

16. Confronting urban regeneration policies in Europe between new forms of tourism, creativity and expulsions

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Forty years after the first urban regeneration policies, it is time to carefully consider the social effects generated by these policies that have led to profound transformations of form and content. Such transformations are today questioning the very meaning of the city and the urban, and thus a new epistemological status appears to be increasingly necessary. Following the crisis of Fordism, cities mobilized to: 1) turn historical-artistic heritage into economic assets; 2) renew the image of the city through new architectures; 3) revitalize former industrial parts of the city, by converting them for cultural and recreational purposes; 4) host national and international events. Within this framework, attracting more users and consumers is at the heart of the urban regeneration policies. We refer to a particular individual with several social garments, that daily interact with different parts of the city and performs in as many activities, such as working, visiting a museum, eating, entertaining during daytime and night-time, and so on. If cities manage to welcome visitors/tourists/temporary inhabitants, in whatever guise, their chances of success can improve.

The possibility to access and walk in the city, as also the possibility to have suitable areas for walkability, have become a goal for urban marketing policies aiming at revitalizing and increasing the tourist attractiveness of places. Moving on foot can represent a multisensory experience that allows urban subjects, citizens or tourists, to feel part of the places they are walking through, savouring signs, images and immaterial elements making up the atmosphere of the city. On the other hand, some citizens may take advantage from these urban policies, i.e. policies on walking in some historical areas as in suburbs, taking care of some problems referred to the presence of unsafe areas. Therefore, residents can be part of this entertainment and consumption system, even though their social role may conflict with the very assumptions of the urban revitalization policies. For instance, the needs of temporary and resident populations can be mutually incompatible, starting with housing costs. The renovation of buildings traditionally occupied by low-income populations has led to an exponential increase of purchasing and renting costs, thus pushing pre-existing populations to move to cheaper neighbourhoods. Furthermore, due to the growing urban attractiveness, short-term rentals for temporary populations have become more profitable. This twofold process is having an impact both on the social morphology of the cities that are undergoing such changes, and on the very nature of urban life that is gradually losing its primary

functions – housing and material production – and consequently the strong social ties that these functions give rise to.

This session invites submissions that focus on theoretical and empirical discussions on new forms of tourism, with particular attention to proposals focused on walkability as social practise and urban experience, creativity and expulsions in contemporary cities and on the social and territorial effects arising from urban regeneration policies within urban neighbourhoods, integration between tourism policies and urban policies, mediating between the city of citizens and that of tourists.