LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE POST-SOCIALIST CITIES: BEYOND MARKET AND STATE (THE EXPERIENCE OF MINSK)

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Abstract*: The development of local communities provides an opportunity for citizens to realize they right to the urban participation and self-government. The most effective mechanism for activating local communities is they involvement into urban common. Urban common practices allow citizens jointly feel responsibility for restoring their territories, formulate mutually beneficial solutions and reduce the possibility of conflicts. Data shows that at least one-third residents of Post-Socialist cities (on the example of Minsk) are still excluded from urban participation. Among all factors influencing the urban common practices, the most significant are the level of trust between the state and civil society, the knowledge about official ways of urban participation and the nature of neighborhood communication. Overcoming communication gaps between neighbors supported by educational work among local leaders could improve significantly the level of civil activity and urban participation at Post-Socialist cities.*

Keywords: *post-socialist city, urban participation, urban common, local government, local communities, neighborhood*

Introduction

Seeking greater engagement with citizens in local self-government and care for common resources is getting popular today not only in Western cities, but also in post-Socialist ones. Indeed, ordinary people as the end-users of urban resources can inspect in the best way (comparing with the city authorities) the effectiveness of the local problems solving. Giving local communities the real opportunity to participate in self-government in this case could not only to improve the quality of urban environment with less time and resources costs, but also provides an alternative to excessive municipal bureaucracy. However, local communities often appear to have limited influence on the administrative decisions relating to the quality of urban life, which

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ultimately leads to the distortion of the principles and purposes of the sustainable city development. In fact, citizens "become a buffer between the interests of the State and Market, not having sufficient power to influence either one or the other" (Dellenbaugh et al., 2015: 57). The particular combination of economic, political, cultural factors (especially at the post-Socialist cities) led to a decrease in the level of self-organization and internal communications effectiveness of local communities, their inability to articulate their own interests. At the same time, "the municipal authorities, speaking on behalf of the city, must understand that they are not acting on behalf of buildings, streets, courtyards, roads, etc., but on behalf of the community of residents (citizens) who have full power in the city" (Larichev, 2019:103).

The local self-government is the institution with long history, which enable the most effective tool for integrating local communities into the urban environment (Boydell, 2014; Buser et al., 2013; Chernysheva, 2020; Jacobsson, 2016; Purcell, 2001). In doing so, the traditional mechanism for local community's activation are the various "place-making" practices. Joint activities aimed at improving the urban environment allow realizing common goals and objectives, formulate mutually beneficial solutions and reduce the likelihood of conflicts and disagreements (Kolba and Kolba, 2019; Pachenkov, 2020; Parker and Johansson, 2012; Tykanova and Khokhlova, 2020; Hamilton and Curran, 2013). By participating an accessible way in the development of the city areas, citizens feel their own importance, involvement in urban life, form a responsible attitude towards the city (learn not to wait for the initiative "from above", but to act "here and now") (Lydon and Garcia, 2015: 11). In such way, public spaces "grow" from the already existing habitable realm, not to destroying it, but focusing on the real people's needs; turning into the forming tool for strong local community, assuming particular social and cultural meanings (Garcia, 2006). In the process of common solving emerging problems, neighboring communities are structured, resources and are founded, and local leaders are identified. Meanwhile the emerging group structures and inner relationships are quite stable and do not vanish with the end of improvement's activities, allowing to maintain the high quality of the urban environment (Aksenov, 2011; Cabannes, 2004). In post-Socialist cities however, in the civil participation practices for the urban management serious challenges both organizational and sociocultural remain. Ongoing researches indicate a number of problems associated with local self-government, including communication ones. Among the reasons for the low activity of local communities in post-Socialist cities, ones mentioned the specifics of modernist architecture, which causes the atomization of society, impedes the consolidation of urban communities and limits the interests of citizens outside their own apartments (Lebedeva, 2020).

> "*Older cities whose urban landscape was formed well before the 20th century were rather an exception; however, their subsequent emerging residential areas, as well as the new towns that were founded during the Soviet time, became a vivid example of the application of the rational planning' principles*" (Cheshkova, 2000: 16).

The habit-forming patter to leave the solving of every problem to the State as a powerful force that controls everyone is another important factor in the low civic activity. The role of the Soviet public space was to demonstrate the power of the state and "substitute the chaos of urban life with a logical organization of space and human

activities, one fitting the particular mould of ideological reasoning" (Engel, 2007: 289). Even though Soviet urban planning included a wide range of options for recreation and sports – for example, parks, skating rinks, other sports facilities – their existence was seen as part of the socialist lifestyle to show that the state takes care of its citizens, not as a space to encourage citizens' voluntary local civic activism and self-governance so as to improve their neighborhood and exercise their city rights. On the contrary, the emergence of the pseudo-public spaces in Soviet cities was a manifestation of "the transparent desire of the government to control people's lives and activities at all times and all places" (Engel, 2007: 289). That led to the substantially reduced ability of city dwellers to organize themselves locally within a Soviet public space. They voluntarily withdrew from deciding how to improve their living environment, leaving it to the city government. This legacy still exists, revealed by the fact that residents of post-Soviet urban areas have a very limited desire to improve the territory adjacent to their private living places (stairs, entrances, children's playgrounds, courtyards) (Chernysheva and Sezneva, 2020).

The broad-scale changes that occurred throughout Eastern Europe after the collapse of socialism and communism caused a serious contradiction. On the one hand, the market transformations occurred have turned a significant part of the citizens into homeowners, on the other hand, these new homeowners did not have the necessity skills and experience in managing the collective ownership (especially common living spaces) and continued shifting the care for the common resources to the state.

According to a sociological poll conducted in 2021 in Minsk, the participation of residents in urban landscaping is not a mass practice – only 11.3% of respondents do this regularly and 35.8% note the occasional participation in urban environment upgrading (1-2 times a year). The most popular form of urban common practices is the traditional Soviet "subbotnik" (so called work day, announced and governed by the local authorities, aimed to centralized cleaning of the territory, planting trees and so on) – 45.8%. Creative practices are quite rare – only 8.3% have ever been involved in the installation of new elements of courtyard infrastructure (or repair of existing ones), only 2.2% of respondents organized the neighbourhood festivals. Moreover, the successful conduction in such communities of public discussions devoted to solving common issues are often become an extremely difficult thing (Aksenov, 2011; Gladarev, 2012; Tykanova and Khokhlova, 2020). Local attempts to organize neighborhood communities in accordance with the democratic principles of collective action are associated with certain risks. In this case, the most serious problems arise in the field of creation the local leadership institute. Increasingly the local leader is forced to act in an extremely critical environment (so called "caught in the crossfire"). One the one hand his activity has not escaping suspicion and repression from the local authorities, on the other – the local leader is continuously involved in conflict management, with reconciling opposing points of the vision of the other neighbors. So, it is obvious that one can indicate serious problems with the local leaders' motivation (Heller, 1998).

Despite all of this, some trends indicate movement of post-Soviet cities toward the European democratic values – we can observe an active revival of neighborhood practices, strengthening urban solidarity, and attempts to form institutions of local self-government. Social effects that are caused by this contradiction require careful study, as

they are led to a greater understanding of the possible urban commoning practices in post-Soviet cities.

Exploring different strategies for citizen's self-organization, ways of cohesion strengthening will help to understand the potential points of growth in the neighborhood community's development, which is still weak institution of civil society but has a great potential in the issues of urban commoning practices. It is necessary among other things to understand the key factors that influence on the activity of local communities. Due to this, the main research question is: *does the participation of citizens in the upgrading of their yards has an impact on the urban self-government institutions development?* Is the regular participation in urban commoning practices in the post-Soviet cities able to "grow" into a comprehensive self-government arrangement, to become the basis for the democratization of the society?

Research Methodology and Objectives

The analysis of the activity of neighboring communities was carried out predominantly in the neo-Marxist critical theory frame (Attoh, 2011; Lefebvre, et al., 2010; Harvey, 2003; Harvey, 2011; Hardt and Negri, 2011; Purcell 2001). The key idea for the survey design construction is the concept of "the Right to the City". From the neo-Marxism point of view, the urban environment is the theatre of the struggles and conflicts, the field of social contradictions sharping. Another key category of analysis is the "local community", which is considered in the ecological tradition, as a kind of collective subject having a relatively high degree of social unity and the particular habitat. In this sense community is "a group of households located in the same place and linked to each other by a functional interdependence that is closer than similar interdependence with other groups of people within the social field to which the community belongs» (Elias, 1974: ix). The key features of such communities are the locality (belonging to a certain territory) and the social density (the intensity of relationships within the community is higher than between individual members of the community and the external environment). A close definition of local community is the "neighborhood" – a community that arises in the process of the natural division of the city into segments (living yards) (Chernysheva, 2020). Urban care refers to "proactive actions" that support the urban environment in order to make it the best it can be (Zapata, 2020; Cahen et al., 2020). The study also used the "formal/informal" dichotomy in local government. Formal self-government is the participation of citizens in institutions and practices that are fixed by legislation. Informal initiatives – the spontaneous, fuzzy structured expressions of grass-roots activism beyond the formal mechanisms of self-government controlled by the state (Bollier and Helfrich, 2014; Dellenbaugh et al., 2015). Informal initiatives are a kind of civic participation, individual or collective actions that compensate for the "gaps" of the State (Holston, 2009). One more important concept is the urban commons (Bollier, 2014; Bollier and Helfrich, 2014; Hardin, 20029; Harvey, 2011; Borch and Kornberger 2015; Stavrides, 2016) as various practices of care of citizens (on a non-commercial basis and in the interests of the community) about objects and spaces that are in the mode of common ownership. Urban commoning practices include three elements: (1) a common resource, formally fixed or perceived by citizens as a common one; (2) social structure that forms and

reinforces the rules for handling this resource; (3) a community whose members are involved in the production and reproduction of this resource (Urban Commons: Moving Beyond State and Market, 2015). The concept of urban commons allows both to consider the process of active contestation of the ownership regime in which urban resources are located (Bollier, Helfrich 2014) and to observe the routine practices of production and reproduction these resources as common ones (Linebaugh, 2014).

Socio-demographic characteristics of study participants

The empirical basis of the article is the data of the questionnaire survey conducted in Minsk (Belarus) in December 2021 (total amount of respondents is 400). The survey was held on a quota-proportional sample (quotas by sex, age and level of education). The estimated value of the sampling error did not exceed 4.8%. Among the total number of respondents, 43% male and 57% female. 39.8% of all respondents have higher education, the other 60.2% – secondary specialized one. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by age. 63.5% of respondents at the time of the study were full-time employees, 6.3% were on social leave, 18.8% – non-working pensioners, 3.8% unemployed and 7.8% – students. The achieved characteristics of the sample fully correspond to the parameters of the general population of Minsk over 17 years old.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by age (in %)

Age intervals	%
17-19	5,0
20-25	8,8
26-35	21,8
36-45	20,0
46-60	21,5
61 and over	23,0

Source: own representation

Urban Commons in Post-Socialist Cities

According to the so-called "spatial paradigm", the priority is given to the city's physical aspect of spatial organization as its core (i.e., the city's "means of production") that creates particular types of social practices that in their own specific way exploit and regenerate the city's physical "body". The changes in the "production mode", coupled with the ensuing transformation of the urban space, form new social practices and advance new forms of urban life. However, the reverse might also be true when "new" social activities transform "old" urban territories, and therefore it may be apt to compare this endless transformation process with the writing of the "spatial code" (Lefebvre, 2010). Though the city is often be considered as the product of institutional decisions and market mechanisms nevertheless some creative processes developed through everyday practices can explicitly or implicitly mobilize the transformative potential of its inhabitants. Henri Lefebvre describes the city as 'a totality assembling

difference, characterized by formal simultaneity where all parts refer to the whole and vice versa'. Rather than identifying the city as an existing, accomplished spatial order, he sees it as a developing process. The 'right to the city' becomes the right to collectively produce it through creative cooperation. For example, citizen-led repair initiatives that collectively create urban commons, questioning the configuration of production, consumption, and discarding within neoliberal capitalism, have emerged in recent years. Through repair practices, commoning communities can reinvent, appropriate, and create urban commons. This openness of the commons allows commoners to shift roles unproblematically, alternating between the commons, state, and market (Zapata, 2020).

In the post-Socialist cities urban commons also plays an important role though originally, they occurred not the in the same forms as in capitalist ones. A good example of the post-Socialists urban common is community gardens as multilayered places which satisfy diverse needs of the urban residents, including home grown food, socializing, recreation, contact with the nature, and even supplementation for low pensions. They can also be seen as examples of heterotopias or alternative spaces during both examined periods. In the socialist period they were secluded, private, pseudo-rural places in a semi-authoritarian, communal, and (supposedly) urban and industrial society. In post-socialist Zagreb, characterized by an uncontrolled and unplanned spatial context reliant on neoliberal market-oriented principles, social insensitivity and exclusion, the new gardens are depicted as beacons of communal involvement, grassroots movements, and the ability of citizens to stand together and make their voices heard (Borčić , Cvitanović & Lukić, 2016).

A survey conducted in Minsk showed that citizens often use common resources (spend their free time outside the home - in the yard, on city streets, in parks) (Table 2).

Table 2: Spending free time outside the home (in %)

How often do you spend your free time outside the home?	%
Everyday	42,3
Several times a week	30,0
Several times a month	13,8
Prefer to spend free time inside the home	14,0

Source: own representation

In other words, urban commons spaces have been praised for their role in social capital building, neighborhood revitalization, urban sustainability, alleviation of poverty, health promotion, and for their environmental benefits. There is a correlation between financing for housing maintenance and improvement and the level of social stability – the underfunding of urban improvement affects in the negative way on the assessment of not only citizen's social well-being, but also of the whole State social policy. The habitants (as the direct "users" of a particular territory) meanwhile could be the most effective "controllers" of the territorial quality's problems solution. But in order to let such a monitoring mechanism works, citizens should be aware of their responsibility for the quality of the urban environment and be involved in urban common practices.

Local community as a subject of activity

As mentioned above the grass-root landscaping in Minsk is not popular – only 47.1% of respondents in some form take place in it. Potentially interested to do that is about a quarter of Minsk residents (28.4%). But approximately the same amount of people (28,1%) has no plans to spent time improving their own courtyard under current conditions. If nothing changes virtually every third citizen will remain outside the zone of activity, being excluded from the number of subjects involved in the urban development. The danger being that if the triad "State" – "Business" – "Society" is out of balance, the city may be further driven by the strongest actors (State and Business), while citizens being sidelined and fail to protect their own interests.

An important factor in the development of urban participation is the degree of horizontal solidarity – if citizens trust their neighbors, can they unite to resolve existing problems of living space, is it easy to find like-minded people and so on.

The survey data showed that the neighborhood interaction in Minsk is not fully a relationship of trust. Less than half of the respondents (47.3%) trust their neighbors, about the same number of people count on support from them if situation is difficult (47.5%). Yet the respondents define own willingness to help their neighbors more highly – 58.3%. We can note a particular communication gap – «I am ready to help others, but I am not sure that others will do the same to me», «Other citizens can unite for solving common problem, but not me and my neighbors». In addition, the difficulties in neighborhood solidarity approved by the fact that, according to respondents, it is easier to connect with "abstract" Minsk residents (outside the local community) than with the neighbors (Table 3).

Table 3: Key features of neighbor solidarity (in %)

Do you agree with the following statements?	Yes	No	Difficult to say
I can find like-minded people in Minsk	64,3	25,5	10,3
Minsk residents can unite to solve common problems	63,3	17,8	19,0
I feel support from my neighbors while I come into troubles	47,5	30,5	22,0
Usually I trust my neighbors	47,3	29,8	23,0
I am ready to help my neighbors while they come into troubles	58,3	14,3	27,5

Source: own representation

The level of trust in the local community decreases with age. If among those who are from 17 to 25 years 58.2% feel support from their neighbors, then only 40.2% of respondents over 60 do the same. While 70.9% of young citizens are ready to help their neighbors in a difficult situation, only 48.9% of the older age groups are about to do this. 52.7% of young citizens trust their neighbors and only 41.3% of citizens over 60 (Table 4).

Table 4: Key features of neighbor solidarity depending age (in %)

Agreement with the statements:	17-25	26-35	36-45	46-60	60 +
I feel support from my neighbors while I come into troubles	58,2	51,7	46,3	45,3	40,2
Usually I trust my neighbors	52,7	55,2	50,0	39,5	41,3
I am ready to help my neighbors while they come into troubles	70,9	64,4	56,3	55,8	48,9

Source: own representation

It is obviously, that the involvement in local communities affects both the general perception of oneself as a citizen and the sense of responsibility for one's city. Only 53.8% of respondents, against the background of a low trust degree, feel pride being Minskers, even smaller (44.5%) feel own responsibility for an appropriate maintenance of urban environment. Despite this, a sufficiently large number of citizens (75%) – both young, middle-aged and elderlies in equal proportion – want to be among the decision-makers if it concerns their living space (residential area or courtyard). The survey data revealed a correlation between the characteristics of neighborhood communication and the willingness to participate in urban common practices. The better connections between neighbors, the more intensive and comprehensive communication between them (including using Internet messengers), the more actively citizens are involved in various landscaping practices. So, among those who described their relations with their neighbors as bad, no one devotes time to regular landscaping (Table 5). Almost half of the citizens (45.5%) who have not allowed the communication link with neighbors do not plan to participate in the landscaping soon for comparison with only 26% citizens who have good relations with their neighbors.

Table 5: Relationship between relations with neighbors and participation in improvement (in %)

Participation in improvement	Relations with neighbors			
	Good	Rather good	Rather bad	Bad
Yes, regularly	14,9	3,3	0	0
Yes, 1-2 times a year	36,8	34,1	40,0	31,8
No, but I would like	21,3	36,3	40,0	22,7
No, and I do not plan	27,0	26,4	20,0	45,5

Source: own representation

The next part of the study was the consideration of the formal and informal the courtyard improvement actions ratio, as well as the limitations of grassroots improvement. The whole variety of improvement actions were roughly divided into 3 groups for ease of analysis. The first group – there are actions, that may be done without official control and permission from the authorities; the second one – the actions that should be sanctioned or certified by the authorities; finally, the third group contains the improvement actions that are impossible for citizen's independent execution in any case. The majority of Minsk citizens (75.6%) would like to plant flowers, lawn, trees in their l courtyard without an official permission; the lower number of respondents (62,0%) would like to take part in organization of neighbor's

festivals in their courtyard without an official permission (Table 6). About half of the Minsk citizens (54.0%) believe that they should be able to install playground equipment, benches or recreation areas without a permission and control from the local authorities. 29.3% of respondents suppose that citizens should have the right to creative self-determination by applying graffiti in the courtyard, or inviting graffiti artists for building decoration (Table 6).

Table 6: Key way of activity of local communities (in %)

	Without an official permission	With an official permission	Not available in any case	Difficult to say
Plant flowers, lawn, trees in the courtyard	76,5	6,8	2,5	14,2
Organize neighbor's festivals in the courtyard	62,0	14,8	4,0	19,2
Install playground equipment, benches, recreation areas in the courtyard	54,0	22,3	2,5	21,2
Apply graffiti or invite graffiti artists for building decoration	29,3	29,5	9,8	31,4

Source: own representation

By the way, the recent Nobel Prize in Economics was awarded to the American economist Elinor Ostrom for substantiating the significant effectiveness of the management solutions for communal resources through the active involvement of self-governing structures that offer community-based ways for accessing the shared resources, alternative to public and private ones (Dellenbaugh et al., 2015).

Local communities and urban governance

The participation of city people in the implementation of city-wide improvement projects is closely related to such a phenomenon as local self-government. Local self-government thus connotes a process of collective discussions, collaborative learning and collaborative actions by the local community and its leadership on the basis of their collective knowledge. In order to study the willingness of Minsk citizens to contribute in the in local self-government, there was a question about the most suitable form of participation in the yard improvement. According to the data achieved the most suitable form of the urban environment improvement for 50% of Minsk citizens is informal activity – to be engaged in landscaping together with the neighbors, without cooperation or coordination with the local authorities. The noticeably fewer number of citizens (33.0%) are ready to participate in the courtyard landscaping in coalition with local authorities. More than 53% of the Minsk citizens, in case of their yard improvement, would like to take part in the participatory budgeting – either on the principals of sharing economy, bypassing both state and business structures (34,0%) or

contacting to the private service companies. That's what's meant by the term of "urban commons" (Parker, Johansson, 2012) – situations where citizens seek to take the actual control of their nearby territories («moving beyond state and market») – beautify courtyard areas by planting flowers, install jointly new playground equipment, restore recreation zones etc. In the context of post-Socialist cities (like Minsk), this can be interpreted like a return to traditional "subbotniks", but on the completely different ideological basis – the only possible declaration of independency, the absence of feeling of "being in touch" with the state.

Despite this, only 17% of respondents are ready either to initiate some official local self-government bodies or to take part in it. Such a low percent may be caused both by the generally low level of the "hierarchy of governance" credibility (due to the Covid-19 pandemic or the large-scale socio-political crisis in 2020), and insufficient awareness of the possibilities of official urban self-government. Only 19.3% of the respondents have the necessary knowledge about the local self-government procedures available. Sociocultural and communicative factors come to the fore while the age, level of income or education do not determine much the urban participation potential. Among those who are aware of the local self-government procedure available, 26.4% of respondents feel responsible for the beautification of Minsk, and among those who do not, only 9.3%. Citizens who are aware of the local self-government procedure available have the tendency to be proud of Minsk and more likely to find like-minded people there (Table 7).

Table 7: Local government and urban identity (in %)

Are you aware of the local self-government procedure available?	*I feel responsible for the beautification of Minsk*		*I am proud of Minsk and would like to impart this sense to my children*		*I can find like-minded people in Minsk*	
	Yes	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Yes	26,4	9,3	22,8	11,2	21,0	13,7
No	73,6	90,7	77,2	88,8	79,0	86,3

Source: own representation

Summing up the analysis of the urban common practices in the post-Socialist cities (on the example of Minsk), one can divide three different types of citizen's activity patterns:

1. "Paternalists" – likely to seek the help in every problem concerning the ground maintenance from the local authorities. "Paternalists" usually represent urban participation as paying local taxes and utility bills. Basically, these are older citizens (from 46 years old and older), with a secondary education, living in the so-called "late-Soviet" panel buildings (1970-1990s), who are not in touch with neighbors. Among the total number of Minsk residents, there are about 50% of "paternalists".

2. "Pro-market citizens" – ready to make maximum use of officially legislated participation in local self-government. They are usually community-involved persons, communicate in the local chats (or even administrate them), interact a lot with their neighbors both online and offline. More than any other "pro-market

citizens" feel themselves responsible for the urban maintaining, but also they want to possess the freedom of decision and sovereignty concerning their courtyard improvement's budgeting, choosing the utility company for yourself. Under socio-demographic they represent the youngest (25-45 years old), the more economic successful and more educated social group. Among the whole respondents, they are only 20% of "pro-market citizens".

3. "Community-based citizens" – in fact, they are also ready to take responsibility (including participation budgeting) for the courtyard improvement but unlike "pro-market" "community-based citizens" do not trust nor the state, nor business structures. In the matters of improvement, they prefer to rely on themselves or on their community power (sharing economy principles) instead of taking part in the formal local self-government procedures. "Community-based" citizens have not any socio-demographic features; they make up about 30% of the total number of Minsk residents.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis, a number of trends relevant for the post-Socialist urban common practices could be identified.

1. Deepening segregation between "rich" and "poor". Post-Socialist cities will be gradually divided into the modern (comfortable and expensive) residential areas for those who can afford this, and the "slums" for citizens with a lower standard of living who don't have enough money for comfortable living space and who prefer to minimize contact with the urban environment. How critical this segregation will become depends on the position of the state, whether it will provide support to those who do not have sufficient financial resources or not.

2. The local communities and urban common practices will more often appear in the modern residential districts (due to their social homogeneity which provides more comfortable communication circumstances), while in the old areas (built in 1970-90's) vice versa, neighborhood communication will be reduced to a minimum so the urban participation will become virtually impossible.

3. The growth of popularity of so-called tactical urbanism activity – informal, spontaneous, non-systemic improvement, implemented by small groups of citizens, with improvised materials that will cause the diversity and fragmentation of urban design solutions.

The negative trends in the post-Socialist urban common practices are mainly associated with an increase in the social stratification and the inequality of access to a comfortable living space (a well-maintained courtyard will be synonymous with the high cost of housing). Based on the policy of repression associated with the local community's activities executed by the Belarusian authorities, such a scenario in the future may give Minsk (as a vivid example of a post-socialist city) the features of a classic capitalist city with elite buildings and slums. A positive scenario, on the contrary, involves the support of local self-government, the local community's revival and consolidation, the

active use of community management technologies in working with citizens with the establishing of feedback mechanisms between citizens and local authorities, including via "local chats". In other words, the development of post-Socialist cities has two opposite ways – either the State's fully responsibility for creating comfort urban environment conditions without civic participation, or the provision an opportunity for local community's development. Obviously, the second scenario carries much more benefits for all social subjects.

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