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Theoretical Foundations of Investigating Urban Spaces Contested by Weak and Strong Advocacy Groups

Under "contested spaces," which are to be protected by local communities, we mean "geographic locations where conflicts in the form of opposition, confrontation, subversion, and/or resistance engage actors whose social positions are defined by differential control of resources and access to power"[1]. Advocacy groups in this case are the associations of people who defend their rights to and interests in some form of benefit. "Strong" advocacy groups, such as municipal governments and investors, are those who decide about urban planning and implement initiatives, whereas the "weak" are those who have to challenge these decisions through the representatives of local communities, NGOs, lobbyists, and the like.

Urban space is an important resource, and possession of this resource and the ability to change it is a significant marker of belonging to government. When speaking about the contestation of urban space, it's necessary to distinguish between the processes that underlie this kind of conflict. Each type of social order, according to Lefebvre, has its specific configuration of spatial practices that is always mediated by cultural and economic functioning of society. These spatial practices are types of capital distribution which in turn create and recreate the space and, thus, affect the redefinition of space directly lived in by city dwellers[2]. It should be noted that these types of capital determine the possibility of a material or symbolic appropriation of space, profiting from the occupied space and the exclusion of those who, due to the lack of capital, do not have this opportunity[3]. In this context, there emerges, according to S. Low, the social production of space – the process responsible for the material creation of space (redevelopment, gentrification, urban development programs, etc.), which is the prerogative of the government[4]. On the other hand, according to M. Foucault and P. Rabinow, through architecture and planning power is channeled, and the organization, discipline, and control of the citizens' daily life is provided[5]. According to M. de Certeau, through the social production of space, the empowered who always seek to subdue some territory to have it monitored and controlled[6]use spatial strategies – the rational planning of urban space organization that is inherent for the "strong" groups.

Spatial practices are based on the representations of space. These are the discursive representations of the principles that underlie the arrangement and structure of the urban space developed by those who directly create and

[1] The anthropology of space and place: locating culture / edited by Setha Low and Denise Lawrence-Zuniga. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd , 2003. P. 18.

[2] Lefebvre H. The Production of Space. Oxford UK; Cambridge USA, 1991.P. 33.

[3] Бурдье П. Социология социального пространства. СПб.: Алетейя, 2005.

[4] Low S. M. On the Plaza: the politics of public space and culture. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000. P. 128.

[5] Rabinow P. Ordonnance, discipline, regulation: some reflections on urbanism. Humanities in society, 1982. № 5 (3-4); Foucault M. Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison, New York: Vintage, 1975.

[6] Certeau de, M.The Practice of Everyday Life. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1984.P. 52.

transform the space – strong advocacy groups and professionals such as architects, planners, sculptors, scientists, and others.[7]

Spatial practices and corresponding representations of space typical for professionals in the field of urban planning simultaneously constitute and challenge the spaces of representation. According to H. Lefebvre, the spaces of representation are connected to the direct perception of the space by its "normal" users--citizens, writers, artists--and their experiences.[8] As Low puts it, the social construction of space contradicts the social production of space where the experiences of space perception, which are shaped through social interchange, commemoration practices, images, and everyday use, are not necessarily born out in how space is constructed.[9]. She argues that the city is a space exposed to the implementation of projects launched by dominant political elites in order to make profit, but these plans rarely overlap with the interests and needs of the citizens leading to the spread of social movements aimed to defend urban space as well as the development of local activism[10].

As a way of struggle against the spatial practices that do not consider the interests and needs of citizens, Lefebvre offers open mass revolt. De Certeau complements the resistance repertoire of the "weak" with implicit, flexible, responsive on-site tactics of resistance through maneuvers designed to solve problems here-and-now[11]. When resisting the imposed rational spatial domination, citizens do not create new spaces, but rather elaborately manipulate the existing ones[12]. The tactics of resistance implied by the citizens actualize when "there is a need for reaction or resistance, but the inequality of forces is so drastic that resistance, open rules violation or verbal disagreement will inevitably lead to losses or total defeat"[13].

When analyzing the processes of contesting urban areas both by powerful advocacy groups involved in the processes of the social production of space and weak groups involved in the social construction of space, various types of reasons for actions referred to by conflicting parties should be distinguished. The parties can refer to the following motives to legitimize their positions: practical reasons, strategic reasons, and discursive reasons. For instance, in their claims to protect the urban spaces considered to be "theirs", local communities refer to their everyday practices such as walking, naming, narrating, and so forth. The citizens' systems of relevancies concerning "their" territory rely simply on the personal, biographical experience connected to these fragments of urban space. They are based on the biographically determined memories of citizens associated with this space, social interaction with other actors, the subjective

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[7] Lefebvre H. The Production of Space. Oxford UK; Cambridge USA, 1991.P. 32-33.

[8] Ibid.P. 32-33

[9] The anthropology of space and place: locating culture / edited by Setha Low and Denise Lawrence-Zuniga. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2003. P. 19.

[10] Ibid. P. 21-22

[11] Certeau de, M.The Practice of Everyday Life.Berkeleyand Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1984.

[12] Cresswell T. Imaginating the nomad: mobility and postmodern primitive / G. Benko and U. Strohmayer. Space and social theory.Oxford: Blackwell, 1997. P. 363.

[13] Волков В.В., Хархордин О.В. Теория практик, СПб.: Издательство Европейского университета в Санкт-Петербурге, 2008. С. 198.

experience of mastering this territory, and more. For the representatives of local communities, these urban areas turn into «lieux de memoire» – realms of memory[14]. It is this disparity between the people's backgrounds, based on memory and habit, and the landscape of the city[15]subjected to redevelopment, that can be seen as an indicator of the city dwellers' protest initiatives.

The representatives of local communities who refer to the effects of long-term habits embedded in the contested urban area rely rather on implicit, background, practical knowledge, acquired through traditions and skills of space usage (know-how) than on the formal knowledge of rules and laws promoted by the authorities (know-that)[16]. Thus, we can conclude that in their protection of urban space, city dwellers act according to the regime of familiarity (régime de familiarité), "in which people constantly use local landmarks in order to regulate their involvement in close relationships with their environment", and not only with individuals but also with familiar things[17].

There's no doubt that strong advocacy groups have rational motives when implementing urban planning decisions. However, weak advocacy groups can also rely on strategic, pragmatic motives when claiming urban space.

Thus, we can conclude that both conflicting parties also act in the regime of regular planning(action en plan), that presupposes rational actions of individual agents designed to achieve their immediate objectives[18]. To analyze this type of action used in urban space contestation, we'll use the theory of collective action (since collective action is supposed to bemore rational than other types of action). The theory developed by social economist Mancur Olson gives us the opportunity to consider the intrinsic characteristics of collective action as distinct from other kinds of action such as individualized action. This is especially important as our subject of inquiry is a local community that always consists of several members.

According to Mancur Olson, the interests of group members who plan to perform a collective action are based on striving to benefit from the collective good and the ratio of efforts invested in the common cause.

Olson makes an important remark about the interrelation of collectivist and egoistical behavior patterns in a group as well as the stability of groups made up of members who prioritize individual goals over collective ones: "If members of a large group rationally attempt to maximize their individual welfare, they will make no efforts to achieve shared collective goals unless they experience external pressure or are offered personal motives for such action that do not coincide with the general interests of the group – the motives that can be implemented only provided that the members of the group take over some of the costs to achieve

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[14] Проблематика мест памяти. Франция-память / П. Нора, М. Озуф, Ж. де Пюимеж, М. Винок. СПб.: Изд-во С.-Петерб. ун-та, 1999;Хальбвакс М. Социальные рамки памяти. М.: Новое издательство, 2007.

[15] Hirsch E., O'Hanlon M. The anthropology of landscape: Perspectives on place and space. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. P. 1-30.

[16] Райл Г. Понятие сознания. М.: Идея-Пресс, 1999. С. 57.

[17] Тевено Л. Прагматика познания. Введение: исследование связи между познанием, коллективностью и практикой // Социологический журнал. 2006. № 3-4. С. 11.

[18] Ковенева О.В. Французская прагматическая социология // Социологический журнал. 2008. №. 1. С. 16.

the common goal"[19]. However, local communities, at least in the context of defending their "right to the city"[20] and protecting their space against urban development initiatives developed by strong advocacy groups, should involve the largest possible number of participants in collective action. It is important to note that the groups whose members are engaged in neighborhood relations are often heterogeneous, and therefore different actors within them have different goals, interests, behavior strategies, and so forth. Therefore, important factors, such as heterogeneity and the need to attract the largest number of group members possible in the case of particularly heated conflicts, can impede the self-organization of local communities. In large heterogeneous groups the situation is likely to emerge when most members who are in need of collective action face the free rider dilemma: "We must admit that, when the state of affairs in an organization causes dissatisfaction, one can stay loyal without being very powerful personally, but only on conditions that one can reckon on someone else taking up to improve the situation, or something happens that will lead to this situation"[21] In this case, if the demanded public good is obtained, nobody can be excluded from access to it.

The justification of the positions held by both strong and weak advocacy groups is achieved through legitimizing their actions in public discourse. Representatives of local communities address public appeals to other citizens and widely use the media in order to organize themselves and gain support for their initiatives. City officials and investors legitimize their opinion on the need for contested urban area development through public appeals and statements. Therefore, in the case of conflict around the development of urban space, the struggle also displays itself on the discursive level – in the context of regime of justification (régime de la justification), which is characterized by active actions in public space and public justification of interests and is connected with the shared principles and common goods[22]. To analyze the discursive strategies of the parties of the conflict, we shall use the conceptual apparatus of Nancy Fraser who distinguishes between "strong" and "weak" publics. "Strong" publics are publics whose discourse encompasses both opinion formation and decision making,"[23] while "weak" publics have only advisorial functions. In public interactions, representatives of strong publics have the opportunity to present their views as politically important and characterize the requirements of discriminated weak public as private thus excluding them from public debate[24].

To analyze the strategies of legitimation, self-organization and unification that local communities use to protect neighborhoods from urban development

[19] Олсон М. Логика коллективных действий. Общественные блага и теория групп, М.: Фонд экономической инициативы, 1995. С. 4.

[20] Lefebvre H. The Right to the City // The Blackwell City Reader / Ed. by: G. Bridge & W. Sophie. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002; Mitchell D. The right to the city: social justice and the fight for public space. N.Y.: Guilford Press, 2003. P. 12-16.

[21] Хиршман А.О. Выход, голос и верность: реакция на упадок фирм, организаций и государств. М.: Новое издательство, 2009. С. 78.

[22] Ковенева О.В. Французская прагматическая социология // Социологический журнал. 2008. №. 1. С. 16.

[23] Fraser N. Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy // Calhoun C. (ed.): Habermas and the Public Sphere. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992. P. 28.

[24] Ibid.

decisions, as well as the strategies city governments use to legitimize their actions, we shall use the findings of the sociology of critical capacity (Laurent Thevenot and Luc Boltanski[25]).

The determining factor in the dispute between the conflicting parties is the achievement of the level of "equivalence" that is provided through mutual search for connections and correspondences between discreet arguments. This process is necessary to support approval and criticism: "In order to criticize someone and explain to the others what is not going well, you need to bring together different sets of people and things through establishing links between them. For example, you need to connect situations and moments of the past in order to find the properties common for them and relevant in this case. The process of bringing together different objects or different facts should be justified by means of the principle of equivalence showing what they have in common"[26] According to Thevenot and Boltanski, the equivalence principle is a necessary condition for the parties to put forward demands, claims of injustice, and claims for compensation paid or retribution.

To achieve the level of equivalence between the participants and to legitimize their actions, conflicting parties appeal to one or more communicative "worlds of justification". Boltanski and Thevenot distinguish between seven of these "worlds, «or "orders of worth," sufficient "to describe justifications given in most everyday situations "[27]:

Inspired worth is emotionally charged value-based framework of grace. The main characteristics of people whose actions are focused on the world of inspiration are creativity, imagination, and dreams--their typical way to proceed is to dream, to imagine, to rebel. The common good of this "world" is based on the idea that everyone can benefit from inspiration and creativity [28]

Domestic worth / trustworthiness worth– is a value based on trust and chains of personal relationships. Relationships between people in this "world" are considered through the prism of kinship and interpersonal relations; they rely on respect for traditions which becomes a powerful source of legitimacy. This world is usually opposed to the market world which is described as "cold", unemotional, and rational.

Opinion worth embraces values based on such important criteria as fame, popularity, publicity, and public recognition. In this case, well-known personalities, stars, opinion leaders, and journalists are believed to be experts. They are important when they are popular, recognized and successful or seem to be in the public eye.[29]

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[25] ThévenotL. Justifying critical differences // Cultureand Humanity in theNew Millennium: The Future of Human Values, Hong-Kong, Hong-Kong University Press, 2001; Болтански Л. ТевеноЛ.Социология критической способности // Журнал социологии и социальной антропологии. Т.3. №3.

[26] Болтански Л., Тевено Л. Социология критической способности // Журнал социологии и социальной антропологии. Т.3. №3. С. 67.

[27] Там же. С.75.

[28] Thevenot L. Justifing critical differences // Culture and Humanity in the New Millennium: The Future of Human Values. Hong-Kong: Hong-Kong University Press, 2001. P. 61.

[29] Ibid. P. 59.

People who refer to the values of *civic worth* are willing to give up their private interests for the sake of common aspirations and collective welfare: "The specific feature of civic worth is its focus on collective substances rather than individual ones. Individuals are relevant and meaningful only if they are members of a collective body. That is why the important entities of this world are federations and communities or their representatives and delegates. Their basic qualities are official and characterized by the conformity with law"[30] Only actions and attitudes oriented towards mobilization are noteworthy. This value is opposed to the domestic worth that is based on personal dependencies.

Market worth - the value of this world is based on competition commercial exchange, investments, buying and selling, benefits, and property relations. The subjects of this "world" are buyers and sellers. They are characterized by opportunism in the use of market resources and the lack of personal ties or emotional restraint. Agents are assessed through fixing prices in the form of money.

Industrial worth: "The important actors of the industrial worth are experts. The terms used to describe their professional skills can be also used to define things. They are believed to have value only if they are effective, productive, and prompt. They use tools, methods, criteria, plans, figures, graphs, and more. Their relationships are considered to be harmonious if they are organized, measurable, functional, and standardized"[31]

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[30] Болтански Л., Тевено Л. Социология критической способности // Журнал социологии и социальной антропологии. Т.3 №3. С. 78.

[31] Болтански Л., Тевено Л. Социология критической способности // Журнал социологии и социальной антропологии. Т.3 №3.

Contested Urban Space in Paris and St. Petersburg: A Comparative Case-study

In the context of investigating protest initiatives of citizens, our attention will be drawn to two big European cities – Paris and St. Petersburg – where issues of historical and architectural heritage preservation play an important role in the debates on urban policy. Paris and St. Petersburg are also selected as examples of urban space contestation because in many respects they have a similar fate as regards historical development of their centres and the preservation and maintenance of architectural and historical monuments. For instance, in Soviet times in Leningrad, it was decided to leave historical buildings of the downtown untouched and construct new buildings in Stalinist architecture in Moskovskiy city district to symbolize the beginning of a new era. At the moment, the central part of St. Petersburg is a UNESCO protected zone. However, there are a lot of cases of demolition and new construction in the city center, and cases of spot construction and felling are also not infrequent provoking protest among the citizens. According to a well-known researcher of civil initiatives in Russia Carine Clément, protest initiatives of St. Petersburg residents have intensified since 2002 because of a construction "boom" in the city[32]. The city administration wants Petersburg to acquire the status of a "European city" and therefore gets involved in a kind of competition over the right togain features that verify this status: infrastructure development, mobilization of investment, increasing attractiveness of the city, and so on[33].

Meanwhile, Paris has undergone two waves of gentrification: the "rental" gentrification of the Latin Quarter[34] in 1960's, and the so-called "cultural gentrification" of the Marais[35]in the 1970's and 1980's. However, the capital of France is known for its new high-rise buildings being moved out of the historic center to the business district La Défense. An exception to this rule is the construction of a skyscraper Tour de Montparnasse in the Latin Quarter, which invited heated public debates that have continued until now.

We shall consider the protest strategies implemented by local communities and directed against urban development initiatives offered by strong advocacy groups, and the social contexts in which urban space contestation takes place through the analysis of empirical data collected in the framework of two case-studies. These cases are:

- Protest initiatives of local communities and their lobbyists aimed against the potential demolition of Yurgens' house in St. Petersburg (Zhukovskogo street 19, city center)

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[32] Клеман К., Мирясова О., Демидов А. От обывателей к активистам. М.: Три квадрата, 2010. С. 183.
[33] http://www.assembly.spb.ru/manage/page?tid=633200028. «Ежегодные послания и отчеты Губернатора СПб».
[34] Cherval A. La gentrification à Paris intra-muros: dynamiques spatial, rapport sociaux et politique publiques. Thèse de doctorat. Décembre 2008.
[35] Djirikian A. La gentrification du Marais: quarante ans d'evolution de la population et des logements. Thèse de doctorat. Juin 2004.

Picture 1.Yurgens' house, Zhukovskogo street 19[36]

- The struggle for the preservation of the architectural complex of Port-Mahon: the ancient building of a dairy farm Montsouris and the adjacent estate Saint-Jacques in Paris (Street Tombe-d'Issoir, 14 District, peripherals of the Latin Quarter).

Picture 2.Garden in the yard of dairy farm Montsouris[37]

In St. Petersburg, the representatives of the developer company "Co Ltd Luxor" bought all the apartments in Yurgens' house and planned to condemn the building which would have allowed the owner to demolish the building and construct a luxurious six-story business center instead of an old three-story house. In Paris, the investor «Soferim» followed a similar strategy; to avoid the conservation and restoration of buildings, the company planned to demolish them and construct a housing estate and a cultural center for children.«Soferim» obtained a permit from the French Ministry of Culture to do so on April 25, 2005.

The major criterion for us to choose these two cases of urban space contestation for further comparison was the historical value of the buildings. The three-story Yurgens'mansion built by a famous architect whom the house was

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[36] http://www.citywalls.ru/photo32123.html.
[37] http://collectifportmahon.blogspirit.com/album/photos_du_site/jardin.html.

named after is an example of typical low-rise housing of XIX century St. Petersburg--erected in 1865.Farm Montsouris and the architectural complex adjacent to it, erected in mid XIX century, was the only remaining dairy farm from among 502 that had ever existed on the territory of Paris.
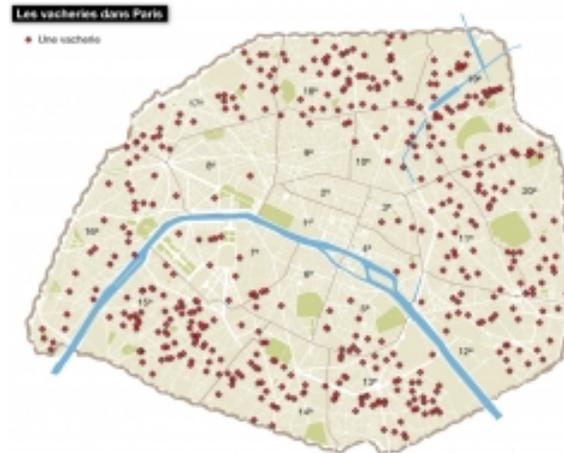
Picture 3.The map depicting the location of dairy farms in Paris in 1895, according tol'AtlasdesParisiens[38]

Generally, although Yurgens'house is not an architectural monument of federal importance, it is still valuable as an example of XIX century architecture. Moreover, it is located in the very center of Petersburg where, except for the rare cases of irreversible damage, the demolition of old buildings is prohibited. The territory where the architectural complex of Montsouris dairy farm and Saint-Jacques estates were located has archaeological significance for medievalists because it is an undeveloped area which has a rich cultural layer indicating the construction technologies of the Middle Ages.

Picture 4.The open cast of Port-Mahon road[39]

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[38] http://collectifportmahon.blogspirit.com/histoire-d-une-lutte-2012/.
[39] http://collectifportmahon.blogspirit.com/album/photos_du_site/Port%20Mahon%20C%C3%A9dric%20Canc%C3%A8s%202.html.

In both cases, the representatives of local communities (in St. Petersburg those were the residents of the neighboring houses, and in Paris – the residents of Street Tombe-d'Issoir and generally of the 14-th district) disputed the urban planning decisions regarding the contested areas. However, the strategies that people used to defend Yurgens' house and Port-Mahon architectural complex differed significantly.

Members of the local community Tombe-d'Issoir actively resorted to legitimate methods of struggle against the decision of the French Ministry of Culture to permit the demolition therefore acting within the regime of "planned action" which proved itself effective for several years (2005-2012).

Members of the local community Tombe-d'Issoir actively resorted to legitimate methods of struggle against the decision of the French Ministry of Culture to permit the demolition therefore acting within the regime of "planned action" which proved itself effective for several years (2005-2012). Local activists contested the right of the investor to demolish the buildings, destroy the archeological area and construct new buildings in the administrative tribunal of Paris. This strategy was successful for a long time until the demolition of the buildings in February 2012. The residents of neighbouring houses also collected signatures for cooperative appeals to various instances and invited experts from the Committee on Urbanism and Paris Municipal Commission (the so-called "Commission of Parisian Doyens") to monitor the investor complying with the security regulations of the mayor's office. Moreover, local activists sent requests to the municipality of the 14th district where the contested area of the urban space is located, as well as to the City Hall of Paris, the City Council and the Federal Council (Parliament).

These actions became the accelerants of the heated debate about the fate of the farm and the neighboring estates in the City Hall of Paris that resulted in the open vote of Parliamentary factions during which the representatives of the left-wing parties disputed the destruction of historic buildings and the majority of right-wing representatives voted for such demolition.

Taking advantage of the contradictions in federal and regional legislation regulating urban development issues, the representatives of the investor sent new inquiries to the City Hall of Paris, the City Council, the Ministry of Culture, and other institutions each time they were prohibited from demolishing the dairy farm, altering buildings or constructing new facilities in Montsouris. For example, according to the blog of the defenders of Montsouris farm and Saint-Jacques estates from August 3 2006, "*The investor has filed three more applications for permission to demolish seven buildings. In this case, only the building of granary and building 26 in the street of Tombe-d'Issoir will remain intact. To justify their position, the representatives of the investor point to the fact that the buildings are in very bad condition*"[40]. Through mutual agreements and due to the legal tactics of the investor, the company obtained the license for the "restoration" in the form of concreting the construction units. The local community protested against this

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[40] http://collectifportmahon.blogspirit.com/histoire-d-une-lutte-2012/

project considering it as "sham restoration". The permit was also heatedly discussed in the City Hall of Paris. For instance, a member of the left-wing Green Party René Dutrey publically claimed that concreting was not aimed at the restoration of the units of historical heritage: "*[Concreting] is like scattering sand in the nave of Notre Dame de Paris*"[41].

When failing in their attempts to legitimately struggle against the demolition, the representatives of the local community acted within the regime of public justification engaging media to cover the conflict and organizing several public meetings. The members of the initiative group Tombe-d'Issoir followed the strategy of active virtualization of the community as they created a site where they could share the latest news about the demolition and post visual materials. Having the ability to directly observe the contested area and using the knowledge of the key features of the neighboring territory, the citizens resorted to unaggressive spatial tactics[42] such as spying and photographing the cases of demolition at the farm access to which has been hampered by Soferim.However, it should be noted that the members of the local community defending Port-Mahon complex predominantly focused on self-organization and legitimate struggle, rather than striving for cooperation with other urban activists and the creation of a common network to exchange experience. Neither did they collaborate with organizations aimed to protect the city and other NGOs.

Nevertheless, the Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles granted Soferim permission for further work in the open cast. Meanwhile, the investor publicly declared the intention to preserve the historic units of the farm.

Picture 5.Soferim's posterat Tombe-d'Issoir: "The work is conducted to preserve everything"

Later on, after the head of the district representing the left-wing party had been replaced by another official representing the right-wing party loyal to the actions of the investor, the developer company obtained a permit for the

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[41] http://collectifportmahon.blogspirit.com/histoire-d-une-lutte-2012/.
[42] Certeau de, M.The Practice of Everyday Life. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1984.

demolition of three buildings and – under the pretext of extremely bad conditions– destroyed all remaining housing on February 14, 2012.

Members of the local community that protects Yurgens' house also initially applied legitimate protest actions. They addressed various stakeholders such as the municipality, management company, and city administration, wrote collective letters to the city governor Valentina Matvienko, and sent requests to district administration. However, these actions were not effective: *"Well then, as a result, as we were told in all instances: we, since May, we, all tenants of house 17, are writing to all authorities, starting from Matvienko and ending with lower authorities. You know, except for the runarounds no one and nothing except ... Here, the private owners of apartments in this house haves the right to do whatever they want. So, consequently we find ourselves in the space where legal rights mean nothing"*[43]. This situation forced local community members to start active long-term public protests within the regime of public justification. These protests were organized both directly near Yurgens' house and in the nearby public garden.
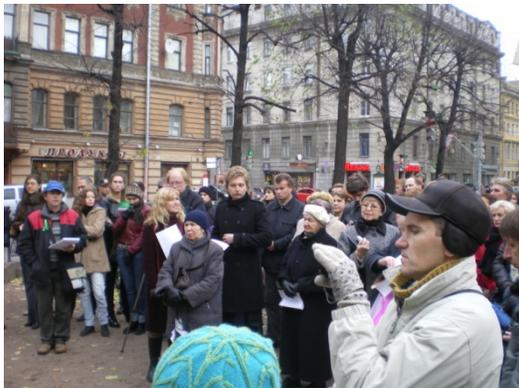
Picture 6. Public meeting in defense of Yurgens' house, October 16, 2010

It must be emphasized that from the very beginning of the conflict the residents chose a strategy of association with city-protection organizations such as "The Civil Initiatives Movement", "The Living City", "Autonomous Action" and "The Organization for Monuments and Architecture Protection". The defenders of Yurgens' house also considered it effective to address the representatives of other local communities such as the defenders of the public garden in Ivan Fomin street, house 112 at Nevsky Prospect, farm Benoit, the Square of Courage, Okhtinskaya Arcmovement, and others. in order to create a network designed to discuss practices and share the experience of self-organization and urban space contestation: *"Friends, comrades, we must unite. Now, today the first data on the first two days of the census were published. 6% of the population of the city have been already registered. Now, if those 6% of the city population came together, united, this would show the authorities that people are really concerned about*

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[43] Field notes, public meeting in defense of Yurgens' house, October 16, 2010. Resident of House 17, Zhukovskogo street.

*what is happening in the city. And then, when they would have to think about how proceed the next time... The bell has already rung. And here, too, we can find a hint that if a large number of people gather together, it means that something is wrong, that there's certain dissatisfaction with the actions of the authorities"[44].*The high level of consolidation in the networks embracing the members of different local communities that contest urban space is symbolized by green ribbonsworn by activists.

However, it should be emphasized that at the discursive level the legitimation tools that representatives of city-protection organizations and members of local communities use to advocate the preservation of Yurgens' house are really different. For example, the members of "The civil Initiatives Movement" and "The Living City" often refer to the historical value of Yurgens' mansion: *"This is a low three-story building. Not so many buildings like this are left in the city. We know that these buildings have accompanied the history of St. Petersburg and it is not very easy to find this kind of buildings in original form… It is not necessary to know any urban planning rules and laws in order to understand that the city in its heart, in its historical part, should remain the way it is"[45].*

Meanwhile, the local defenders of the house don't appeal to the commemorative or historical value of the building, but rather adhere to rational, pragmatic reasons as they fully realize that the demolition of building 19Zhukovsky street and the consequent construction of a business center can cause damage for neighboring houses: *"So they're going to demolish the entire outbuilding facing the street as well as the courtyard wing and to build a six-storeyed business center at this spot, as we have been told. And, most importantly, to make an underground parking. This is the most dangerous thing... After all, the only thing that we have is the houses where we live. And they're going to destroy it"[46].*

As opposed to the case of urban space contestation in Tombe-d'Issoir, the coalition of Yurgens' house defenders embeds their problem in the context of other threats that urban development generates in St. Petersburg. For example, the representatives of "The Living City" came to the meeting with posters containing information and visual material concerning the streets that were excluded from the security zones of the city and therefore found themselves at risk of demolition.

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[44] Field notes, public meeting in defense of Yurgens' house, October 16, 2010. Defender of public garden in Ivana Fomina street.

[45] Ibid. Darya Minutina, "The living city" movement.

[46] Ibid. Resident of House 17, Zhukovskogo street.
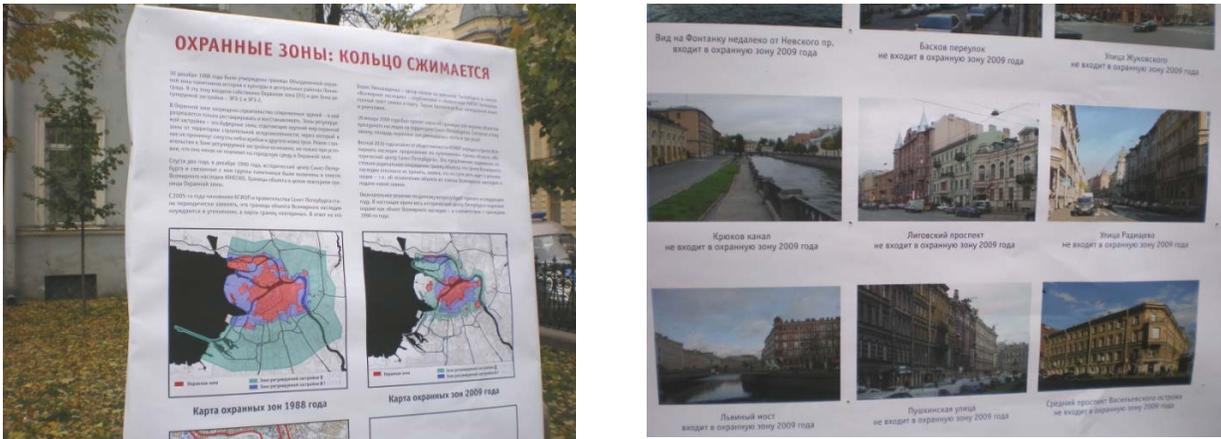
Picture 7. Posters at the public meeting in defense of Yurgens' house

The reasons for these differences in protest activities of local communities in St. Petersburg and Paris can be found in the varying types of urban political regimes typical for those cities. For example, in St. Petersburg, the dominant political regime has taken the shape of a "growth machine"[47] - symbiosis of political and business elites (in the context of our city - building corporations[48]), who derive mutual benefit (through the efficient use of urban areas) through rapid solution of urban problems. However, the actions of "growth machines" do not always lead to the welfare of citizens. According to deputy Sergey Malkov who lobbied the interests of the local community in Zhukovsky street: *"Today, when the recognition of old houses as dangerous structures is becoming one of the elements of construction business, your meeting is part of the struggle for the preservation of the historic center of the city. City authorities and investors have come up with a fancy name to disguise their true actions – "the development of St. Petersburg". But in fact, the word "development" masks something that is absolutely opposite to real development – the destruction of the historic center for the sake of momentary profits"*[49]. "Growth machine" strategies aimed to profit by investing in urban areas reflect the tendency inherent in the capitalist city and the neoliberal course of the urban economy.

One of these trends, according to the social geographer David Harvey is the so-called "spatial-temporal fix" of capital. Urban space undergoes the specific territorialization of capital--geographic expansion of investments in urban space--which enables business elites to invest accumulated capital surplus in new areas and thus avoid financial crises[50]. Therefore, access of the local communities to legitimate methods of struggle is limited which makes them increasingly resort to public protests and to consolidate resources in coalitions with city-protection movements and other activist groups.

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[47] Molotch H. The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place // American Journal of Sociology. 1976. Vol. 82.№ 2.Р. 309-332.

[48] Тев Д. Политэкономический подход в анализе местной власти. К вопросу о коалиции, правящей в Санкт-Петербурге // Политическая экспертиза. 2006. Т. 2. № 2.С. 99-121.

[49] S.A. Malkov's address to the defenders of Yurgens' house.

[50] Harvey D. The New Imperialism. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

On the contrary, in European countries, political parties are important agents of urban policy, and the influence of left-wing parties is an obstacle to the formation of "growth machines". Political leaders also play a significant role in urban planning and taking decisions on urban (re)development[51]. That is why the local community of Tombe-d'Issoir has managed to legitimately dispute the numerous requests from the investor about the demolition of the buildings for several years. Meanwhile, after the change of political leadership in the district, the investor was entitled to use the permit and demolish the old buildings, and it was only then that the representatives of local communities were forced to turn to public protest. Thus, we can conclude that different configurations of political discourse determine both the opportunities and limitations of protest initiatives of local communities.

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[51] Strom E. In Search of the Growth Coalition: American Urban Theories and the Redevelopment of Berlin // Urban Affairs Review. 1996. Vol. 31. № 4.

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