006. At 26 December 2014, he

promoted his collection of articles, published between 2006 and 2014, under the title „Името на злото“ ("The Name of the Evil").

1. What important activist movements and practices can be detected in Skopje?

A few NGOs have been active in the city in commenting and opposing the undemocratic and anti-urban government projects. Prvata arhibrigada (the First Archi-brigade) was among the first ones, and in March 2009 there was a striking (perhaps the most effective and media-covered) public protest performance 'Don't Rape Skopje', but they came to an end (probably due to government pressure) and continued to exist as an internet group in a smaller scope. Ploshtad Sloboda (Freedom Square) is, on the other hand, continuously present, but they can't be called a movement, because, just like the Helsinki Committee, Civil and the like, which are the most active in the city, act as NGO with an activist program and practice, and not like massive movements. Only I Protest has an element of movement, but, that one, at least for now, has an identity, program, ideological and organizational emptiness deep inside its DNA.

2. When you think they started to appear?

In our society these activist organizations, associations and movements started to appear more intensively with the physical implementation of the anti-civilization project of the government of the Republic of Macedonia entitled as

Skopje 2014, but, in any case, these reactions came too late.

3. Which is the reason for their appearance? The reason for their emergence is the raised conscience that the conditions in the Macedonian society are so bad, and the political system so corrupt and essentially twisted – serving the particular party-mafia interest, and not serving the public and general interest of the citizens – that civic activism is the only way to constructively influence not only one's own, but also the national destiny and future.

4. Could you comment their effects? Unfortunately, the effects are only in the symbolic and psychological realm, which means that these public activities have contributed to the awakening of conscience for the necessity of resistance, unrest and rebellion..., and to a certain extent, to the reduction of the fear that the government spread on purpose so that they can rule on the basis of the population's mass opportunism. Other effects – from changes in the government's policies, some concessions or compromise, to real 'victories' that can be documented – cannot be noted down without a dramatic exaggeration or 'cheering' emotions. Apart from the painting of the monuments of evil, which is also an effect in an art-installation style, artistic performance with symbolic messages, which will be remembered by photo documenting the event.

5. What might the project SK2014 mean in this context? (Is there any connection between the activist movements emergence and the project SK2014) Everything about Skopje 2014 is violence, which has transformed into a sadistic rape of the whole society. It hurts to write about this last point, so I am going to quote myself time and time again: Skopje 2014 not only damages our physical reality, it also suspends constitutionality and the rule of law, it destroys the value system of culture, it distorts national history and it displaces the foundation pillars of our national identity. This 'project' is a political violence with which VMRO-DPMNE suspends the constitutional order, and establishes the self-rule of Gruevski to make not only all the political decisions but also the ones that refer to urbanism, architecture and monuments. In order to implement this illegal project in glory of his totalitarian rule, Gruevski has led the government, the City of Skopje, state inspections, public prosecution, practically all the executive bodies of the central and local self-government, the Parliament, the courts, and finally the Constitutional Court, to commit crimes. All the institutions of the system have annulled themselves from the point of view of their constitutional role by taking part in the implementation of Skopje 2014, either by actively breaking the laws and Constitution, or by inaction and silence. That is why the only method of fighting this violence is the force of the resistance. The violence for liberation of this violent

and criminal dictatorship is to negate the negation – that is the affirmation of liberty and justice. The building of Skopje 2014 is vandalism – not its destruction.

6. Do you think that the activist movements and practices influence the urban dimension (city landscape) in Skopje? Apart from the colours of the Colourful Revolution, and only until they have been repainted or cleaned (sometimes done right after the painting, when night falls, by the dictatorship of VMRO), civic activism doesn't influence the urban dimension of the city at all. And this is not my opinion, these are facts: the facts do not exist. This, however, is not a responsibility of the movements, but of the entire society: in a totalitarian, fascist-like dictatorship, just like opposition opinion and political influence, civic activism is reduced to mere existence and has a decorative function. In totalitarianism of the new type, these are just 'democratic' decorations of the government, they are allowed to exist provided that they have no influence on reality, and they provide for the democratic alibi of the dictatorship.

7. Do you think that those movements influenced public opinion? If so, in what way? These movements influence public opinion, but only the segment that gets its information by the few free media, and that amounts to 15-20% of the population, at its best.

8. Do you think that the activist movements have any kind of transformative power? Activist movements have transformative power only in democratic, open societies in which the system of managing the society is inclusive and auto-corrective. In societies such as the Macedonian one – a closed society in which the government is functionally single-party, with fascist mythology and ultra-nationalistic, meaning authoritative and totalitarian according to its system characteristics, the activist movements are merely – as I have already said – decorative performances with marginal, symbolic meaning. Unfortunately.

9. What do you think that will be the result of such activist movements? If it came to intensification, multiplication, and above all, massification and radicalization of these movements, in my opinion, that may help in bringing down this totalitarian regime and in the establishment of an open democratic society.

10. Could you tell me your story: What right to the city mean in the context of Skopje? The right to the city in the case of Skopje has been multiplied by zero by the party-mafia rule. I told the story in the quotation in question 5.

11. Are you part or supporter of some activist activities? If so, in what way you're involved? I am not a part of any movement, but I help and participate in all movements that will ask me to.

INT14 JAKIMOVSKA, Iilina
(**Јакимовска Илина**); (1971) is a professor at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Faculty of Sciences in Skopje. She has published three books and edits and writes for the Bookbox part of off.net portal. She is an editor-in-chief of "Tabahon" publishing house.

1. What important activist movements and practices can be detected in Skopje? Freedom Square, In defense of GTC, I Protest, Singing Skopjans, Critical Mass – Skopje on bicycle, Tiiit, Students Plenum and High school Students Plenum, Protests against the new law on taxation, Protests for the girl Tamara, Retvitni meal.

2. When you think they started to appear? Although smaller activist movements were present before, I think that the first most important massive movement in Skopje was the protest for Martin Neshkovski five years ago. Since then somehow the ice has been broken, and the citizens of Skopje, especially the youngest begun to freely manifest their civic will and attitudes on the streets in the city. Side effects are the counter-protests that are appearing in almost every protest retroactively and in my opinion calculated and inauthentic.

3. Which is the reason for their appearance? The reasons and motives are different, but according to me they consist of: concrete events in which the Government has brought substandard

and harmful laws in particular fields (education, taxation); protests against the urban policies related to the project SK 2014; social discontent (poverty, low standard of living for students and high school students, low quality of health versus unplanned spending on useless projects, etc.); a desire for a better quality of urban life together with strengthening the civic awareness for the environmental and other aspects.

4. Could you comment their effects? Civic movements, particularly protests on various issues are contributing for strengthening the civil consciousness and solidarity among the citizens of Skopje. At the same time, they have contributed for changing or freezing of some of the government decisions (eg the new Law on Higher Education, which is "frozen" until 2018).

My impression is that although the effects are not yet visible in that extent in which we would have expected, but yet in long-term this is very important period in building democracy and reducing the fear to express an opinion. So, the effects, the possible mistakes and the wrong decisions, I think they could be assessed only after a few years, with some historical distance, because at the moment all the events are still in progress.

5. What might the project SK2014 mean in this context?(Is there any connection between the activist movements emergence and the projectSK2014) Some of these

movements certainly have, directly and indirectly / in a symbolic way (GTC, Colorful Revolution, and Freedom Square). But that's only one aspect of a broader picture of the destruction of the image of the city, which consists of more than just making and locating ugly and expensive monuments. It's about the reaction and the destruction of the social tissue of Skopje, its symbolic / ritual places that instead of merging now divide, on political and national basis. At the same time, this has not a connection only with Skopje, but also with the general narrative of Macedonian history and national "mythology" promoted and constructed through the monuments and the buildings in the project Skopje 2014 .

6. Do you think that the activist movements and practices influence the urban dimension (city landscape) in Skopje? The most evident example of the material / physical impact is the Colourful Revolution, whose traces are still visible on the buildings in Skopje. The Protest movements have their own roughly determined trajectory and space in which they unfold, which became recognizable (for example: at 7 before SJO). Critical Mass, on bicycle is trying to change the city landscape in order to become friendlier with the cyclists. Retvitni breakfast is trying to raise the awareness of homeless people in Skopje .However, do all the inhabitants of Skopje feel this impact, or only young people which are on the social networks and live in the urban

core (not parts as Pintija, Dracevo or Madzari), I could not really say that.

7. Do you think that those movements influenced public opinion? If so, in what way?

8. Do you think that the activist movements have any kind of transformative power? I will answer on both, question seven and eight. Yes; they have major impact on public opinion, but only upon those who receive accurate information about what is going on. Due to the media control and converting information, some of the activist movements are often presented as something completely different of what they actually are, and hence they cannot perform its real impact. The impression is that a limited number of individuals with different nationalities , age and gender are appearing consequently from one movement to another , but still not enough massive for fundamental changes .

9. What do you think that will be the result of such activist movements? The result is that it will remain recorded in history that they have existed, that there were people that have expressed their opinion in a very important moment, regardless of what kind of impact it had in the higher politics. For a country like Macedonia, where protest movements until now were rare, or did not even existed, this is very important. For real achievement, in terms of revolution, I

think at this point is still early to be discussed.

10. Could you tell me your story: What right to the city mean in the context of Skopje? Right to the city for me it means that the city should be both pleasant (not noisy, not ugly) material "home " for me, my family and my friends , and for all citizens of Skopje. On the other hand, it should offer features of " home" in a symbolic and social sense, like comfort , openness and creativity of urban atmosphere in which you feel motivated , secure and happy.

At this moment for me, neither the first nor the second condition is fulfilled, so I cannot say that I have the right to dwell in my city. In contrary, for years the city is withdrawing from me and I from the city. If I do not have to, I do not go in the center at all, I am moving in a minimum radius mainly in my yard. Similar feelings have many of my friends, which perhaps because of their age are nostalgic for some other time.

11. Are you part or supporter of some activist activities? If so, in what way you're involved? I have participated with my presence and articles in the media for: Student / professorial plenum, I Protest / Colorful Revolution and I love GTC. I'm not part of a formal organization or movement, but I go on protests as a citizen.

INT15 JANČEVSKI, Vladimir
(**Јанчевски Владимир**); (1984, Skopje)
graduated from the Institute of Art

History (Contemporary Art) at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje. Since 2011 participates in the activities of the Centre for Visual Studies – Skopje, which is part of the European network for visual culture. As an independent researcher, works in the field of contemporary art, art theory and visual studies.

1. What important activist movements and practices can be detected in Skopje? The role of several groups or movements can be separated. Among them should certainly be mentioned left organizations Solidarity and Lenka, from 2009 the "Archi-Brigade", then in the autumn of 2014 the Students movement through the Student plenum (then the Professors plenum, and the Secondary school plenum). Since 2015 more noticeable are activities of civil movement I Protest which since the publication of the so-called "Bombs" to date has managed to raise considerable crowd and support, especially among heterogeneous group of unsatisfied citizens who are not party activists from the opposition bloc. Naturally there are many other initiatives and organizations which are active on occasions formed around specific events or themes, such as Amman or protest movement against police brutality. However, it seems that it is the same group of people who are part of the network of NGOs, sometimes proves to be a strategy that is counterproductive to the intent to multiply the resistance to include most uninterested than normal, suspicious and reserved public which is critical to

serious changes. Although it is not a directly activist oriented art initiative Cooperation, quite active from April 2012 until early March 2015, was a specific open platform in bringing together a significant number of artists, historians and teoretari art, cultural workers and citizens who various ways have supported this initiative, mostly by relinquishing their space for the realization of exhibitions and debates. The point of this informal association was through the prism of critical art to treat some issues relating to the current socio-economic and political situation and the development of possible models for self-organization and cooperation with the wider public.

2. When you think they started to appear? Their appearance or a more intense visibility can be accounted at the beginning of 2009.

3. Which is the reason for their appearance? That happens when the tendencies for rearrangement of the city are becoming more visible when the ruling elites through culture show interest in redefining the identity parameters (or by strengthening them) packing it all as a necessary condition for the state. From this distance it seems the overturn occurred after the debacle at the NATO summit in Bucharest, and later after the financial crisis progresses, in which they opened the way for an easier identification of this retrograde nationalist architectural activity, which was offered for rescue of economic and identity sense. And precisely the complexity of the whole

project which saw many pure political pragmatism and personal financial interest opened the door of resistance and was seen as a call for the defense of endangered public space and the rights of those who think differently from the ruling majority and their supporters.

4. Could you comment their effects? The effects can be seen by the fact that many of the controversial projects and policies have opened up polemics where the majority of citizens were not only aware of many details but they begun to familiarize themselves with the policies that shaped their lives within the community, especially among young people the interest for the history of the city began to grow, the architectural heritage, invisible monumental landmarks, legal regulations and numerous other issues which are in the regulation of public space and its meaning.

5. What might the project SK2014 mean in this context? (Is there any connection between the activist movements emergence and the project SK2014) Certainly. I think there is a direct connection, because this project is problematic in many ways, from ideological, architectural, urban, and financial aspects. Then in terms of transparency the criteria under which the projects were chosen- in art, style and democratic sense is large disappointment. It is quite legitimate for a government to decide on big constructions to soften the effects of a

crisis, but it is extremely problematic how the budget funds are distributed, who is assigning these projects and their performance and according to which criteria. The vast majority of professionals who are in charge of these issues as urban planners, architects, art historians and artists were unpleasantly surprised when in February 2010 was presented the visualization of the already defined project. Therefore, it is by no coincidence that numerous representatives of these professions, especially students organized protests against imposed projection for future Skopje, as an unacceptable romantic nationalist vision.

6. Do you think that the activist movements and practices influence the urban dimension (city landscape) in Skopje? I think that every rebellion or reaction has an impact on some citizens. Certainly the range is questionable, it depends from the media, but also from the strategies of the activists and engaged citizens. Often activists and civil society organizations refuse to face reality and reconsider their actions and part of them, it seems that are not trying enough, closed down in their self-sufficiency and the support they receive from their supporters.

7. Do you think that those movements influenced public opinion? If so, in what way? They have, but obviously not enough for bigger and more serious changes which are usually expected or announced. To some

extent some of the actions had some success such as getting the government to back out of their intentions, such as the proposal for the problematic location for the construction of the church. But despite the withdrawal from that location, they still decided to build one also on a problematic location in the small park in front of the building of the Army of Republic of Macedonia. Sometimes it is very dangerous because some of the government's initiatives are creating a domino effect, as it was the reciprocal proposal for building the Burmali mosque, wherewith further problems are escalating and bringing the hazardous terrain for ethnic and religious confrontations.

8. Do you think that the activist movements have any kind of transformative power? Unfortunately, despite the efforts of individuals and groups, the effects are short-lived and the public is rather unconcerned. Also in this process of anti agonization of these issues, some of the people became aware that the political and the economic elites are uncompromised in pursuing their interests and that while they have been given some support, they will persistently defend their positions, irrespective of expert opinion. Therefore, I think that efforts should result in a change of tactics, if not the whole strategy to resist the usurpation of public space. Very often during these 7-8 years after intensive open fierce debates about the city and its almost violent untransparental transformation

that initially began tentatively now is conducted freely. In art circles of the world seriously discuss the possibility through art to influence the awareness for changes. The dilemma between critical art that acts in a symbolic domain and artistic activism that aims to direct political action sometimes seems like a false dilemma because usually most activists (eg. Municipality Center) end their actions with short visual effects which not only differs from the actions and interventions of artists, but often are superficial comments on a current event or a statement of the rulers.

9. What do you think that will be the result of such activist movements?

It is difficult to predict. Until now some activities in a period of time managed to mobilize a significant number of citizens who participated in various protest movements or at least managed to get their support and affection in larger initiatives. It is significant that after many years of confrontations and protests at this very moment when the political crisis seems to last, arraises the question of involving citizens in the process of negotiations. It remains to see how it goes and if a solution will be found to finally get out of the crisis. Let me mention again the cooperation. What is important to mention is that unlike many other initiatives and movements, the cooperation achieved a great number of events, to get a broader regional support and recognition which resulted in the participation of many artists from the

region and beyond, based its capacities and individual support of well-meaning citizens who have recognized the value and opportunities of the initiative. That was only a beginning fase and an interesting experience through which many who had looked at art as décor or a meaningless autonomous zone, saw that it directly depended of the public presentation and had implicit political dimension.

10. Could you tell me your story: What right to the city mean in the context of Skopje?

Right to the city assumes a smooth participation in making decisions that are essential in this case for the development and future of Skopje. Skopje, like any other city, has its own specific history with a series of opened questions about major projects during the 20th century and their heritage. After the Balkan Wars and World War I as part of the Kingdom of SHS and Yugoslavia, Skopje gets a single eclectic character with late reflections non-classical style, but also some solid examples of modern architecture and international style. After the liberation and especially the earthquake in 1963, opening up new opportunities, but also modernization and expansion remain a lot of unfinished projects and obviously our population was not sufficiently educated and aware of the radical modernity of the project resulting with some resistance. Unlike previous problems, this problem is that this last endeavor happens in democratic Macedonia and authorities relating populist authoritarian, allegedly relying

on the judgment of ordinary people, while completely disregarding the recommendations and suggestions of the vast majority between vocational upper circles. The scary thing is that today, unlike Jugoslavija Kingdom and Yugoslavia despite some directives, but the decisions were largely left to the architects and urban planners. Right to the city is inextricably linked to the struggle for the preservation of social goods, a struggle which involves blocking not liberal tendencies to privatize every public space. But it also implies an obligation for knowledge of the history of the city, its architecture, The structure of the population and its needs, protection of certain values. Citizens of a city, besides the right to use the benefits of living in urban areas, should insist on greater involvement and information about policies and their effects and show greater responsibility and critical awareness that would lead to constructive solutions. But to achieve this very great efforts should be made in the educational process and to prevent the usurpation amid social fragmentations are unlikely to be sufficient of reapaeting thesis of Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey of merely attended panel discussions or closed workshops, but more extensive research that will result in wider public availability. Here mst important is enthusiasm of young activists with high capacity for research.

11.Are you part or supporter of some activist activities? If so, in what way you're involved? I am not directly part

of some activist movements, but I support all the initiatives that are for raising critical awareness, primarily composed of individuals who are self organized without tendency to "professionalize". One example was the 'Students movement', which with their articulation and dedication they surprised many and showed greater determination and political maturity. However, at the moment it appears that part of that intensity and enthusiasm has decreased, probably due to the policies of the parties and their games of negotiations behind closed doors, without involvement of the citizens.

INT16 JOVANOVIĆ, Branimir (Јовановиќ Бранимир);(1982) – currently a visiting researcher at the University of Turin, Department of Economics and Statistics. , a researcher at the Association of Economic Researcher, Skopje, a new association aiming to stimulate and popularize economic research in the country and the region.He obtained his PhD from "Tor Vergata" University in Rome. His recent research interest includes financial crises, fiscal policy and income inequality and it can be broadly defined as applied economics and econometrics.

1. What important activist movements and practices can be detected in Skopje? There are so many. Since the end of 2014 we are having protests all the time. The reasons were the educational system, the health system, tax changes, labour rights, treatment of

journalists, pollution, urbanism (Skopje 2014), police brutality, the central heating system, electricity, and the government in general. Apart from the protests, there are many guerrilla actions. There were also student occupations of universities. There are many performances, there are blockades, strikes etc. Regarding movements, there are leftist's movements, labour unions, professional organizations (journalists etc.), student movements, eco movements, NGOs. The most important movement currently is the "I Protest" movement (i.e. the Colourful Revolution).

2. When you think they started to appear? It's hard to point to a certain date. But I would say that the current big anti-regime protests (the Colourful Revolution), are a continuation of the protest wave from the end of 2014 (which started with the students), which is a continuation of the protests from 2012 against the increase of the electricity price, which is a continuation of the protests from 2011 against police brutality. There were many other protests during this time (and before), like the protests against the church on the main city square in Skopje, or the protests against destroying a park in Skopje, or the labour protests, or the protests of the workers that lost their jobs during the transition (стечајци).

3. Which is the reason for their appearance? Developments and problems in the society. For example, the student protests from 2014 started

against the law on higher education. Same with most of the other protests, the ongoing Colourful Revolution is slightly different, in the sense that it is much wider. Those protests are clearly anti-regime, i.e. against the way the current government is ruling the country.

4. Could you comment their effects?

Some of them had some effects, but, in general, the effects are very limited. This government doesn't make concessions. Even when it appears to do so, it changes its mind.

5. What might the project SK2014 mean in this context?(Is there any connection between the activist movements emergence and the projectSK2014) Some movements were clearly affected by SK2014. The protests against the church on the square, the protests against the destruction of the park, the protests/actions against the change of the façade of the GTC. Also, the current Colourful Revolution was attacking monuments and buildings which are part of Sk2014.

6. Do you think that the activist movements and practices influence the urban dimension (city landscape) in Skopje? In general, no. There are some movements which were against building more buildings in the center of Skopje (in defending the neighborhood Debar Maalo) which may have changed some small things, like stopping one building etc. But in general, the authorities have continued with what they wanted.

7. Do you think that those movements influenced public opinion? If so, in what way? Certainly. People are becoming more aware of the problems, more active, engage in the protests etc. Still, it's of a limited scale. It's mostly in the center of Skopje, among the more educated etc.

8. Do you think that the activist movements have any kind of transformative power? It's hard to say. They are probably transforming the society into a more active society, but it's still early to say whether this is really sizeable.

9. What do you think that will be the result of such activist movements More politically aware and active citizens, more active society, more responsible authorities. Better quality of life.

10. Could you tell me your story: What right to the city mean in the context of Skopje? More parks and green areas. More walking zones. More public places (sport terrains, playgrounds, libraries...). Better public transport. Less traffic and less pollution.

11. Are you part or supporter of some activist activities? If so, in what way you're involved I am participating in many of the protests from the last 2 years, including the current ones. I have been included in the organization of some protests from this period. I have been involved in activities for better urban planning in Skopje (informing people, talking to the local authorities etc).

INT17 PROKOPIEV, Aleksandar (Прокопиев Александар; (1953), a Macedonian novelist, essayist, poet and a former member of the eminent Yugoslav rock band Idoli. He is Founder of postmodernism in Macedonian contemporary literature and currently professor at the Institute of Macedonian Literature at the SS.Cyryl and Methodius University. He worked in several domestic and foreign magazines, for example as a member of the editorial board of Orient Express (Oxford, UK) and World Haiku (Kyoto, Japan). He wrote screenplays for film, theatre, TV shows, radio dramas and comic books. His works were translated in English, French, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Polish, Hungarian, Czech, Slovak and other languages.

1. What important activist movements and practices can be detected in Skopje?

2. When you think they started to appear? Let's begin with a prehistory of what that meant in the sense of the political process of independence of the state that took place in 1992. Were there sprouts and possibilities for civic movement to be developed as a formulation, critique and collective of certain political attitudes that became predominant? Was there also a possibility to develop a first front against it?

There was such a possibility, and that was the League of Democrats. It was established by Gjorgji Ivanovikj, a professor of law, who is still very active, even though he is in his 80s or

90s. It was interesting that his concept was not party-oriented but civic. All of us, who were young, were supporters and voters of that possibility. Of course, in the very beginning, the two parties bipolarized, and started to suffocate the rest of the parties, with that entire system of party strategies and structures; however, it should be mentioned that during the first local elections, at least in Skopje, there were people from the League of Democrats that were influential, critical and had different opinions from the ones of the two leading parties. If we mention all these movements that contained within them that kind of a strategy pertaining to the civic sphere, then we have to mention these movements as the beginning of such an opinion.

However, I believe that since 2007 the civic conscience started awakening again via actions that comprised creative i.e. artistic and performance statements. The impetus of the civic movement is: on the one hand, the academia; on the other hand, the artists and architects, and the third group are the students. It all started with the students, from the youngest ones and a group of intellectuals, many of whom have been interviewed here, starting with Iskra Geshoska, Igor Toshevski, Jasna Koteska, who long ago started speaking of those basic themes of freedom and non-freedom, of being forced to do something, of punishment, of political imperatives and civic (таф)?, so, those ideas have been long present, and now they have become more massive.

It is an undisputable fact that the scope of the civic initiative that has apparent political implications is not that political any longer, it is directed by certain political interests, but it is simply dictated by a civic unrest.

3. Which is the reason for their appearance? As I said earlier, the reason is a certain dictation of the political that was heralded even during the last millennium, and in this one it became apparent by the ruling in a few areas. First of all, that is the area of the media that gave in to the dictatorship of the ruling party and the division of journalists into groups. Secondly, an economic faction became very powerful, one that we cannot see, who did a lot of damage via their business, above all, in architecture, but also in the economic life of the country. And lastly, it is education. The education and all that corruptness that has become more and more apparent had to challenge the civic voices that came from the people that are most pure, in this case, young people i.e. students and those that were affected in terms of their knowledge, these are the creative people and university professors that are also the target of the government, i.e. the autonomy of the University that is a key freedom of every democracy. Those three points are very important, and the civic movement reacted to them in a mass manner.

3. Could you comment their effects? It is apparent that some political changes will bring effects, and it will serve as a warning to those that come next so

that they know that they will be punished if they commit crimes and manipulate with the citizens; however, we need to fix some basic things here, such as the rule of law. We still don't have a rule of law, it all comes down to degradation and bribery of the law system, and that is terrible. We must fix education, and last but not least, social life (the relations with other people, not to condemn people with different opinions), that is what this party did, a terrible division in the most private area of human life.

So, surely, changes will come, history is not that merciful to those that are the bravest and that have those ideas. Because it is a known fact who will profit the most – the opposition party, that is clear. Still, will the opposition party be stupid enough to reject all these people that suddenly make themselves available and employ this structure that is pyramid-like and bipolar, or will they finally realize that this will mean a change in conscience and creating another climate that will finally enable this country to live in democracy.

4. What might the project SK2014 mean in this context?(Is there any connection between the activist movements emergence and the projectSK2014) The stupidity of the SK2014 project was a great impetus for many of these issues. So, it turns out that the government brought about this movement. That stupidity is so apparent and so prone to cause rebellion and ridicule; however, it is interesting that this nonsense made the rebellion more compact, and more

civic initiatives started acting together. The story is now very interesting if you just see it from a cultural point of view because many of those objects have been built, now they are covered with paint, which is good, but it is intriguing what will happen next with those objects.

I think that the protest held in opposition to the baroque-ization of GTC (City Mall) was a stroke of the free spirit of modernism. This protest together with the student protests made the movement more massive, and here the different generations mingled. This is also interesting from a civic point of view because the civic sector fights against snobbery, the good taste and education fight against the kitsch, the trades fight against amateurism.

5. Do you think that the activist movements and practices influence the urban dimension (city landscape) in Skopje? I believe that they can continue to influence provided that a basic change of conscience takes place and people realize the stupidity and manipulation of this government that is implemented via the monuments and cutting down the trees in Skopje. All that can be changed, but the whole strategy of this country must be changed, when this government falls, it must be changed, because this government let the urban mafia develop.

6. Do you think that those movements influenced public opinion? If so, in what way? Your thesis is also a proof

that it influences, as well as all the people that you interview. However, now it is much more interesting that it does not influence only individuals, but also larger groups. The students are numerous, 90% of them, and the middle class that was somehow kept in the dark in relation to everything that was happening, and now they have started to wake up and develop a new conscience and courage.

7. Do you think that the activist movements have any kind of transformative power? What I mentioned before is a kind of transformation. You can't expect to have transformation over night with people who have been infected by fear for decades; it can happen step by step. One of the conditions is to fix the media and to change conscience, which is always more difficult because you build it with life experience, with the possibility of knowledge and information of a different kind (not dictated).

8. What do you think that will be the result of such activist movements? Well, may the first result be what we all want, and that is a change of government. The second result – to change all these systems, and to implement the rule of law, not to manipulate with the judiciary, and to improve education. The University must be more worthy of its name.

Then, there will be other results that are dependent on the passing of time, because these young people will enter

public life more and they will have responsible jobs, and with this experience they should start acting in a different way (their conscience must be different due to this experience).

9. Could you tell me your story: What right to the city mean in the context of Skopje? The right to the city in the context of Skopje is connected to all the things I have mentioned so far. Skopje is an adequate example of the destruction and discrimination of the right to the city. This probably has caught the attention of cultural researchers and urban researchers, now, for instance, many people from Croatia have come to speak of the Skopje phenomenon. It is probable that when that information spreads, people will become aware that the right to the city is a basic right and that no dictator, group or party can take that right away from you.

10. Are you part or supporter of some activist activities? If so, in what way you're involved? I have always been a supporter of activist movements, an unusual one, I have to admit, starting from my student days, as in the League of Democrats, then the Professors' Plenum, I Love GTC, and I am a constant participant in actions and debates. Still, I am not a leading activist, even though I meet often with them, we discuss, I support them, and I try to give them a new dimension, to uncover a path so that they can see whether it fits them or not.

INT18 SAVESKI, Zdravko (Савески Здравко); Doctor of Political Science), longtime activist, trade unionist and member of the Presidium of the newly formed Left party.

1. What important activist movements and practices can be detected in Skopje?

2. When you think they started to appear? I would say, starting from 2009, actually starting with the protest that happened that year on the main square, there is direct line that is leading to these protests of the Colorful Revolution, because the people that used to protest back than in 2009, are protesting continuously ,but also the organization itself shows the direct line too. Especially interesting for me is the horizontal organizing. In Skopje there were anarchist groups that were believing in the horizontal organization, from which i will point out as the first horizontal organization, the movement for social justice Lenka in 2008 (but there were existing also others before). Than another important movement with significant place was Liberal Index(Sloboden indeks), that took over the horizontal way of organizing from Lenka and through the protests spread in the bigger circle of people.

For this horizontal organizing as a big importance was one wave (form of plenum) for organizing the protest movements in the period of 2014-2015. First were the students that started to protest organizing student'

plenum, than followed the professors with the professors' plenum, that high school students and so on...this kind of plenum movement originated from Macedonia, as i already mentioned before started form 2009 with the name of Student index, to continue with Student Plenum nowadays.

3. Which is the reason for their appearance? The main reason is indigenous coming to the same conclusions, because people are realizing that the democracy we are living in, is faulty, that the citizen participation is missing in it. In general the protest are happening for those undemocratic parties, to offer even bigger undemocratic system of choosing(deciding).

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4. Can you comment their effects? For now we have successes that are corresponding to the concrete goals. Second, regarding the value level, those successes are huge. I can mention two very big benefits: first the belief in democratic values expanded and second, anti-nationalism that is promoting among the people and the understanding that all of us in Macedonia have to live together. Third, citizens don't perceive themselves anymore like apathetic citizens who nobody asks anything or consider their voice, but step by step they build there conscious. And fourth, these protests bring the courage in people, knowing that our people are shy, but what we see in these protests

is something that has never been seen before.

5. What might the project SK2014 mean in this context?(Is there any connection between the activist movements emergence and the projectSK2014) I definitely think that there is relation/connection, in the end everything started with the protest that was directly linked with SK2014. SK2014 shocked Macedonian society. When the presentation of the project was showed for the first time, nobody believed that the government was serious about realizing that concept, the same government that started leading the country when everything in Macedonia was nearly in the hands of private sector, the only way to steal the money was using the monuments, that is the bottom itself of the idea. So in all this illegitimacy of the government, illegitimate is even SK2014, but also most visible manifestation of the regime.

6. Do you think that the activist movements and practices influence the urban dimension (city landscape) in Skopje? Among other, this year was performed artistic intervention on SK2014. The Colorful Revolution originally didn't have artistic dimension, it was expression of revolt, afterwards it was understood that apart from showing the revolt, we were beautifying Skopje also, where instead of the white of SK2014 suddenly u find colorfulness and joyfulness. Even the discourse has been changed now, for example the

Triumphal Arch would be for real Triumph of the victory, when this regime will fall. Initially there were even ideas for dislocation and demolition of the arch, but I think that the Triumphal Arch will stay as a monument of victory of the citizens over the regime.

7. Do you think that those movements influenced public opinion? If so, in what way? Definitely they do influence the public opinion. The protests have very big support from the the citizens, support that is few times bigger than the protesters itself, because not everyone is able to go to the protests, they are still afraid and they don't see themselves as politicized citizens. Surveys and statistical studies also are showing that the Colorful Revolution has big support, even though they area not showing increased support for the opposition(party-Social Democratic Party), people hate the actual government(party) but they don't like the opposition too.

8. Do you think that the activist movements have any kind of transformative power? Definitely , yes! First of all for protesters themselves, they are encouraged and see themselves as active actors, second the discourse is changing in terms of shaping the topics and understanding the problems, that battle of ideas is very important, and third the face of Skopje is changing.

9. What do you think that will be the result of such activist movements?

Regarding the results, we have either very dark or very bright future and that is why a lot of people think that this is very important fight. To bring the regime down, that what we all expect, than is opening the possibility for bright future, when finally we will set up strong healthy base, that won't allow making more stupid things , whoever will take the leadership, because behind, this time will have awake citizens. But if we don't succeed we can openly say that in Macedonia will be imposed open dictatorship.

my solidarity.I will emphasize the protests of redundant workers, because those people have been forgotten from everyone and for us is important to show them our solidarity. Also part of Protestiram(I Protest) from 2008 continuously and nowadays part of Presidium of the Levicata(Left).

10. Could you tell me your story: What right to the city mean in the context of Skopje? When I first visited Skopje it was quite a Yugoslav era city but with its own charm and a fantastic contemporary art /architectural history. The contemporary scene is a bit hidden but once you din it, the city really does open out to you. The Skopje 2014 scheme really has saddened me enormously. The city centre is now ruined; architecturally incoherent and politically and socially claustrophobic. I know many citizens feel that the scheme has gone so far that the city is now permanently vandalized. Others are already thinking of what will happen to all this stuff that has been jerry-built when Gruevski and VMRO are not as powerful as they are at present.

11. Are you part or supporter of some activist activities? If so, in what way you're involved I am present nearly on every protest, as an organizer of some of them and often present expressing

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