

Dear Saskia Sassen,

thank you very much for your reply to our letter. We strongly welcome this incipient discussion even though disagreement on many issues will remain. For not having to discuss specific numbers in open letters, we would like to invite you to look at Wilhelmsburg from another angle together with us, an angle that your discussants at the IBA and SAGA/GWG will surely not be able to provide you with. We would greatly appreciate if during your next stay in Hamburg we were given the opportunity to discuss publicly with you and the network "Right to the City" whether or not an "upgrade without displacement" has or has not taken place or whether it had ever been intended in the first place.

However, in our brief reply we nevertheless would like to comment on a few issues. We were surprised to find out that in your understanding the IBA is an effort to decontaminate vast swathes of land and to establish ecological sustainability. Of course, we also share your concern that such an effort is absolutely necessary in Wilhelmsburg where vast swathes of land are contaminated by former industrial use leading to negative consequences for the local population. In our point of view, however, precisely this problem has not been tackled in Wilhelmsburg. On the contrary, even after the IBA will have officially closed Wilhelmsburg will remain a borough with highly contaminated soils along many canals, in allotments and housing areas. The cutting of more than 5000 trees which cleared the land needed for the IBA and the igs, an effort which surely cannot be considered a "sustainable measure", will most likely remain a little noted side effect.

With regards to the „Global Neighbourhood“ we took another close look at the numbers provided by the SAGA/GWG, which, by the way, you quote without even naming the source. Comparing rental agreements signed before the refurbishment with flats currently on offer we hold that the numbers mentioned can no longer seriously be claimed as valid. We calculated a rent rise of nearly 100 Euro for a flat of the same size. The rent without any additional or side costs alone rose by 18% in the example given. It is impossible to even confirm the reduced heating costs which will supposedly lead to lower rents. On our blog we have outlined why we continue to stick to our original assessment that rents have substantially risen leading to a loss of cheap housing opportunities, even though that percentage may be lower in the highly subsidized "Global Neighbourhood":

<http://akuwilhelmsburg.blogspot.eu/2013-08-einige-anmerkungen-zum-weltquartier-sowie-zur-mietenentwicklung-in-wilhelmsburg/>

Despite our discrepancies we hope the discussion we started will continue in the future thus enabling us to contribute to stop developments such as those in Wilhelmsburg and elsewhere.

Arbeitskreis Umstrukturierung Wilhelmsburg (Working Group on urban development Wilhelmsburg)