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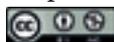
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URBANIZATION AND URBAN PLANNING AT THE EUROPEAN SEMI-PERIPHERY: UNINTENDED GENDER CONSEQUENCES³

Urbanizacija i urbano planiranje na poluperiferiji Evrope: Nenameravane rodne konsekvence

ABSTRACT: *This paper aims to answer two main questions: 1. what is the relation between urbanization, gender regimes and everyday lives of women at the European semiperiphery and 2. what is the role of urban planning in shaping gender relevant social changes? The authors present an historical overview of intersections between urbanization, planning and gender regimes, from socialist to present neoliberal conditions, the overview of gender aspects of everyday urban life and also engage with analysis of challenges of gender sensitive planning and development at the European semiperiphery. The analysis is mostly based on the case of Serbia and ex-Yugoslav region and has three main objectives: to define key challenges for engendering urban development and planning in the semiperiphery, to map out the 'knowledge gaps', and to suggest guidelines for further research. In conclusion the authors state that urbanization at the semiperiphery on the one hand opens new opportunities for women, but also poses new challenges that make gender sensitive to urban planning very relevant for the quality of life of both genders. The 'gender and social double blindness' of urban planning and neoliberal urban development model at the European semiperiphery, are seen both as one of the key challenges to gender equality, as well as one of the consequences of their semiperipheral position.*

KEYWORDS: Urbanization; urban planning; gender; gender sensitive urban planning; European semiperiphery

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APSTRAKT: *U ovom radu odgovaramo na dva osnovna pitanja: 1. kakva je veza između urbanizacije, rodni režima i svakodnevnog života žena na poluperiferiji Evrope i 2. koja je uloga urbanog planiranja u oblikovanju rodno relevantnih društvenih promena? Autorke daju istorijski pregled tačaka ukrštanja urbanizacije, planiranja i rodni režima u socijalističkim i savremenim neoliberalnim okolnostima, pregled rodni aspekata urbane svakodnevnice i upuštaju se u analizu izazova rodno senzitivnog urbanog planiranja i razvoja na poluperiferiji Evrope. Analiza je uglavnom zasnovana na slučaju Srbije i zemalja bivše Jugoslavije a ima tri osnovna cilja: definisanje ključni izazova urođnjavanja urbanog planiranja i razvoja na poluperiferiji Evrope, identifikaciju saznajni praznina i formulisanje smernica za dalja istraživanja u ovoj oblasti. Autorke zaključuju da urbanizacija na poluperiferiji pruža ženama nove mogućnosti ali ih istovremeno postavlja pred nove izazove, što rodno senzitivno urbano planiranje čini vrlo značajnim za kvalitet života muškaraca i žena. "Socijalno i rodno, duplo slepilo" i neoliberalni model planiranja i razvoja gradova na poluperiferiji Evrope se sagledavaju kao osnovne prepreke rodnoj ravnopravnosti u urbanom kontekstu, ali i kao posledice samog poluperifernog položaja.*

KLJUČNE REČI: urbanizacija; urbano planiranje; rod; rodno senzitivno urbano planiranje; poluperiferija Evrope

Introduction

In a seminal article "A women's place in the city" published in 1984 in *Antipode* – the radical journal of geography, Gerda Wekerle demonstrated how everyday urban issues, such as transportation, housing or land use, are women's issues and the legitimate focus of the women's movement. Since then, the feminist engagement with urban has produced a rich body of literature, showing the ways in which cities and gender are intertwined (Jarvis, Cloke and Kantor 2009; Peake and Rieker, 2013; Sánchez de Madariaga and Roberts, 2013). The fact that the majority of the world population lives in the cities and that there is also a continuous urbanization has made feminist rethinking of urban issues more important than ever. These efforts are, however, confronted with a number of conceptual and methodological challenges.

The first derives from the fact that most of the existing knowledge about the relationship between cities and gender, is produced within the context of western cities or/and within a western – modernist analytical framework. The 'Southern turn' in urban studies has successfully drawn attention to women position in the cities of the Global South, pointing to the women's experiences in peripheral urban contexts (Moser 1995; Roy and Ong 2011). This, however, enhanced the binary view of the urban (center/periphery; developed/developing) and gender (public/private, formal/informal), which currently dominates urban studies and occupies most of its debates (Storper and Scott, 2016), while the knowledge about intersections of gender and urban within the semiperipheral context is highly missing. Nevertheless, there is a sudden interest in postsocialistic cities

within both feminist and urban scholars. Feminist geographer Judit Timár (2007) argues that Anglo-American hegemony is reproduced within this new interest which may delay the process of working out theories that are valid for the circumstances in this region.

The cities at the semiperiphery, thus, must not be seen as a passive background, but as the active agents in creating and transforming gender relations. In these circumstances, it is necessary to find appropriate theoretical and methodological frameworks for gender sensitive urban research and planning in the semiperiphery. We argue that the *theory of semiperipherality* (Hughson, 2015), developed as a 'grounded theory' in order to fill the empty space in the understanding of the structural characteristics of societies in the European semiperiphery, as well as specificities of its gender regimes, is a good starting point for the integration of gender and urban issues and policies in to semiperipheral contexts. This theory provides us with conceptual tools to capture both the similarities and differences from countries in the core, thus enabling better contextualization of gender equality urban policies. In this regard, two aspects of the European semiperiphery seem to be relevant. The first one is the process of socio-economic "de-development", meaning regress in the quality of life of great majority of population, together with increased existential insecurity and a capture of resources by the new political elite; and the second one is permanently high exploitation of women's resources, both in the private and in the public sphere with ambivalent effects on women's empowerment. (Hughson, 2015)

In addition, "there has been no systematic effort to ensure that a theoretical engagement with gender relations and an empirical concern with women's everyday lives are undertaken, not separately but in productive engagement with each other, within an analytical register that articulates these subjects as marked both by differences in epistemic and material positioning and through global structures that render them mutually constitutive (Peake and Rieker, 2013: 4). Cities and gender, thus, should be seen as mutually constitutive, but such an approach is still neglected, especially at the policy level. If urban issues are discussed from the gender perspective, this is usually done in a decontextualized and depoliticized manner, making gender issues separated from the general urban problems. As stated by Jarvis, Cloke and Kantor (2009: 2) „cities function as key sites in the production, consumption and reproduction of gendered norms and identities. At the same time, cities are themselves shaped by the gendered embodiment and social reality of daily routines – at home, in public and on the move“.

In this paper we analyze intersections of urbanization and urban planning – as the defining features of cities – and gender relations in the semiperipheral context. We approach semiperipheral cities not as the passive background upon which the gender relations are being performed and exercised, but as the active agents in their creation and transformation. Urbanization and urban planning are understood as the social processes, with social causes and social consequences, and not as the simple demographic concentration of people in urban areas and technical organization of urban space as the response. Accordingly, gender relations can be seen as the structuring element of urbanization, while

urbanization can be taken as the factor that produces specific gendered urban ways of life. Urban planning is, on the other hand, here seen as the highly political process, also gendered, that is producing physical spatial structures within the existing, gendered social space, with the potential to influence gender relations and possibly improve overall quality of everyday life for all urban inhabitants.

In order to define the key challenges for engendering urban development and planning in the semiperiphery, to map out the 'knowledge gaps', and to suggest guidelines for further research we pose the question; what is the relation between urbanization and gender relations at the European semiperiphery and what is the role of urban planning in the mediation of those processes? We present an historical overview of gendered urban processes, the overview of gender aspects of everyday urban life and then engage with analysis of challenges of engendering urban development and planning at the European semiperiphery.

Gendered Urban Processes at the European Semi-Periphery: From Socialist to Post-Socialist (Neoliberal) City

The differences in level of economic, political and socio-cultural development among European countries have deep historical roots and they are significantly shaped by the levels and forms of their urbanization. Jiri Musil (2005) observes that, between the 16th and 18th century, Europe has become divided into a dynamic western center and the semi-peripheral zone in the east, and that the fundamental role in this process was played by the system of cities. Cities of southeastern Europe 'have not experienced significant changes between the 14th and 19th century, and their weakness remained the main characteristic of the region throughout the 20th century' (Musil, 2005: 24).

After the Second World War, Yugoslavia was a rural and agricultural society with traditional patriarchal culture and the percentage of urban population was below 20%, while at the same time, more than a half of population of developed European countries was already living in cities (Latifić, 1997; World urbanisation prospects, 2014). One of the main strategies for modernization of traditional social structure under socialist governments was a planned and intense process of industrialization and urbanization, so Yugoslavia reached the highest rates of urbanization in the period 1950–1980 (from less than the 20% to 45% of urban population)⁴. Urbanization induced overall development and huge social changes, while urban planning reflected an institutional response and adaptation of urban environment to the needs of a new urban population. This was almost an experimental situation in which we can analytically observe what happens to traditional gender roles when suddenly many people encounter a new set of conditions in an industrialized city, planned within a socialistic ideology of equality (see Denich, 1976).

The rapid urbanization has contributed to the restructuring of social relations, especially relations between men and women. Building cities was, in fact, one

4 Source: World Urbanization Prospects, 2014.

of the main tools for building a new society based on socialistic ideals. Bette Denich noticed that Yugoslav case has particular relevance for understanding women's roles because the massive rural-urban migration process have occurred under the jurisdiction of Socialist government which has stressed the value of equality between man and women (Denish, 1976:12). In these circumstances, cities were strategic places of women's emancipation and *urban planning reflected and to a certain degree even encouraged the ideal of gender equality*, at the times when, women's issues in urban planning were not even recognized in other more developed European cities. In Yugoslavia, for example, the problem of a double burden of newly working women was addressed by the idea of 'socialization', which was related to the 'creation of social institutions facilitating women's liberation from reproductive work: the construction of kindergartens, nurseries and breastfeeding facilities within the factories, workers' restaurant canteens, babysitting assets, financial support to working mothers and so on' (Solar 2014). The ideal of liberated and equal Yugoslav women affected the urban planners, although it was based on a relatively narrow experience of middle and upper middle class urban women, in dominantly rural and agricultural society. Young and Kaczmarek (2008) similarly described how the socialist authorities in Poland, sought to reshape urban identity by associating the figure of Polish-born female revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg to the new urban class of working women.

However, differences in the position of women throughout postsocialist European countries, lead to the conclusion that patriarchal ideology and power function at the deeper structural level that have not been significantly altered in the period of socialism. Even during the stable phase of a socialist system, 'cities reflected the ambivalent values, ideas and practices, which are sometimes contrary and exclusive... and planning ideals, represented in modernistic everyday practice and space, come across a variety of contexts, against which they could or could not be realized' (Đilas, 2014). Exploring the case of socialist Romania, Magyari-Vincze (2006: 25) similarly observes how 'under the surface of egalitarian planning ideology of the 'homogenous nation', other social categories endured at the same time, reproduced the hegemonies of the Romanian/Orthodox national-communism and paternalist state. According to Denich (1976: 15) official stress on the public facilities in Yugoslavia, led to underestimation of women roles within the household, and that was precisely the main contexts which enables migrants to actually enjoy the "fruits of urbanization". Within the household, patriarchal ideology was successfully and stubbornly cohabitating with the new ideology of equality, while the contradictions between the two were resolved through women's extraordinary efforts to cope with the double burden. (Milić, 1994; Blagojević, 1991).

Spatial scenario of the socialist city (which still largely shape today's cities) was led by the idea of *de facto* equality, adapted to the needs of the 'average person', 'socialist man' or a 'working hero' and embodied in standardized and mass produced apartments within tower blocs. This urban planning concept was closely connected to modernization flow at those times, embodied in ideas of Le Corbusier, a pioneer of modern architecture. Thus, urban planning became modernized and egalitarian, but disconnected from its own social context, by

ignoring the differences in the spatial needs of different groups. On the other hand, it became increasingly dependent on technical standards and norms, which were not questioned and behind which were often unconscious or repressed patriarchal and other ideological elements, in fact 'gender blindness'. This clearly shows how gender equality in city is not possible without firstly recognizing and understanding gender differences in the urban way of life.

Gender blind urban development and planning left many unintended gender consequences and diminished the emancipation potentials of urbanization. Although the period of socialism, due to rapid state planned industrialization, contributed to the accelerated rate of urbanization of these countries, *underurbanisation* (Andrusz, Harloe and Szelenyi, 2011), in terms of both quantity and quality, remains as a structural phenomenon. The shortage of apartments, as a consequence of a gap in a speed between industrialization and urbanization, was favoring cohabitation of extended families (including three or even four generations), which resulted in a strong private support to networks and sharing of work between women of different generations. Lack of apartments thus can be seen as the factor of preservation of traditional gender roles. The extreme effort to build industry and cities in a relatively underdeveloped society, also meant that women's work was a highly necessary resource for the biological reproduction of a 'working class'. This constant effort to 'catch up' with the center and state of perpetual transition, achieved by intensive draining of women's resources, can be seen as a permanent feature of semiperipheral societies and, consequently, its cities (Blagojević Hjuson, 2015).

After the fall of communism, urban planning was functioning without clear strategy, in a state of 'contextual uncertainty' where a 'further difficulty arose from the popular expectation that the market will solve all problems' (Newman and Thornley, 2002: 24). In many semiperipheral cities in Europe, this 'contextual uncertainty' remains the permanent feature of urban planning and development, reproducing old and creating new urban problems (Svirčić – Gotovac, 2016). This leads to further decline of the institutional power of already underdeveloped urban institutions in the semiperiphery. Urbanization patterns are still present in a form of concentration and growth in a few major capital cities, while there is rapidly declining population in small urban centers and villages (Pajvančić – Cizelj, 2017). Smaller urban centers, former industrial cities, are rapidly decaying and losing population due to de-industrialization and also population developments (intense aging of population, intense emigration and low fertility rates). In the postsocialist, in fact a neoliberal phase of urban development, further metropolization is becoming even more encouraged, since it corresponds with the overall concentration of power and economic resources. Major cities (usually capitals) are strategic sites for postsocialistic transformation: privatization (of housing, public services and public spaces) and de-industrialization, (growth based on the service sector and reliance on direct foreign investments). Women in these cities have traditionally been more prevalent in declining sectors of the urban economy and in the sectors with declining in job quality (e.g. textile industry, social services, education, health and public administration) and less represented in the newly growing sectors (IT sector, financial services, business services) which encouraged feminization of urban poverty.

The relationship between gender and the city is becoming more complex today and more difficult to be engineered: it is to a large degree shaped by global factors (integration into the global neoliberal economy), which are harder to observe, analyze, measure, as well as to control and influence by local institutions and communal public policies. Many semiperipheral cities are practicing 'austerity urbanism' (Peck, 2012) involving the budget cuts in family social support and other social services. Cuts in salaries and pensions and erosion of workers' rights, lead to the need for additional sources of income through informal labor and/or the extension of working hours. The burden of these measures affects both men and women, but for women that also means the loss of previously acquired social positions.

Gender Aspects of Everyday Urban Life at the European Semi-Periphery

From the very beginning of massive rural to urban migrations in Yugoslavia, urban infrastructure in big cities could not secure the needs of rural immigrants and the lack of housing was the primary reason for growth of informal settlements, surrounding cities and massive daily migrations (Ivanović – Barišić, 2015). Available data on the gender aspects of mobility within the national boundaries are very limited. Studies conducted in Serbia show that there is a low level of mobility in general population, that women often took part in the permanent migration with changing the place of residence, (usually related to marriage) while men usually take part in short-term daily mobility, traveling long distances in search of work (Poleti, 2016; RZS, 2013).

One of the basic patriarchal mechanisms for controlling women is achieved by restriction of their movement and mobility. Women in the Balkan rural areas are, for example, doomed to strictly controlled environments that comes down to the border of their households (gardens, farms) and thus inhibited to fulfill their needs and become economically independent. A study conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Blagojević, 2007) showed that, since rural women drive cars much more rarely than men, and actually depend on them to go to the neighboring cities, an issue of physical restriction of women's movement in rural areas is extremely important and directly connected to their quality of life, especially when there is no public transportation provided. The same study showed that life in the village is considered to be highly unrewarding for women, implying hard work, isolation, and living in frustrating traditional hierarchical relations, along the lines of gender and age, let alone the inequality in the distribution of economic resources (see Babović, 2010). These are considered strong push factors for young women to move to the cities. The key issue in the process of moving to the city is often housing, which is usually solved by relying on relatives living in the cities or through buying of small property at the edge of the city. Another study conducted in Serbia (Blagojević Hjuson, 2013), with a representative sample of 1026 respondents from 68 municipalities, also showed that the main factor for women deciding to move from a village to the city is not, as commonly

perceived, the chance for employment, but access to affordable housing. The study also points to the strong links between rural and urban economy represented in mixed households, which combine incomes from employment and farming, and therefore can sustain very difficult socio-economic conditions. On the other hand, households of this type successfully conserve patriarchal relations, as their major coping mechanism, and their way of life represents one of the key barriers to modernization of gender relations. The study also brings some insights on differences between rural and urban women and their everyday life: even 52 % of rural women comparing to 26 % of urban women stated that their household is lacking income for meeting their basic everyday needs, which means that they are two times more prone to poverty; it is 1.5 times more likely for a woman in the big city (compared to a rural woman) who lost her job to be able to get it back. And rural women are not feeling less stressed compared to urban women, as the widely shared idea of “rural idyll” would have us believe. Women living on the edges of big cities (Belgrade) are a highly mobile and flexible work force, since one in four of them has changed jobs three or four times in the last few years (Blagojević Hjuson, 2013). These differences in the living conditions and economic opportunities between urban and rural women are deepening and the women in big cities are becoming the important part of the flexible labor force highly needed in the new global economic context. What kind of everyday life changes this economic transformation brings to women in the cities and to the cities themselves remains to be seen in future research.

These findings support our claim that gender aspects of everyday urban life are specific within the semiperipheral context, since the rhythm, scope and quality of urbanization, were different as compared to countries at the “core”. Semiperipheral urban life has contradictory gender consequences including both the chances, as well as the barriers for the emancipation and empowerment of women. Affordable and accessible housing and transport are two main preconditions for accessing the benefits of urban life (such as social and health services, opportunities for education and work and flexible social norms). In that context, a gender sensitive approach to everyday urban issues (such as housing and transportation) is highly needed, but still absent from current urban research and practice.

Challenges of Engendering Urban Development and Planning in the European Semi-Periphery.

The central European cities are becoming increasingly reflective of the new gender relations, following the examples of other cities in Northern and Western Europe, or even going ahead of them (for the city of Vienna⁵, see, e.g., Soos,

5 Gender mainstreaming is the central strategic discipline in urban planning in Vienna. It was implemented in the Strategy Plan for Vienna, the Urban development plan and sectoral programs, master plans and urban design concepts as well in the numerous individual projects. Between 2005. and 2010. in more than 50 pilot projects different gender sensitive interventions in urban planning were tested. The manual for Gender mainstreaming in

2008; Damyranovic, Reinwald and Weikmann, 2013). While urban policies and planning in those cities have a clear gender and social dimension with already a long tradition at the European semiperiphery, gender equality has only recently been recognized as a political and scientific problem in the domain of urban policy and planning. It should not be forgotten that gender-sensitive urban policies and planning cannot function well without increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in the city⁶ and including the social and gender dimension within the technical departments and research institutions. Recent analysis of urban plans and the development strategy of Novi Sad and Belgrade, the two largest cities in Serbia, has shown that urban planning is still modernist (in the sense of unifying approach) and not open to the social and cultural diversity and differences arising from gender, age, ethnicity, class, health status, life styles and the like. The social context, including its gender dimension, is subsumed under the technical norms, which are not called into question or tested in research (Pajvančić – Cizelj, 2016).

Caroline Moser (1995) identified three stages in urban development and planning. First a gender-blind period (primarily the 1960s-70s); a second 'add women and stir' period (during the 1970s-1980s) that focused on 'proving' that women were important in the urban development agenda and making them visible within a WID framework; finally, a third period (from the 1980s onwards) that shifted from women per se to gender (GAD framework⁷) focusing on the ways in which urban life was gendered, and how the social construction of gender relations differentially constrained men and women's access to, and participation in, areas of urban life. Following this, it could be said that the semiperiphery is mainly in the first, gender-blind phase. But, in the contemporary reflexive society, it is not necessary to pass all stages mentioned above. In the best-case scenario integration of the *state of the art* gender approaches to urban planning can be expected, and at worst, blockade and stagnation in a current gender-blind phase. The success of 'skipping' one phase and learning the 'lessons' of developed countries will depend on: 1) the possibility of producing contextualized knowledge on gender aspects of everyday urban life 2) its integration into urban policy and 3) democratization of urban planning and policy, through reversing the trends imposed by a current domination of a neoliberal model. It is also important to notice the possibility for multidirectional diffusion of theoretical concepts and practical planning related to gender across the European region (for example, recognizing 'good practices' from the eastern socialist legacy).

urban planning and development (2013) provides the summary of different practices of gender mainstreaming in the areas of land use and development plans, public space planning and mobility, public parks and gardens, housing and public service buildings.

- 6 Woman are underrepresented in politics in general, but especially at the local level. In Serbia in 2013. elections, only 9 of 169 mayors and municipality presidents were women.
- 7 While early WID (Women in Development) approach legitimated efforts to influence development policy with a combined argument for equity and economic efficiency (emphasis on women's productive contributions), GAD (Gender and development) approach broadens the discourse of efficiency to argue for human and sustainable development and moving the focus from women to gender (Razavi and Miler, 1995).

The problem of gender equality in urban contexts, however, now comes primarily through gender policies, and dominantly by a way of laws and regulations, and not as a result of previous knowledge acquired through theoretical and empirical research. In Serbia, for example, more than 20 municipalities have signed the European Charter for the equality of women and men in local life, but there is a lack of knowledge about structural causes of inequality in a specific context, and therefore, adopted principles are rarely implemented. This reflects the typical 'reversed course', or de-development phase of the semiperiphery countries which become mere receptors and 'implementers' of public policies, defined in the contexts of the center, and not the active agents of contextualized and meaningful public policies (Blagojević Hjuson, 2015).

Urban institutions are therefore facing the challenges of incorporating best practices related to gender mainstreaming in spatial planning (e.g. The City of Vienna), and on the other hand, to take into account the contextual constraints, including a low level of public awareness and lack of knowledge about gender and its spatial dimensions. The chance for 'learning from mistakes' is, however, significantly limited due to the negative inherited conditions, as well as those reinforced during the 'transition'; such as: weak and/or corrupt local authorities, underdeveloped mechanisms of public control, the absence of substantive decentralization and conditions such as the newly dominant neoliberal deregulation of practices in the field of urban policy' (Petrović, 2009: 38–39). According to Mina Petrović (2009: 234) "the post-socialist elite is postponing the systemic approach to building a legal, institutional and financial framework of urban policy from the perspective of defining social rights, that is, the right to a city." She shows how *ad hoc* planning in the first phase of transition, produced uncontrolled commercialization of urban space, reduced public services and spaces as well as the increased socio-economic inequalities. These effects are even more enhanced with the adoption of neoliberal urban policy in the later phases of transition and can be viewed as obstacles for the introduction of socially responsible and gender sensitive models of urban development. The privatization of housing during the 1990s, implemented according to the neoliberal model of the World Bank, is a good example. Due to a number of contextual specificities, it produced a series of negative consequences (see Petrović, 2009) among which is the diminished opportunity for the development of gender-sensitive housing policies. As stated by Ognjen Čaldarović (2012) the position and interests of private, corporative investors, in the process of urban planning, is not clearly defined and structurally bounded, meaning there is no efficient instrument for balancing private and public interest in the city. In such context, it is highly unlikely to implement good practices, such as the Viennese model where private real estate investors must meet gender sensitive criteria, clearly defined in planning documents, in order to get subventions and permission to build apartments. In sum, the present, neoliberal model of urban development in the semiperiphery, coupled with negative inherited conditions, is systematically undermining possibilities for improving the quality of life for both women and men.

Conclusion

Urbanization at the semiperiphery opens up new opportunities for women but also poses new challenges, and urban planning and development models play the important role in determining which side will prevail. The 'gender and social blindness' of urban planning and development is the barrier for gender equality in these cities and one of the consequences of their semi-peripheral, dependent position. The patriarchies in this region, as *'the longue durée'* structures, are resisting and escaping different policies of urban development and planning, from socialist to neoliberal. In order to address gender issues properly urban planning has to overcome present gender blindness and rely on *contextualized knowledge on gendered aspects of urban everyday life*. Further research is needed to fill up the huge knowledge gaps in this area. It should, in our opinion, overcome assumptions (usually coming from western feminist discourse), that cities are hostile towards women. Data presented in this paper shows that cities are *strategic places of women's emancipation in the region*, so the urban policies should make an effort to preserve and support these positive aspects of urban life. In order to do so, a gender perspective needs to be taken seriously and both women and men, as gendered individuals, need to become active agents in the creation of their own urban environment. It is, also, important to promote an 'intersectionality' approach and to present gender in connection with other diversities, as an issue of everyday urban life and not just as a marginal, specific or imposed ('from the West') issue. A gendered approach in urban planning in postsocialist countries should build on positive experiences of women's emancipation in socialism, while at the same time being open and incorporating new knowledge and contemporary best practices from other countries. Gender sensitive urban planning and development can become a possible strategy for re-focusing urban policies and planning from 'urban boosterism' to the needs of real people. It can contribute to the production of just and fairly shared cities (Fainstein 2010; Sánchez de Madariaga and Roberts, 2013) at the semiperiphery. In practical terms, this process would require the convergence of urban and gender studies as well as closer cooperation between urban and women's movements in the semiperiphery.

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